

# The Pretoria Complex

## *Some sad truths about Mozambique*

*"Generalisations about refugees are very dangerous; all that can safely be said is that they have sought refuge"*  
— Julius Nyerere

**I**N RECENT MONTHS much has been written quite rightly about drought and suffering in Mozambique. It is also fashionable to lump Mozambique's plight squarely on to Pretoria: to use the Pretoria connection, or complex, as ample justification for supporting Mozambique. Oppose Apartheid? Support Mozambique. Give generously. Here is the text of one advertisement:

### **MOZAMBIQUE. HELP COMBAT APARTHEID.**

South Africa is arming and supporting bandit groups in neighbouring Mozambique, to sabotage, kill and terrorise. The disruption to agriculture, health services and the economy is so great that Mozambique is now facing a man-made disaster. Millions have been forced to flee their homes and farms. One child in three is dying. And people are reduced to wearing rags ...

### **WITH YOUR HELP MOZAMBIQUE CAN SURVIVE ...<sup>1</sup>**

A brochure that has been freely distributed on university campuses and elsewhere asks:

What has brought Mozambique to its present state?

... The answer lies in the geographical location of the Country and the current political climate in southern Africa.

Mozambicans know, it concludes, that "the source of their problems is the apartheid government in South Africa". Elsewhere in this brochure, economic and social development in Mozambique is said to be possible only to the extent that the MNR guerillas can be kept at bay. Comprehensive long-term sustainable development in that country requires the neutralisation of the MNR by the removal of the South African Government support ... Any other assistance which you can give to the Anti-Apartheid cause will ultimately be of fundamental benefit to Mozambique ...<sup>2</sup>

Thus international assistance to Mozambique is required to counteract the effects of MNR activities: these *bandidos* are presumed to have no further cause to exist once the RSA will have ceased to exist or at least ceased helping them to exist. That there could also be something wrong

with Frelimo's political system and methods is unthinkable and does not rate a mention. Mozambique's ills are explained away monocausally: the blame lies unreservedly elsewhere — abroad.

This has been a keynote feature of otherwise laudable fund-raising campaigns — one in particular. Use of this Pretoria complex as a shroud to cover up just about every ill in Southern Africa is widespread. In the mass media it tends to be uncritically regarded as the norm and risks becoming an obligatory article of blind faith. Half-truths and distortion often result.

Someone who was actually present in Sofala Province, Mozambique, in the thick of fighting, Lord Michael Cecil, seeks to describe how "extremely limited" any South African support to Renamo, the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) is: "the rebels", he writes, "are badly trained and equipped". But the two column bold print editorial sub-title to his own report reads: "PRETORIA SUSPECTED OF FUNDING MNR GUERILLAS".<sup>3</sup> Cecil was accompanying the Italian reporter Amerigo Grilz, 34, who was shot dead (almost certainly by Zimbabwean troops) while filming an MNR operation. Cecil wrote this of the rebels:

Some wear captured government or Zimbabwean combat clothing and boots, but most are barefoot and in rags. They have limited ammunition and damaged rifles ... The reason for MNR's success must lie in the deep unpopularity of government. When the former Frelimo guerillas ... came to power in 1975, they began putting peasants into supervised collective villages ...

Cecil saw random bombing of villages in MNR areas — and Zimbabwean troops are blamed for atrocities, such as that on 28 April last when they reoccupied the undefended town of Morrumbala, rounded up suspects and beheaded them.

Incomprehensible or inconceivable though this may seem in contemporary Australia, it is not untypical of contemporary South Africa. I was in Zimbabwe just after the civil war ended and mixed with all sides. It was as blood-chilling to listen to a white Rhodesian air force man talk lightly of knocking down "baboons" on the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Road as it was to learn firsthand of how an elderly Shona has his eyes gouged out by

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ZANU cadres for giving a drink of water to a wounded Rhodesian officer near the Mozambique border.

Travel restrictions from "communal villages" are strictly enforced in Mozambique; one author, Joseph Hanlon, has even noted "the practice of flogging people who criticise incorrect actions of officials". Perhaps most depressing, he writes, is that Frelimo failed to learn the lesson that it was its own high-handedness that was creating opposition: in Erati district the army responded to MNR advances "by forcing people into villages, and burning the homes of those who resisted". Referring to a speech by Samora Machel in 1984 blaming imperialism for wanting, through South Africa, to destroy "the alternative civilisation which Mozambique represents", Hanlon observed how that implied the regime's own overthrow:

Nine years of war and hardship have smashed not only the economy, but also the early enthusiasm, ideals and good political intentions. Destabilisation has remoulded Frelimo in the South African image of *sjamboks* and passes — in the Portuguese colonial tradition of 'protected villages'.<sup>4</sup>

