

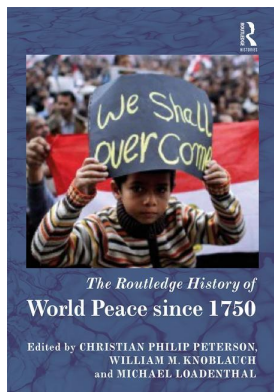
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### **An Activist in Exile**

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## AN ACTIVIST IN EXILE

Janet Mondlane and the Mozambican  
liberation movement*Joanna Tague*

On February 3, 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan delivered his now-famous “wind of change” address to the South African Parliament. At the time, British colonial officials had already dubbed 1960 the “year of Africa,” when seventeen African nations would achieve independence. Framed by Macmillan as a wind, historians have similarly cast decolonization as a force of nature—a wave, storm, or deluge.<sup>1</sup> The problem with these metaphors, however, is that they universalize the decolonization process, glossing over the enormous variations in African liberation struggles. Britain and France both fought lengthy guerrilla insurgencies (in Kenya and Algeria, respectively), which subsequently prompted them to negotiate with African leaders in their other colonies so as to avoid additional anti-colonial warfare. For many British and French colonies, the year of Africa consisted of a peaceful transition to independence.

The same cannot be said of Portuguese Africa. In their colonies—Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea (today Guinea-Bissau)—the Portuguese obstinately refused to relinquish control.<sup>2</sup> Because António de Oliveira Salazar, Prime Minister of Portugal, would not even meet with African leaders to discuss the possibility of independence, all three colonies engaged in protracted guerrilla wars for liberation from 1964 to 1974. This chapter takes as its focus the activism behind the formation of the Mozambican liberation movement—the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). Founded in June 1962 by Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO has a remarkably singular history among African liberation movements, for among the founders and within the highest echelons of the African (and predominantly male) political leadership, was Eduardo’s wife, Janet, a white American woman from Downers Grove, Illinois.

The Mozambican liberation movement is worthy of reexamination on several fronts. First, the prevailing narrative of FRELIMO’s history is one of war. Historians have interpreted Mozambique’s war for independence as a class-based guerrilla insurgency, as an extension of the apartheid state, and as yet another corollary to Cold War competitions.<sup>3</sup> But the Mondlanes and other Mozambican activists sought a peaceful transition to independence long before FRELIMO and Portugal went to war in September 1964. This history, of overtures toward peace before war, has been sorely understudied. Second, biography—as genre of African history—privileges certain liberation leaders while overlooking others.<sup>4</sup> Of the continent’s myriad liberation leaders, Eduardo Mondlane has received far less attention than other luminaries such as Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, or Julius Nyerere.

Historians have examined the life of Janet Mondlane even less, in part because a conventional trapping of biography is to foreground the public/visible exploits of (often male) political leaders, eclipsing the private/shrouded nuances of domestic and daily life. Though the binary between private/public is certainly false—we know the one frequently and seamlessly merges into and influences the other—we nonetheless rarely consider the functionality of family (particularly marriage and parenting) in the lives of African political leaders and peace activists. This chapter places Janet Mondlane center stage: In doing so, the roles of women—as wives, mothers, and activists in achieving peace and ending violence—becomes strikingly apparent.

Any examination of Janet Mondlane's life offers an unconventional entry to the world of African liberation activism, particularly the historical role of the *individual* in working to prevent violence. Most examinations of the peace process, be it positive or negative peace, center on theoretical constructs or structural forces—usually of the state, economics, or justice and inequality. This tendency for scholars to analyze the peace process at the macro level (inadvertently) minimizes the role of the individual in such processes. Personal experience matters deeply in the history of peace activism: A greater understanding of the *human* dimension to peace processes in the twentieth century would impress upon scholars and peace activists the enormity of individual agency—then and today—in preventing war and agitating for social justice.