Following a tour of Mozambique, Archbishop Desmond Tutu announced the church's teaching to be that there can come a time when it would be justifiable to overthrow an unjust system violently — but, it seems, only in South Africa, not in Mozambique. He was shown evidence of the atrocities committed by those who are called in Maputo "the armed bandits".<sup>5</sup> Be it established that guerillas opposing Left-wing totalitarian regimes are "armed bandits" whereas those opposing Right-wing totalitarian regimes are "freedom fighters". Like many an "agitator" in the heyday of imperialism, the rebel sees the light through iron bars: the thickness of the bars serves further to obscure the light. Christ and Gandhi might have contested Archbishop Tutu's theology, but if it is true for South Africa, could it not be true also for Mozambique?

In *Renascent Africa*, Nnamdi Azikiwe noted how the term "agitator" did not find reception in high circles: it had become a sort of anathema to some Africans: one felt one was being derided, socially or politically. But, he added, if there were no agitators, everything would be at a standstill.

Society would be stagnant. Individuals would be so complacent that there would be no urge for change and improvement. Someone must challenge social injustice. Someone must rouse society from its lethargy, if the forces of man's inhumanity to man are carried to the various institutions of society, be they political, economic or religious. That is why 'agitators' are born.<sup>6</sup>

The "real issue relating to Mozambique" was, Tutu said, "whether the South African Government supports those who seek to destabilise the people of Mozambique. If it does, it is supporting terrorism".<sup>7</sup> One is tempted to reply: to hell with the South African Government. All power to the people of Mozambique. As for terrorism, could that not emanate also from an unrepresentative government? On the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, all that matters apparently is whose side you're on.

The conditions laid down by MNR leader Alfonso Dhlakama, and rejected by Frelimo, are:

All foreign troops must leave Mozambique. A joint council of national reconciliation must be formed. There must be free and internationally supervised elections.<sup>8</sup>

The MNR are generally believed to control 50% of the country and are probably in a position of advance comparable to that reached by the Eritreans a decade ago before the Cubans intervened on the Mengistu regime's side to crush them.

As I observed in another context, most black refugees today are from black African dictatorships, generally as well as in Australia.<sup>9</sup> Most of these have been emanating since 1974 from Ethiopia. What we have in Mozambique now is comparable to what we had in Zimbabwe until 1980, with the roles reversed. (Until 1980 most Zimbabwean refugees were in Mozambique. The Mozambique regime's estimates, which I found exaggerated, counted up to 200,000 from Zimbabwe at that time. Most of Nkomo's militants, who were Ndebeles, went to Zambia whereas almost all of Mugabe's militants, who were Shonas, were in Mozambique.)<sup>10</sup>

Without wishing to exculpate Pretoria from blame — I find *apartheid* repulsive — the Pretoria complex notion nevertheless is too simplistic and jaundiced; it can also be counter-productive. A regional correspondent observed that whatever Pretoria's strategic and ideological interests in the war, the real issue of the struggle lies in the ideological divide in Mozambique:

On the one hand is Frelimo's commitment to hardline socialist policies and a strongly centralised administration which, its critics say, is rife with corruption and incompetence. On the other is Renamo's bid for a return to the traditional power structure of tribal chiefs and an end to the sometimes ruthless reign of party-appointed regional political commissars. Dhlakama has vowed that any future Mozambican government will be anti-Communist . . .<sup>11</sup>

Having myself lived in independent Mozambique for a while, mixed with some of its civil servants and political leaders, and travelled extensively there security permitting, I wish to record my own impressions and to remark on what appeared to be other real issues facing that otherwise beautiful and potentially rich country.

Presumably Pretoria's interest — Nkomati Accord or not — is indeed to destabilise the regime in Mozambique, where ANC elements have been active against the RSA. There were reprisals by South Africa from 1981 and earlier by Rhodesia — such as the Rhodesian air strike in Tronça district late in 1979, a site which I visited soon afterwards.

That Pretoria assisted the Mozambique National Resistance is an open secret, although it is less clear how far such assistance continued after 1984. On-the-spot reports indicate that had the rebels been better equipped, they might have been marching on to Maputo by now.

If one has to point a finger at Mozambique's troubles, which are many, one has to point first at Lisbon rather than Pretoria.<sup>12</sup> Portugal left Mozambique in a mess in 1975 — a far cry from Zimbabwe's inheritance five years later. Apart from the exodus of Portuguese as a result of the head-on confrontation that led to sudden independence, there was 90% illiteracy. Of the 2000 students at the University



in Lourenço Marques, 40 were Mozambicans. There were at best a few dozen doctors to cater for the needs of over nine million people spread across an area of 785,000 square kilometres, and very few skilled personnel in industry. Arguably a positive left-over from Portuguese rule was Portuguese itself — a potentially unifying element as the ex-colony's "national" language of communication.<sup>13</sup>

From then onwards one has to look at the Mozambican leadership itself, at Frelimo's methods and ideals. Admittedly there was the Rhodesian problem. After UDI in 1965, in conformity with the international economic sanctions against Smith's regime that followed, on taking power in 1975 the border with Mozambique's largest trading partner was closed, and Mozambique rather than Rhodesia suffered for that. Partly owing to internal unrest, reopening that border in 1980 did not lead to an economic recovery. One has to look further back, to 1962, when different nationalist groupings merged. Matters took a turn for the worse when the moderate nationalist elements under the inspired leadership of Eduardo Mondlane lost out to extremist Marxist-Leninist ideologues, the late Samora Machel among them.

Dusty and tattered portraits of Mondlane still may be seen around Mozambique but the spirit certainly is not there, least of all the *poésie*. Progress was achieved even under Frelimo in some areas such as literacy and paramedical assistance, in spite of enormous problems. But as far as I could see President Machel was a screaming, table-thumping demagogue and despot. He was no Tom Mboya.<sup>14</sup> His cabinet's inter-Ministerial squabbles were the rule rather than the exception. Unpredictability was a common denominator: one day you would be talking to a Minister, the next day you hear he has been locked up or committed suicide. Corruption could not be curtailed: it was part of the system. What the State did not own it closely controlled. Fighting from the northern provinces against the centralised, military, doctrinaire regime in Maputo has hardly ever stopped since the armed anti-colonial struggle began in 1964. Pretoria was not central to those early disputes: it supported the enemy, Portugal. Moscow, not Pretoria, became the dominant influence.

A central and seminal dispute was that between Lazaro Nkavandame, a northerner who wanted voluntary cooperatives, and Machel, a southerner, who wanted State collectives. Mondlane, who had unified and presided over the three then existing nationalist groupings in 1962 thus founding Frelimo, was not unsympathetic to Nkavandame's position. However, Mondlane was assassinated in Dar es Salaam in 1969 and the Machel faction eventually triumphed.<sup>15</sup>

"The purpose of our struggle is not only to destroy," Mondlane told his party in 1967. "It is first and foremost aimed at building a new Mozambique, where there will be no hunger and where all men will be free and equal." Writing about "the new Mozambique", Mondlane emphasised change in continuity:

... neither the traditional nor the colonial system of education is designed to fit the needs of this new entity (the independent national state). A new departure is required. But a departure must begin somewhere. We can learn from other cultures, including the European,

but we cannot graft them directly on to our own. It is for this reason that a certain understanding of our own cultures and our own past is essential. Much of our traditional education is obsolete; but some aspects — the art and some of the moral values, for instance — can help form a basis for the new society we are trying to build. As Jahn put it: 'Only where man feels himself to be heir and successor to the past has he the strength for a new beginning.'<sup>16</sup>

Listen, by contrast, to Machel's Message at the Investiture of the Transitional Government in September 1974:

Hence the chief task of all Frelimo militants is to further the work of organising the masses and guiding them in each factory, each agricultural unit, each PFLM detachment, each co-operative, each neighbourhood, each department, so that the government is constantly aware of the people's feelings and thoughts.<sup>17</sup>

In January 1980 I saw Maputo's main streets carefully painted over in thick black paint with huge slogans condemning "capitalism" and hailing "the revolution" and "Marxism-Leninism". Independence was perceived as a revolution, and as a liberation not from colonialism but from capitalism. This phenomenon is common to new states, including various African ones, Mozambique being a near-classic. In *The African Nations and World Solidarity*, Manadou Dia expressed the problem thus:

Since colonial power imposed the domination of foreign capitalism everywhere, there is naturally, in the mind of proletarian nations, complete identification between capitalism and colonialism, between the political system and the economic system ... One can understand why they prefer the socialist system and look towards socialist experiments. Unfortunately, the question is not so simple, for it seems that colonialism is able to survive any system ... Every human grouping, every society, has a right to the benefit of political independence with the understanding that to enjoy it, it will not suffice to proclaim the right but rather to guarantee to carry out the mandate, through the existence of a democratically organised state. In other words, independence risks being fiction unless it can be effectively exercised.<sup>18</sup>