The type of peace activism the Mondlanes embraced necessitated exile; one consequence of their exile was the (re)imagining and (re)making of self and home. To unpack this point requires tracing Eduardo Mondlane's early educational and professional trajectories and examining how his work politicized Janet and prompted her own dedication to peace activism. This chapter will then analyze the Mondlanes' 1963 decision to relocate to Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, in order to lead the Mozambican liberation movement. A close reading of the letters that Janet exchanged with Eduardo, her parents, family, and friends in the United States forefronts the importance of the individual in the peace process. Such correspondence reveals the logic and sentimentality driving Janet's (re)making of home in-exile, showcasing the emotions attendant to peace activism. In a broader sense, it also adds texture to the lived realities of liberation activists, casting in sharp relief the ways in which they grappled with notions of self, family, and home. Ultimately, Janet Mondlane's life illustrates how activists in exile forged community and confronted their own ideas of belonging in order to agitate for both positive and negative peace.

### **The education of Eduardo Mondlane: The making of a liberation activist**

Born in southern Mozambique in 1920, Eduardo Mondlane led a life that fascinates many because he helped terminate a system that sought to prevent the very existence of anyone like him. Because Portuguese colonial policy intentionally restricted African educational opportunities, throughout the twentieth century exceedingly few Africans in Mozambique had the ability to attend primary—let alone secondary—school. From the perspective of US State Department officials, this “calculated policy” of denying Africans education had transformed the colony into an “intellectual wasteland.”<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to avert an anti-colonial uprising, in the early 1960s Portugal enacted a series of reforms that dramatically expanded African access to education. As a result, over 20,000 African students enrolled in primary school while 119 enrolled in secondary school. Growing up in the 1930s, however,

Eduardo would later write that, “all my life in Mozambique I had never met a single Black man who had ever finished high school in any Portuguese colony.”<sup>6</sup>

A shepherd until the age of twelve, Eduardo enrolled in the local missionary school and rapidly rose through the ranks. What followed was unprecedented in Mozambique’s history. When he enrolled at the University of Lisbon in 1950, he was one of three Africans from Mozambique to *ever* attend university. In Lisbon, he encountered a small but diverse community of highly educated Africans from Portugal’s other colonies—Amilcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, and Mario de Andrade. Of the ten African students from Portuguese colonies in Lisbon at the time, all of them (aside from Eduardo) were from Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, or São Tomé. Monitored closely and frequently detained by the Portuguese secret police, many of the students soon feared living in the colonial capital. To continue his education beyond the state’s gaze, in 1950 Mondlane received a Phelps Stokes scholarship to attend Oberlin College in Ohio, inaugurating his “American decade.”<sup>7</sup>

A prolific public speaker, Mondlane frequently spoke to US audiences about life under Portuguese colonial rule. In 1951, while speaking at a Christian summer camp in Geneva, Wisconsin, Eduardo met Janet Rae Johnson, a seventeen-year-old high school student. Having had a childhood that revolved around the church, embroidery, cooking, and piano lessons, hearing Eduardo speak exposed Janet to the injustices of colonialism. She “decided to grab him quickly.”<sup>8</sup> Their relationship wrought quite a bit of turmoil for both of them. Her family maintained views on inter-racial unions consistent with 1950s America, forcing Janet to keep their relationship secret for some time. Moreover, upon learning that Eduardo was dating Janet, his pastor back home wrote, “If he marries a white girl, better to stay in the States and abandon all project of work in Moçambique! [sic]”<sup>9</sup> Mondlane wrote back that he was deeply disturbed by the intransigence of the church over his relationship with Janet, which “could have been seen as an important opportunity to challenge the racial assumptions underlying the colonial social structures.”<sup>10</sup>

Eduardo completed his bachelor’s degree and then earned a master’s degree in Sociology from Northwestern University. He and Janet married and, when Eduardo enrolled in Harvard’s Ph.D. program in Anthropology (which he completed in 1960), the couple moved to Boston.<sup>11</sup> Then, as a research officer in the Trusteeship Department of the United Nations, he participated in the 1960 plebiscite in the British trust territory of the Cameroons. This was a period marked by Eduardo’s intense faith in the UN system: He held out hope that the organization could help end colonial rule and facilitate radical political change. He later wrote, “however weak the world organization may seem . . . it is the only hope for helping millions of dependent peoples in Africa . . . the United Nations is helping to solve difficult problems peacefully every day.”<sup>12</sup> From his perspective, it was incumbent upon the governments of Western Europe and North America to put pressure (via the United Nations) on Lisbon so that freedom might yet be attained without bloodshed.<sup>13</sup>

After the plebiscite, the Mondlanes visited Mozambique. For Eduardo, it was his first visit home in over a decade—and an opportunity for him to appraise the ways conditions had (or had not) changed in his absence; for Janet, the trip introduced her to the racism and inequality inherent to colonial Mozambique. They returned to the United States committed to forming a liberation movement. The United Nations, however, barred officials from political activity, so in August 1961 Eduardo resigned from the organization to accept a post as Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Syracuse University. The flexible teaching schedule allowed him to travel and dialogue with other activists—most frequently, to Dar es Salaam, where more and more Mozambican liberation exiles were congregating.

### Dar es Salaam and the politicization of Janet Mondlane

After independence in 1961, Tanzania emerged as a “haven” for African liberation activists who challenged the remaining vestiges of white minority rule on the continent.<sup>14</sup> A plethora of liberation movements—all banned in their own colonies—established headquarters in Dar es Salaam: The MPLA of Angola, PAIGC of Guinea-Bissau, SWAPO of South West Africa, ZAPU of Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa’s ANC. Because Tanzania’s president, Julius Nyerere, and his government facilitated the settlement of these liberation groups in Dar es Salaam, the city became a “gathering place” not only for the leaders of these groups but also for the thousands of refugees who followed in their wake.<sup>15</sup>

In June 1962, the Mondlanes journeyed to Dar es Salaam for several reasons. One was to talk with Mozambicans living in the capital. Another was that the Committee of Seventeen, the United Nations body responsible for overseeing the decolonization process, was meeting in the Tanzanian capital to hear petitions against the remaining enclaves of European colonial rule in Africa.<sup>16</sup> Still optimistic that the organization could help avert armed struggle in Mozambique, Eduardo spoke before the committee.<sup>17</sup> It was an experience that irrevocably changed his perception of the world body. By the time he testified, Eduardo noted that the committee had “exhausted its interest” in the entire process—committee members failed even to “ask any questions to all of those who petitioned.”<sup>18</sup> Eduardo’s testimony in Dar es Salaam, in tandem with the UN’s continued inability either to enact or enforce resolutions passed by the General Assembly, contributed to his disillusionment with the organization.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the UN’s inability to effect the kind of change that Eduardo had been so optimistic about convinced the Mondlanes’ that the Mozambican liberation movement had to be grassroots—tailored *not* to the bureaucratic processes and protocols requisite to reform on the international stage, but rather to the specific needs of the Mozambican refugee population in Dar es Salaam. Characterizing this demographic as grassroots, however, is somewhat problematic: The refugees in Dar es Salaam were “local” but not indigenous, “common” but not typical compared to the millions who remained in Mozambique at this time and throughout the war. They were grassroots *but* displaced, indicative of the interstitiality of refugeeness during liberation.<sup>20</sup>

Visiting Dar es Salaam in June 1962, Janet witnessed first-hand the ramifications of Portugal’s colonial education policy and the story of Zeca, a seventeen-year-old boy, had an especially profound impact on her. Born in Mozambique, Zeca moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1959 to attend primary school. During one school holiday he returned home to visit family, but when he tried to reenter Southern Rhodesia the Portuguese refused to issue him a permit to leave Mozambique. With no other alternative and unwilling to jeopardize his education, Zeca returned to Southern Rhodesia illegally. There, he spent two years in school until the Portuguese discovered his whereabouts. Zeca then fled to Dar es Salaam; he hoped, in time, to become a doctor. For Janet, the story of Zeca’s pursuit of education could “be heard again in the experience of Antonio, and in the story of Lopes, in that of Eli, in the experiences of Isaac, and João. The same experiences apply to Felipe, Daniel, Pedro, Gabriel, José, Patrick, and any of the young men that we found in the refugee camps outside Dar es Salaam.”<sup>21</sup> In many ways, Janet’s realization that the Portuguese colonial state systematically obstructed African education made her an activist; bearing witness to the painful struggles that Mozambican refugees endured and the dangers they overcame to bypass such obstruction politicized her. Refugee education in general—and the selection and training of future Mozambican leaders in particular—became her (undisputed) realm of authority within FRELIMO, testimony to her newfound politicization.