A significant ideological rift developed between the precepts of Frelimo and much of the rest of African theory. As Serapiao and El-Khawas have noted, Mozambique was the first African state to declare that it was going to follow the pattern of Marxist-Leninist socialism. In characterising Frelimo's commitment to stop individuals from succeeding in their capitalist aspirations or from getting capitalist appetites, Machel used the image of a crocodile. "It is necessary," he said, "to crack the eggs of the crocodile before the young hatch; in other words, it is necessary to stop a class of petty bourgeois from maturing into a class of bourgeois."<sup>19</sup> Now Mozambique has many old crocodiles but not fresh eggs. "*A luta continua.*"

When I was in Maputo, it was illegal to as much as take a photograph in the main street, and my informants said visitors would actually be jailed for that offence. Worse, food was scarce — but not for diplomats, the ruling elites,



or those with American dollars, including a thriving local (male and female) jet-set. There was a special shop for these, with several petty bureaucrats doing rounds and rounds of paper pushing and signatures. This special shop had very many imported food-stuffs . . . and cashew nuts. I bought vintage Portuguese wines there. The "ordinary people" queued outside the ordinary shops for hours on end and by early morning most of the shelves were empty.

There was no drought then, yet even chicken meat was difficult to obtain sometimes. Lobsters, which in the heyday of Mozambique's tourism were much sought after and a staple diet for visitors from all over Southern Africa and elsewhere, were hard to come by, and pricey. Moscow allegedly did all the commercial fishing in the ocean, in return for expertise to the client state. The East German Embassy was reputedly the largest and best guarded of all the embassies of Maputo. With some (Scandinavian) exceptions, assistance came mainly from the USSR and Eastern European countries (and the UN).<sup>20</sup> Ironically, South Africans sometimes were around too, in technocratic jobs. In fact there was precious little one could service or buy without going to Swaziland — from bread loaves to radio batteries — Swaziland being, of course, a conduit for South African goods.

In those days Robert Mugabe lived in Maputo; now that he is in power in Harare, having subdued Nkomo's Ndebeles and effectively dismantled the multi-party state, Zimbabwean troops try to keep the Mozambican resistance at bay. Apart from antagonism towards South Africa, the Umtali-Beira railway is a vital trade route for land-locked Zimbabwe. Besides, one good turn deserves another.<sup>21</sup>

The heavily-armed Tanzanians were there too, from early on, although Nyerere ran his own country somewhat differently; now brotherly Ethiopian troops are promised! Not (one presumes) to explain how to avoid famines, but to assist in fighting the armed bandits. Addis-Ababa does have what is said to be the largest monument to Lenin in the world (and what an eyesore it is); and so far Ethiopia is also the largest refugee-producing country in Africa.<sup>22</sup>

When I went to Mugabe's Zimbabwe after Mozambique in May 1980 I could not believe I was still in the same part of the world. Umtali and Chimoio were worlds apart.<sup>23</sup> Never have capitalism and communism existed in such stark contrast and in so close proximity. This is not to say there was no exploitation of one race by another — although Zimbabwe never had *apartheid* in the strict South African sense. Simply observed, on one side things worked, on the other, they didn't; in Zimbabwe there was more food, better food, clothes, equipment; standards and possibilities were incomparably better all-round and generally for more people as well.

At the theatre in Bulawayo, I was rather surprised when the black South African barman told me chattily how he was in Zimbabwe on a working holiday but looked forward to returning to South Africa where one made a better living, he said. Presumably he simply meant earning more money.

It needs to be said though that in Mozambique, as in Ethiopia, famines and human suffering have been at least partly caused by Communism and not by a market economy, by internal repression no less than by external intervention. In centralised, monolithic politico-economic systems there is frequently not much food, freedom or leisure either. Droughts only make this worse, sometimes in more ways than one. Resistance movements produce *deslocados* (displaced persons). Mozambique appears to be one such case bearing the brunt of such disruption. Aid may indeed relieve temporary hardship but it will hardly solve other entrenched problems, however much one might prefer to ignore these altogether. For years now, refugees have spoken of atrocities by both sides in what is an escalating and bloody civil war.

By all means donate money to the victims: outside of Mozambique they are mostly in Malawi now.<sup>24</sup> Their misery is not their fault, except perhaps in so far as they may have been unwilling or unable to combat it successfully while they still had the energy to do so. But it is incorrect to try to pass all this off as the sole consequence of apartheid in South Africa. This black-and-white media *malaise*, fanned by mostly well-meaning fund-raisers, may not serve the long-term interests of the people most directly affected. Totalitarian regimes remain even as droughts come and go. The disappearance of South Africa would not *ipso facto* heal Mozambique's wounds.