Compelled to return to Syracuse so that Eduardo could resume his teaching obligations, the Mondlanes immediately began planning a permanent move to Dar es Salaam, which served as FRELIMO headquarters. Relocating would be no small feat: Eduardo and Janet had three young children who would leave the relative comforts and stability of upstate New York to grow up in the Mozambican liberation movement.<sup>22</sup> For Janet, the trade-off was necessary, marred only by the obligatory delay in Syracuse:

The earliest we can make Dar our residence is in the Spring 1963 . . . We wish we need not return to New York at all . . . there is such a dire need of *educated* leadership of Mozambique that it is a pity to have to spend time in other matters at this point . . . We discover with every day that the life of a politician is a terribly difficult one calling for much restraint and at the same time a great giving of one's energy. Our only regret is that we cannot throw ourselves into the battle full time at this very moment.<sup>23</sup>

### **Love in the time of liberation: Marriage and the pathos of activism**

For Janet, the days leading up to the family's relocation were hectic and stressful, yet she seemed to delight in the chaos. She wrote her parents that every day was "fantastically thrilling and exciting." When one of her friends (a medical doctor) speculated that the impending transition had left her with "battle fatigue," Janet countered that, "Battle fatigue or no, I'd much rather run like that than do laundry and scream at the kids." She seemed to thrive on the exhilaration that moving to East Africa entailed, yet she delighted in the mundaneness of family life. In one letter, she portrays Eduardo not as a political activist but as a father and husband as fallible as any other:

[The children and I wondered] how in the world Eduardo would ever make it around the world without leaving a shoe here, a hat there, some papers elsewhere, and forget half the appointments made for him. At the last minute he couldn't find his permanent residence card (for leaving/entering the country) and pressure had to be put in Washington to hurry up and issue him another. Finally, at the airport he was so overloaded in weight that we had to repack all his stuff into one suitcase.<sup>24</sup>

This image so simply captures the nuances of family in the world of peace activism. Rarely do scholars stop to consider the personality traits and private lives of African liberation leaders—what lay beyond their impassioned public speeches, letters of appeal, or military strategies—to contemplate a family man stepping out of an airport line, with children in tow, to put the contents of their luggage on display for all to see. What a very different, human image.

Eduardo traveled throughout the 1960s, prompting us to ponder the complicated nature of parenting during liberation—particularly the pragmatism that activism often necessitated. Eduardo and Janet frequently flew separately from the children. She later recollected,

people thought we were out of our minds to allow the children to fly alone, but how else could it have been safer? Once you're in a plane there is no place to wander off to, and if the thing crashes my presence certainly wouldn't help keep it up in the air.<sup>25</sup>

The Mondlanes' parenting style at times clashed with conventional American attitudes, but all too often peace activists were forced to make difficult decisions regarding childrearing: Sheer absence was typical. After Eduardo left for one trip to Paris, Janet reflected on how they all resumed "leading a relatively stable life without father, but being without papa is nothing new around here so things seem pretty normal."<sup>26</sup>

### (Re)Making home in exile

In the summer of 1963, the Mondlanes relocated to Dar es Salaam. Janet's letters to family and friends back in the United States reveal the emotional pendulum that she, as a peace activist, encountered in the struggle for liberation. Two very different vantage points emerge in these letters. On the one hand, they showcase the practicalities or logistics of (re)making home in exile: Food, work, décor, routine, and building social networks. On the other hand, Janet's letters highlight the *sensation* of belonging as an activist in exile. Several historians and anthropologists have examined domesticity in Africa within the European colonial context—particularly the impact of colonial taxation, labor, and migration on African families.<sup>27</sup> But the creation, fragmentation, and reconstitution of home within families leading struggles for independence have received far less attention. We rarely imagine the domestic realities and rituals of peace icons and their families. For the Mondlanes, the making of home and the routines of daily life were essential in managing the Mozambican struggle for independence.

In some ways, in Dar es Salaam the Mondlanes replicated the daily lives they had constructed in Syracuse. Mornings involved typical parental woes—getting children out of bed, breakfasted, and dressed. Every morning at 7:30, Janet drove Eddie and Chude to school. Jane, the nursemaid, took Nyeleti to the park around 8:30 and picked the children up from school at noon. They had a family dog, Katembe, whom Janet and the children bathed every Thursday (Katembe often hid and Janet lamented the hours spent trying to find him). Sundays were typically reserved for family excursions to the beach. There were ballet recitals and play dates, much like there had been in New York. These routines humanize the leaders of the Mozambican liberation movement—this holistic, family-oriented image serving as counterbalance to their public lives as political agitators.

In other ways, their lives were wholly new. Janet's workday was highly regimented: From 8–noon and 2–5 pm, she interviewed refugee students for placement in the Mozambique Institute, the school she and Eduardo established to rectify Portugal's neglect of African education. She often went "out to camps where the new refugees are coming in to test them and bring in those who are good for school."<sup>28</sup> When the school term started in September 1963 (just two months after her arrival) about thirty students had enrolled at the Institute.<sup>29</sup> The family's life increasingly revolved around the education of Mozambican refugees, disrupting the ability to maintain routine in their adoptive city. Janet wrote to her parents, "The weekends—at least Sundays—I'd like to devote to my house and family but even today found me in a hot conference with the military department of Frelimo concerning the students."<sup>30</sup>

Material comfort was another of Janet's concerns in her (re)making of home. In letters to family, she described at length her decorating decisions. At times, her décor fused North American and Tanzanian material cultures—reflecting her desire to keep a (metaphorical) foot in both worlds. Possibly décor took center stage because Janet knew it to be a topic that would appeal to the sensibilities of her mid-Western family. And yet, as one friend would later recall, for Janet "everything revolved around their house."<sup>31</sup> This may have been due

to the fact that the Mondlane household was a strategic space: It frequently operated as meeting place for FRELIMO's Central Committee. Indeed, FRELIMO became the Mondlanes' extended family: Many evenings consisted of dinner and conversation at home with members of the party's inner-circle (most often Marcelino dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano, and Lourenço Mutaka), generating kinship and nurturing the Mondlanes' connectedness. Their discussions ranged from the quotidian to the intellectual, often with a "long literary discussion on modern art—film, literature, painting." For Janet, it was "vaguely like the blind leading the blind . . . I was disagreed with, sort of, by all those Europeanized Africans."<sup>32</sup>

We also see how possessions could soften the experience of exile. In her letters, Janet spent considerable time detailing the comforts of home-in-the-making. Her words are worth quoting at length for the imagery she sought to convey:

I have a small rug and matching bedspread and curtains for the guest room . . . Pictures, of course. I bought a rich abstract design for the draperies for the kids' room in soft rose, blue and lime and chenille lime bedspreads to match . . . The guest room's curtains and spread has a white background with blue and blue green flowers. . . Eduardo and my bedroom is the only one I haven't bought for because I can't find what I want—a deep blue, quiet drapery with spreads to match. I sent out by boat the nice double bed spread we had at Syracuse and since we have single beds here I think I'll cut it in half and prepare a lovely ruffle around the sides . . . [in the living room] the drapes are like a deep water-color in rich blue, black and lime, all mixed up. The couch and one of the big armchairs will be upholstered in a deep silver-grey, along with two of the medium-sized chairs. The other two medium chairs are done in the same rich aqua-blue of the drapery and the tops of the eight stools (triangular) will be in the same blue. Almost two whole walls of the living room is drapery and one wall of the dining room, so we will add a quiet color here. With the deep green tiles and some mats it should look restful. Bright colors just don't do since we have so much sun. Bright pillows will suffice. Mother's sea-scape will hang in a good place and so will the tree picture with the water.<sup>33</sup>

Janet's intense use of color had purpose; such vibrancy might spur certain sensations—restfulness, quietude, serenity—all welcome feelings for those who have left home and who are recreating home and family anew. The prevalence of memorabilia (photographs, paintings, textiles) from previous homes abounds, which speaks to the power of reminiscence in exile and the need to merge material objects from one life into the next. We must also wonder whether Janet's painstaking effort to impart visual clarity stemmed from the possibility that her family in the United States might never visit Tanzania and could, therefore, only imagine her new home. Her words reveal a desire for material comfort in exile, though an exile infused with possessions and memorabilia from past homes.