In fact the situation in Mozambique deteriorated as relations with South Africa improved. Faced by bankruptcy — and drought, floods and a cyclone — Machel in 1984 steered his country into a mutual non-aggression pact with South Africa. Condemned by the ANC, this was approved by, among others, China and North Korea. While still professing Marxism-Leninism, the Frelimo congress in 1983 concluded this ideology has not worked too well and sought to abandon aspects of it, such as collectivism in agriculture. But old habits die hard, as could be seen from their decision to reduce the population of Maputo by two-thirds — an impossibility. Decentralisation and local initiatives, after what Mozambique had been through, had a hollow ring to them, even as attempts to attract Western investment and to guarantee a margin of profit to multi-nationals were made. Meanwhile, guerilla activity increased, in spite of additional foreign troops from Zimbabwe and Tanzania and now, allegedly, also from Ethiopia, to prop up Frelimo.

Has Renamo perceived these changes as signs of the regime's internal weakness and impending collapse? Or has the "pro-Western" shift in policy, internal and external, been too little or too late? If Mozambican "bandits" could defeat three or four armies, would Mozambique rise like a Phoenix from the ashes? Certainly not, but the underdogs would find comfort in the belief that life for them could not be any worse than it has become under Frelimo, and that it could be better generally if the government changed. International assistance, on a grand scale, would be necessary; it is necessary now. The motivation for it, however, ought to be humanitarian, not assertively one-sided: Mozam-



ique's "Marxist-Leninist" experiment — an African version of Stalinism — failed, irreparably. South Africa and Renamo are central to this failure, but they alone do not explain it.

Years of sabotage of key installations by Renamo — oil pipelines, railways — have been devastating; how far was this reckless banditry by disparate groups? Desperation can take various forms in the remote jungles; some would call it guerilla warfare. Has Renamo's sabotage been wholly and simply the work of South Africa, or its agents?

Renamo at one time even seriously damaged the Caboras Bassa dam which provides South Africa with 10% of its electricity needs — and much needed foreign exchange for Mozambique. South Africa suffers from a siege mentality as much as Mozambique does, hence its anti-ANC raids. Renamo, arguably the most isolated force of all, its militants in rags, wearing captured military boots if lucky, operating in small invisible bands, probably egged on by famine and the resulting chaos, seems to have united and consolidated. Under the leadership of Alfonso Dhlakama and with a makeshift radio transmitter or two, it is apparently threatening to move in for the kill after more than a decade of sporadic fighting and insubordination to rule by Frelimo. Advancing from its long-time strongholds in the northern and central provinces, it is putting the capital, Maputo, at some risk in the far south of the country. There have been reports of shooting heard in the suburbs of Maputo.

Still more significantly, Renamo seems to have little effective support from South Africa: opposition to it comes increasingly from foreign troops imported for that purpose from neighbouring "Frontline" States. The dejection and humiliation of even the Mozambican national army must be taken as a reflection of the general all too evident despondency and demoralisation that has slowly but surely gripped ordinary Mozambicans in the face of many broken promises, heaped disappointments and failed expectations, forced compliance, lack of incentive and of initiative, unrelenting shortages and scarcities of just about everything, repression, insecurity and hopelessness. Of course all this was not Frelimo's fault — there were serious destabilisation factors, even acts of nature, which however have to be seen in context. Frelimo's chosen path to development may not be said to have succeeded in ever winning the people's wholehearted confidence: Party rule by a group of largely inexperienced but patronisingly arrogant and at times fierce politicians and military men alienated more and more people.

Frelimo's original struggle against colonialism has developed into a home-grown and increasingly savage fight against Frelimo's own dictatorship. Non-Frelimo reports from Mozambique continue to confirm this view. "From what one sees of Renamo," observed Peter Godwin of the London *Times* who was briefly kidnapped by Renamo last April, "Pretoria's support must be very low key or uncharacteristically inefficient."<sup>25</sup> Reporting recently from Moatize, Mozambique, Colin Nickerson quoted a Maputo-based Western diplomat as follows: "There is a tendency to blame everything that goes wrong here on Pretoria. The South African military may

be sympathetic to the rebels and may slip them a spare radio or two, but there is really no credible evidence of massive South African involvement."<sup>26</sup>

For its part the Mozambican regime (which tightly controls internal information sources) readily identifies anti-Communist or anti-Frelimo Mozambicans with South Africa. "We know these bandits are guided by South Africa's hands," a spokesman said; "so we say that every child killed by Renamo is a victim of apartheid."<sup>27</sup> Now South Africa, as we know, has many skeletons in its cupboard; clearly, so does Renamo. But it is sobering to remember that so, too, does Frelimo — a regime guilty of summary trials and executions, closing of churches and mosques, the flogging of dissidents, and other such deeds, over the years. As a liberation movement, it fought harshly enough in the past and its own adherents were called *bandidos* then — by the Portuguese.

Machel's successor, Joaquim Chissano, was Foreign Minister for the previous eleven years; a self-professed "Marxist-Leninist" like his late friend and mentor, he does not share with him the distinction of having been Commander-in-Chief of Frelimo's guerilla forces before coming to power. Chissano was probably the most talented member of Machel's team. If the going gets worse, rather than a fight to the finish it is just conceivable that Renamo and Frelimo could come to some mutual accommodation. The two sides have met before, under South African auspices; faced with a military stalemate on top of all the other woes facing the country now, it is not beyond Chissano, if he could carry his party with him, to attempt to work out a different survival kit with pragmatism rather than *de rigueur* thinking setting the scene. Given the tragic circumstances surrounding Mozambique's recent history, any such arrangement, while fraught with difficulties and compromises, must be the most one could hope for in the Mozambican people's interest.

In the first week of August, President Chissano went on his first visit to Moscow — an event barely mentioned here. At the same time, Ministerial meetings took place in Cape Town between Mozambique and South Africa, rejuvenating the Nkomati Accord.<sup>28</sup> The *Sixty Minutes* program on Mozambique repeated the unadulterated Frelimo version of the situation presented in films being shown around this country by Community Aid Abroad. Students wondered about the *Sixty Minutes* (Frelimo) account: "But why", they asked me, "does Mozambique have so many bandits?" Reports (which merely through internal evidence and an informed reading could impart a different message) were carried as usual in the Australian newspapers: "South African backed rebels . . .", "Local Mozambican officials believe . . .", "Zimbabwean officers agree . . .", *et cetera*.<sup>29</sup>

A good part of the answer to this riddle of back-bending one-sidedness must lie in the simple observation made by David Bonavia (who worked for *The Times* from both Moscow and Beijing) in his just published book *Seeing Red*: "Totalitarian societies," Bonavia writes,

attract a small number of people from democratic countries, who, with their eyes seemingly wide open to



the oppression and lies all around them, find mental tranquillity in these unlikely settings.<sup>30</sup>