### **Sensations of exile/emotions of belonging**

For activists abroad, both physical and emotional metamorphoses often accompany the (re)making of home. Profound personal transformation best characterizes Janet's first few years in Tanzania. Living as an activist in Dar es Salaam in the 1960s, Janet experienced a gamut of sensations: The very senses of sight, sound, and feeling were elevated and honed. Mornings especially were redolent with color, as she wrote friends and family in the United



States: “It is very pleasant in the morning. The sun is a lovely golden yellow and the sea sky blue . . . The land is still fresh from the night dew before the sun boils it off by mid-morning.”<sup>34</sup> A physical awareness attended to living in a new place and color (much like in her own home) not only acquired newfound vividness but inspired wonder:

We are two blocks from the beach, that lovely, serene Indian Ocean . . . The ocean changes color with the sky, and each day driving home along the ocean front I am amazed that I’m here with all these beautiful colors constantly with me. Today as I came into town, I looked up and against the sky some tall trees had put forth masses of blue-violet blooms. The roads and our yard are filled with trees of white, red, orange and fuschia [sic]. Each night as I lay in bed I listen to the smashing of the surf on the beach and watch the stars pass across my windows.<sup>35</sup>

In her letters, Janet confided to friends and family her emotional transformations, often concluding, “I love it here. I belong here.”<sup>36</sup> It is this emotion of *belonging* that tends to overcome the activist abroad, often differentiating them from the casual traveler—cognizant of *not* belonging. As a member of the Mozambican liberation movement, Janet embraced this impetus to belong. Her letters shed much-needed light on the intersectionality of emotion, exile, and activism. But to what or whom, we must ask, was she claiming to belong? On the one hand, it was the place—Dar es Salaam—itself: She felt connected to the very soil. On the other hand, it was the people. She wrote her family regarding her FRELIMO colleagues:

Perhaps it is because we are dedicated to the same cause, but I have never felt so closely allied with anyone as I do with this group. There is a spirit of companionship and well-being even when there are a ton of problems to be solved. A peace of the soul, I think. There is a simple and deep understanding among these people about what life is about right now.<sup>37</sup>

We see Janet’s devotion to her adoptive home when the Mondlanes vacationed in Europe in October 1963. While at Chateau d’Oex, a small resort town amidst the Swiss Alps, Janet wrote a friend about the town’s idyllic tranquility. Yet despite such picturesque serenity, she was homesick: She “couldn’t stand being away from Dar any longer.”<sup>38</sup> The European excursion affirmed that there was “no place on earth” she would have rather been than Dar es Salaam:

Africa feels like home. Every now and then I look around and tell myself that I really don’t belong here. That the people I see on the streets, the Africans and the Indians—I don’t really know them at all and probably never will get to know them. Their life and their language is so different from mine that I will never know them. Yes, maybe if I learned Swahili I wouldn’t feel so separate from them. But then, most of the time I *don’t* feel separate from them. My world is a world within a world—the world of Mozambique, and refugees, and revolution. The talk is of war, and studies and what comes after. And every day has its ups and downs . . . How many spies do we know about now, when shall I get worried enough to put bars on the windows, when will we get a gun permit for the guards at my house, is the boy who has the respiratory problems nervous from problems or is it something more physical.<sup>39</sup>

Consider this passage's juxtaposition: Words such as "home," "feel," and "belong" are counterbalanced by "refugees," "revolution," "war," "spies," and "gun." The very contrast of the terms reflects what most peace activists living permanently abroad endure: Affinity for a new home tempered by extreme doubts (and hopes) of ever truly belonging to it. Gradually, her American identity faded away, replaced by a nascent Mozambican nationalism:

I'm a real nationalist these days . . . One cannot remain degage when involved in a war. In order to stay out of it, one would have to be milked dry of human warmth. War requires a lot of warmth, or we wouldn't survive as people. The bond that ties the nationalist together, the true nationalist, is a strong one . . . I sound like I'm fighting a war. No one is really fighting a war here—yet. But here I have the products of an age-old war. I hate the Portuguese for their depriving my future countrymen of the key to thought—education. One doesn't realize the disastrous effects of lack of education until one lives with an appalling lack of it.<sup>40</sup>

### Conclusion

We cannot romanticize Janet Mondlane's life in East Africa. In February 1969, she was widowed when a parcel bomb killed Eduardo at his office in Dar es Salaam. Janet and the children remained in Tanzania, then moved to Mozambique after independence in 1975. She never remarried, but later recollected how marriage (the most *personal* of endeavors)—and not structural influences, economic inequality, or any direct experience with violence (the most *macro* of forces)—transformed her into an activist: "I am a product of Eduardo Mondlane . . . I'm not at all a violent person. As a matter of fact I'm rather a pacifist. But my life has been very much linked with war, unfortunately."<sup>41</sup> In this way, Janet represents the archetypal peace activist: One who eschews violence precisely because the threat of war is so very, very looming. Janet's words also reflect a prominent tendency in peace promotion: That most frequently it is the oppressed (here, the colonized) who act as historical agents by compelling the relatively more privileged and protected to join with them in solidarity. That Janet defined herself as a "product" of Eduardo reflects the power of personal connection (and not structural forces) in motivating peace activism.

We need to understand more fully how personal affinity affects the peace process, and how the marginalized have historically secured allies. To many scholars of peace, Janet's personal reflections might seem mundane or trivial—her letters home, decisions about décor, feelings about leaving Mozambique—but they reveal important and too often overlooked influences on activism. For scholars and activists alike, Janet's life illustrates the opportunities and difficulties involved in promoting peace. The difficulties were significant: The inability of a (still quite young) United Nations to counter Portuguese aggressions or to offer FRELIMO much support. Yet, FRELIMO's Central Committee (not the Mondlanes) decided to go to war with the Portuguese and Janet supported this: So what are we to make of a pacifist conceding to war? That Marcelino dos Santos, first vice president of an independent Mozambique, dubbed her FRELIMO's "Godmother" (i.e., someone who promises to take responsibility of or care for something) highlights the bonds of solidarity forged among a collective in times of both peace and war.<sup>42</sup> In Janet we see the paradox encountered by so many activists historically, who identify as pacifists and yet become enveloped in violence. Her life reminds us of our capacity to belong elsewhere and make family anew—irrespective

of race, gender, or nationality—in the hope of challenging injustice peacefully but, if needs be, standing in solidarity with those who elect to fight for their freedom.

### Notes

- 1 Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6.
- 2 Multiple factors contributed to Portugal's intransigence. A relatively poor West European state, Portugal relied on its colonies to bolster the domestic economy and reinforce its identity as a world power. Moreover, the fact that the fascist António de Oliveira Salazar had ruled the country since 1938 meant that Luso-Africans could "hardly appeal to Portuguese notions of liberty." See Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Sovereignty and Struggle: Africa and Africans in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1994* (New York: Oxford University Press), 70.
- 3 For interpretations of the war as a guerrilla insurgency: Thomas Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution: Mozambique's War of Independence, 1964–1974* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983); Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and Its Origins* (London: Longman, 1983); on the role of the apartheid state: João M. Cabrita, *Mozambique: The Tortuous Road to Democracy* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); as liberation through a Cold War lens: Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot Cold War: The USSR in Southern Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2008).
- 4 See Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1994) and Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965). Other notable biographies include: David Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalism* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1998); Leo Zeilig, *Lumumba: Africa's Lost Leader* (London: Haus, 2015); Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Nyerere and Africa: End of an Era* (Dar Es Salaam: New Africa Press, 2006); Lindy Wilson et al., *African Leaders of the Twentieth Century: Biko, Selassie, Lumumba, Sankara* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015).
- 5 NARA Box 44. File General Reports Mozambique. Confidential memo to Governor Harriman from Mennen Williams, undated, "Education in Mozambique and Consul General Wright's Final Roundup Report—Information Memorandum."
- 6 Oberlin College Archives (hereafter OCA). Mondlane's statement at the UN Special Committee on Territories under Portuguese Administration on April 10, 1962 in New York City.
- 7 OCA, accessed April 8, 1972, [www.oberlin.edu/alummag/oampast/oam\\_spring98/Alum\\_n\\_n/eduardo.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/alummag/oampast/oam_spring98/Alum_n_n/eduardo.html)
- 8 Robin Wright, "Janet Mondlane of the Mozambique Institute: American "Godmother" to an African Revolution," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 1975.
- 9 Robert Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 81.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 84.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 106–107, 109–110.
- 12 OCA. Box 1, Series II, Part 4. "The United Nations in Action: The Cameroons Plebiscite," Eduardo Mondlane.
- 13 Cabrita, 15.
- 14 John D. Gerhart, "Dar es Salaam Becomes Center of Refugee Intrigue: Nine Exiled Regimes Have Headquarters in City." *The Crimson*, September 25, 1964.
- 15 Bill Minter, *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950–2000* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007), 10.
- 16 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. "Daily memos on a June visit to Dar es Salaam."
- 17 Faris, 151.
- 18 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. "Daily memos on a June visit to Dar es Salaam."
- 19 A series of UN General Assembly resolutions (Resolution 1699 of December 1961 and Resolutions 1819, 1807, and 1808 of December 1962) sought to restrict the sale of weapons by member states to Portugal and urged Portugal to move toward self-determination. The pace of change via multilateral organizations was glacial.
- 20 Defined as the space between one boundary and the next, as a conceptual framework "Interstitiality" challenges the notion that identity categories are complete and bounded by interrogating the in-between-ness of such categories—and posits that identity can be rooted in such interstices. In this way it differs from "Intersectionality," with its focus on identity as forged when multiple categories