## NOTES

1. See e.g. *The Weekend Australian*, 11-12 April 1987; this advertisement was placed by Community Aid Abroad.
2. Anon: "Mozambique: Victim of Apartheid", CAA Summer. 86 Supplement, pp. 1-4. "It is understandable that a society under siege should see every damaging act as at least potentially linked to the operations of the enemy." See Jim Gale: "Mozambique: A Case Study in Destabilisation", AFSAAP Conference paper, Monash Univ., Aug. 1983, p. 12. MNR stands for Mozambique National Resistance, better known as Renamo. Frelimo is the movement that took power at the time of Independence in 1975.
3. Michael Cecil, "Death in a Stalemate struggle", *The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 June 1987, p. 11.
4. Joseph Hanlon: *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire* (London, 1984), pp. 262-263.
5. Peter Youngusband, "Tutu Challenges South Africa to lay charges", *The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 June 1987, p. 11. See however "380 Mozambicans 'Massacred by S. African-backed rebels'", a Maputo report denied by Pretoria, *The Australian*, 23 July 1987, p. 8, and "Hayden accuses Pretoria" (*ibid.*, 27 July 1987, p. 3) of air drops of military equipment.
6. See Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Reascent Africa*, London, 1937, reprinted in 1968.
7. Peter Youngusband, *op. cit.*
8. Michael Cecil, *op. cit.*
9. Henry Frendo, "The Tutu-Ruxton Controversy: Australia, Blacks and Refugees", *Migration Action*, Vol. IX, No. 1, 1987, p. 27.
10. Henry Frendo, "Three claps and a Smile: The Repatriation of Zimbabwean Refugees from Mozambique", *UNHCR News*, Geneva, No. 2, June-July 1980, pp. 1-3.
11. Chris Erasmus, "Mozambique: frontline domino", *The Age*, 18 October 1986, p. 14.
12. On the horrors of Portuguese colonialism see Fr. John Paul's *Mozambique: Memoirs of a Revolution* (Penguin, 1975). Passing reference to Portugal's legacy is made in Anon: "Mozambique: Victim of Apartheid", *op. cit.*
13. Henry Frendo, "Zimbabwe: it-twelid ta'Nazzjon gdid", *In-Nazzjon*, Valletta, 21 August-2 September, 1980; "Twitwila minn Nofs L-Afrika", *Il-Mument*, Valletta, 6 April 1980, p. 6. For a sympathetic account of Frelimo's relative success, see Barry Munslow: *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins* (London, 1983).
14. See Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After*, (London, 1963), *The Challenge of Nationhood* (London, 1970).
15. On forced labour, free enterprise and the debate within Frelimo see Leroy Vail and Lendeg White: *Capitalism and Colonialism: A Study of Quelimane District* (London, 1980) esp. pp. 393-403.
16. Eduardo Mondlane: *The Struggle for Mozambique* (Penguin, 1969), p. 177.
17. Samora Machel: "Message at the Investiture of the Transitional Government, 20 Sept. 1974"; the full text is in T.H. Henriksen: *Mozambique: A History* (London, 1978), Appendix II, pp. 253-267.
18. See Manadou Dia, *The African Nations and World Solidarity*, (London, 1962).
19. See Luis Serapiao and Mohamed El-Khawas: *Mozambique in the Twentieth Century: From Colonialism to Independence* (Washington, 1979).
20. On Mozambique's military, trade and development links with the Soviet Union and Communist States see Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman: *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982* (Praeger, 1983), p. 181 sq. "As of 1982 more than 900 students were studying in East Germany and 1,200 were in Cuba, with whom Mozambique has developed an increasingly close relationship" (p. 182). Western aid was sometimes welcomed but otherwise relations have been ambivalent or hostile. This however changed significantly from 1983 onwards.
21. Zimbabwe now has 12,000 soldiers in Mozambique. See John Edlin: "Racial conflict tears a former 'model society'", *The Australian*, 16 July 1987, p. 8.
22. See "our Enemy is Internally Weak", in *Oromis Speaks*, Oromo Liberation Front, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1981, pp. 2-5. "... to the masses it is starkly evident that their life has worsened more than at any other time ..."; and "The Ethiopian Government Deliberately Starves the Oromo People", *ibid.*, pp. 10-14. "As the result of the Dergue's policies of repression, which have killed the enthusiasm and creative abilities of the masses, production in all the major economic sectors, particularly the agricultural sector, which employs over 80% of the population, and accounts for almost 60% of the GDP, has been falling ..." See also Katherine Teh: "Refugees tell of Ethiopian terror", *The Age*, 18 July 1987, p. 25. "You can not even drink the milk of your cow without the Government consenting because it is considered community property. I knew of a man who gave some of his cow's milk to his children and he was shot for it."
23. Place-names in Zimbabwe have been changed. See Chris Ashton, "Return to Zimbabwe", *Quadrant*, November 1986, pp. 90-93. But see also Paul Moorecraft, *A Short Thousand Years: The End of Rhodesia's Rebellion* (Salisbury, 1980).
24. See e.g. R-P Paringaux: "Malawi-the burden of hospitality", "Mozambique the repatriation train", and "Interview: Joaquim Chissano", *Refugees*, Geneva, No. 42, June 1987, pp. 20-29. According to the (usually inflated) UN estimates, there are at the time of writing as many as 300,000 Mozambican refugees or displaced persons in neighbouring countries (not including South Africa). Of these 200,000 are in Malawi. ("Mozambicans: The Exodus continues", *Ibid.*, p. 19).
25. Colin Nickerson: "Children perish as a nation fights", *The Weekend Australian*, 25-26 July 1987, p. 14.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Chris Erasmus: "Pretoria initiative eases strained relations with Mozambique", *The Age*, 8 Aug. 1987.
29. Paul Fauvet: "Pretoria-backed rebels create a bridge of sighs in Mozambique", *ibid.*, 6 Aug. 1987, p. 10.
30. Anton Graham: "Rich reds under the ruling beds", *The Australian*, 8-9 Aug. 1987. Related questions have inspired entire books: on "fellow travellers", "political pilgrims", the "united nations".

## Australian Association for Cultural Freedom (AACF)

For those wishing to join the above Association, please refer to the application form on page 13.



bique's "Marxist-Leninist" experiment — an African version of Stalinism — failed, irreparably. South Africa and Renamo are central to this failure, but they alone do not explain it.

Years of sabotage of key installations by Renamo — oil pipelines, railways — have been devastating; how far was this reckless banditry by disparate groups? Desperation can take various forms in the remote jungles; some would call it guerilla warfare. Has Renamo's sabotage been solely and simply the work of South Africa, or its agents?