- collide—and posits that identity stems from such blending. See Falguni A. Sheth, “Interstitiality: Making Space for Migration, Diaspora, and Racial Complexity,” *Hypatia* 29, no. 1 (2014): 75–93.
- 21 Janet Rae Mondlane, “The Moçambique Refugee Situation,” 406–407.
  - 22 Eduardo Chivambo Junior, born June 1957; Jennifer Chude, May 1958; Nyeleti Brooke, January 1962.
  - 23 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to Mr. Perier. June 18, 1962. Emphasis my own.
  - 24 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to the Johnsons and the Whitakers. March 7, 1963.
  - 25 Ibid.
  - 26 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to the Johnsons and the Whitakers. March 7, 1963. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela similarly reflected on parenting: “it seems to be the destiny of freedom fighters to have unstable personal lives. When your life is the struggle, as mine was, there is little room left for family. That has always been my greatest regret, and the most painful aspect of the choice I made . . . To be the father of a nation is a great honor, but to be the father of a family is a greater joy. But it was a joy I had far too little of,” 600–601.
  - 27 On domesticity during colonialism, see: Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Karen Tranberg Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).
  - 28 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to “Everybody.” September 8, 1963.
  - 29 For more on the Mozambique Institute and refugee education during liberation see: Joanna T. Tague, “Before Asylum and the Expert Witness: Mozambican Refugee Settlement and Rural Development in Southern Tanzania, 1964–1975” in *African Asylum at a Crossroads: Activism, Expert Testimony, and Refugee Rights* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015) and “In the City of Waiting: Education and Mozambican Liberation Exiles in Dar es Salaam, 1960–1975” in *Africans in Exile: Mobility, Law, and Identity, Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).
  - 30 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to “Folks.” September 15, 1963.
  - 31 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 3. “Notes on a conversation with Margaret and Colin Legum.” November 2, 1979.
  - 32 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to Eduardo Mondlane. October 17, 1963.
  - 33 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to “Everybody.” September 8, 1963.
  - 34 Ibid.
  - 35 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to Muriel Belsky. October 21, 1963.
  - 36 Ibid.
  - 37 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to family. September 22, 1963.
  - 38 OCA. Acc 30/307. Box 1, Series II, Part 2. Letter from Janet Mondlane to Muriel Belsky. October 21, 1963.
  - 39 Ibid. Underlined in the original.
  - 40 Ibid.
  - 41 Laurinda Keys, “Illinois-Born Widow of African Revolutionary Eduardo Mondlane Hopes for Peace,” *The Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1989.
  - 42 Robin Wright, “Janet Mondlane of the Mozambique Institute: American ‘Godmother’ to an African Revolution,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 1975.