Renamo at one time even seriously damaged the Caboras Bassa dam which provides South Africa with 10% of its electricity needs — and much needed foreign exchange for Mozambique. South Africa suffers from a siege mentality as much as Mozambique does, hence its anti-ANC raids. Renamo, arguably the most isolated force of all, its militants in rags, wearing captured military boots if lucky, operating in small invisible bands, probably egged on by famine and the resulting chaos, seems to have united and consolidated. Under the leadership of Alfonso Dhlakama and with a makeshift radio transmitter or two, it is apparently threatening to move in for the kill after more than a decade of sporadic fighting and insubordination to rule by Frelimo. Advancing from its long-time strongholds in the northern and central provinces, it is putting the capital, Maputo, at some risk in the far south of the country. There have been reports of shooting heard in the suburbs of Maputo.

Still more significantly, Renamo seems to have little effective support from South Africa: opposition to it comes increasingly from foreign troops imported for that purpose from neighbouring "Frontline" States. The dejection and humiliation of even the Mozambican national army must be taken as a reflection of the general all too evident despondency and demoralisation that has slowly but surely gripped ordinary Mozambicans in the face of many broken promises, heaped disappointments and failed expectations, forced compliance, lack of incentive and of initiative, unrelenting shortages and scarcities of just about everything, repression, insecurity and hopelessness. Of course all this was not Frelimo's fault — there were serious destabilisation factors, even acts of nature, which however have to be seen in context. Frelimo's chosen path to development may not be said to have succeeded in ever winning the people's wholehearted confidence: Party rule by a group of largely inexperienced but patronisingly arrogant and at times fierce politicians and military men alienated more and more people.

Frelimo's original struggle against colonialism has developed into a home-grown and increasingly savage fight against Frelimo's own dictatorship. Non-Frelimo reports from Mozambique continue to confirm this view. "From what one sees of Renamo," observed Peter Godwin of the London *Times* who was briefly kidnapped by Renamo last April, "Pretoria's support must be very low key or uncharacteristically inefficient."<sup>25</sup> Reporting recently from Moatize, Mozambique, Colin Nickerson quoted a Maputo-based Western diplomat as follows: "There is a tendency to blame everything that goes wrong here on Pretoria. The South African military may

be sympathetic to the rebels and may slip them a spare radio or two, but there is really no credible evidence of massive South African involvement."<sup>26</sup>

For its part the Mozambican regime (which tightly controls internal information sources) readily identifies anti-Communist or anti-Frelimo Mozambicans with South Africa. "We know these bandits are guided by South Africa's hands," a spokesman said; "so we say that every child killed by Renamo is a victim of apartheid."<sup>27</sup> Now South Africa, as we know, has many skeletons in its cupboard; clearly, so does Renamo. But it is sobering to remember that so, too, does Frelimo — a regime guilty of summary trials and executions, closing of churches and mosques, the flogging of dissidents, and other such deeds, over the years. As a liberation movement, it fought harshly enough in the past and its own adherents were called *bandidos* then — by the Portuguese.

Machel's successor, Joaquim Chissano, was Foreign Minister for the previous eleven years; a self-professed "Marxist-Leninist" like his late friend and mentor, he does not share with him the distinction of having been Commander-in-Chief of Frelimo's guerilla forces before coming to power. Chissano was probably the most talented member of Machel's team. If the going gets worse, rather than a fight to the finish it is just conceivable that Renamo and Frelimo could come to some mutual accommodation. The two sides have met before, under South African auspices; faced with a military stalemate on top of all the other woes facing the country now, it is not beyond Chissano, if he could carry his party with him, to attempt to work out a different survival kit with pragmatism rather than *de rigueur* thinking setting the scene. Given the tragic circumstances surrounding Mozambique's recent history, any such arrangement, while fraught with difficulties and compromises, must be the most one could hope for in the Mozambican people's interest.

In the first week of August, President Chissano went on his first visit to Moscow — an event barely mentioned here. At the same time, Ministerial meetings took place in Cape Town between Mozambique and South Africa, rejuvenating the Nkomati Accord.<sup>28</sup> The *Sixty Minutes* program on Mozambique repeated the unadulterated Frelimo version of the situation presented in films being shown around this country by Community Aid Abroad. Students wondered about the *Sixty Minutes* (Frelimo) account: "But why", they asked me, "does Mozambique have so many bandits?" Reports (which merely through internal evidence and an informed reading could impart a different message) were carried as usual in the Australian newspapers: "South African backed rebels ...", "Local Mozambican officials believe ...", "Zimbabwean officers agree ...", *et cetera*.<sup>29</sup>

A good part of the answer to this riddle of back-bending one-sidedness must lie in the simple observation made by David Bonavia (who worked for *The Times* from both Moscow and Beijing) in his just published book *Seeing Red*: "Totalitarian societies," Bonavia writes,

attract a small number of people from democratic countries, who, with their eyes seemingly wide open to



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