



## Machel of Mozambique

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## Machel of Mozambique

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**MACHEL OF MOZAMBIQUE.**

Iain Christie

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## PREFACE

I first met Samora Machel in Dar es Salaam in 1971 and very soon afterwards decided I would like to write his life story. There seemed to be no hurry, since events were making that story more fascinating by the day.

In 1975 my family and I moved from Tanzania to Mozambique where I was able to continue monitoring Machel's life. From time to time I met him and we talked. But the years dragged on and still there was no book.

In 1986 I asked Fernando Honwana, President Machel's special assistant, to inform the President that I would like to write his official biography. I would need many hours of discussion with the President, access to unpublished documents, and so on. Fernando, a dear friend who taught me a great deal about the subject of this book, died with Machel in the plane crash on 19 October, 1986, before he could give me the reply.

Who knows what that reply would have been? Would Machel have said he didn't want books about him published during his lifetime? Would he have said that he would rather his biography be written by a Mozambican? I have no idea. I decided to go ahead with a book about him, simply because I felt I was in a unique position to provide an English language commentary on the life of a great African revolutionary.

What I have written is my own appraisal, not an official biography with the government's seal of approval. Machel of Mozambique is a personal view and neither the Machel family nor the Mozambican authorities bear any responsibility for its content. With one exception, they have not been consulted at an official level. The exception is that Machel's widow, Graca, kindly gave me permission to reproduce her letter to Winnie and Nelson Mandela. It is contained in the introduction.

This book is a preliminary effort to place the life of Samora Machel in its broader historical and political context. As such it emphasizes his own development and the critical role he played in the Mozambican revolution. It does not purport to be a study of Mozambique - in either the colonial or post-colonial periods. The themes emphasized in this study either helped to shape Samora Machel's life or demonstrate how he contributed to the shaping of southern African history. Thus there is some detail about his childhood and youth and substantial discussion of his role as a military leader. But some issues which ought to be analysed in a more general history of

on the emancipation of women, attempts to reverse the urban influx and Mozambique's definition of a non-aligned foreign policy.

*Machel of Mozambique* is not a neutral book. Political journalists always make judgements about the people they are writing about, even if these judgements are not always explicit in the articles they write day-by-day. This book reflects my judgements and is intended as a starting point for debate on a plethora of issues surrounding Samora Machel, a man who helped change the face of southern Africa.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those who helped and advised me in various ways in writing this book. Alpheus Manghezi, Jose Mota Lopes and David Hedges of Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, and the journalist Carlos Cardoso, provided useful comment and historical and cultural background. Lemos Macuacua and the other nurses who were colleagues of Machel in his years as a nurse gave me their valuable time and talked frankly about their departed friend. Aurelio Manave and Joao Ferreira delved into their memories for recollections of the same period. Several authors of books about southern Africa have helped me over the years with information and ideas which have gone into this volume. They include Allen and Barbara Isaacman, Barry Munslow, David Martin, Phyllis Johnson and Joseph Hanlon. Ali Mafudh, who hopefully will someday write his own memoirs, provided fascinating insights into Machel the soldier.

But my main thanks must go to Samora Machel himself, and to all my friends in the leadership and rank and file of Frelimo who have spoken to me, formally or informally, since I came to live in Africa in 1970. They made this book possible. Finally, I must thank Frances Christie, my wife, who did invaluable research into some areas of the story of Machel, and made the book more accurate than it would otherwise have been. This said, everything in *Machel of Mozambique* is my own responsibility.

Iain Christie,  
Maputo, April 1987.

ZAIRE

ZAMBIA

INDIAN OCEAN

*Machel of Mozambique*

#### ORTHOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Names of people and places in Mozambique present orthographical problems. The Gaza emperor who I refer to as Ngungunyana is mentioned in other books as Gungunhana or Ngununhana. I refer to the town of Chai-Chai while the official map says Xai-Xai. Many of the problems are related to the differences between Portuguese and English orthography. For example, in Portuguese the English sound 'y' (as in Ngungunyana) is represented by the letter 'h'. For an English speaking reader, Xai-Xai looks as though it might be a southern African click

sound. It is not. With this and other names I have tried to use English spelling approximate to the actual sound. An exception is the island of Inhaca (pronounced Inyaka), which I left in its Portuguese spelling simply because it is so well known in the southern African region. The official post-independence name of the dam on the Zambezi river is Cahora Bassa. Before independence the Portuguese called it Cabora Bassa. In pre-independence references I have used the Portuguese version.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Iain Christie was born in 1943 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He worked for British newspapers from 1958 until 1970, then moved to Tanzania where he worked as a journalist until 1975, specializing in African liberation movement affairs. Since 1975 he has lived and worked in Mozambique, first with the national news agency and then with Radio Mozambique, as head of the English language external service. He has been the Maputo correspondent of Reuters news agency since 1980 and has contributed many articles on Mozambican affairs to African newspapers and specialist publications such as Africa Contemporary Record, Afrique-Asie, Africa Report and Africa. He is married with two children.

#### INTRODUCTION

On the morning of 20 October 1986, Mozambicans went to work as usual in their fields and factories, their schools, hospitals, ports, railway yards and offices. In the streets of Maputo, people flipped through the daily Noticias newspaper and found nothing of great importance. It was a warm, balmy Monday and business would go on as usual.

Few people had heard a report on a South African radio station that morning, saying that a Mozambican plane had crashed in South Africa. It was not known whether the plane was civilian or military, the radio said. There were no details of who was on board.

President Samora Machel had gone to Zambia on Sunday for a summit meeting with the presidents of Zambia, Angola and Zaire. But it was to have been a one day meeting and the President must surely have come back on Sunday night. As a journalist, however, I had to check. Telephone calls to a couple of media offices established that two local reporters who had been booked to accompany Machel to Zambia were sitting at their desks in Maputo. Clearly, the presidential flight had returned safely.

Or so it seemed, until a further check established that, for different reasons, the two reporters had not in fact travelled to Zambia. The alarm bells started ringing. They rang louder when I arrived for work at Radio Mozambique. Parked outside was the official car of Marcelino dos Santos, the country's elder statesman and a member of the Political Bureau of the Frelimo Party. This was very unusual. I rushed to the phone and called the President's office, asking to speak to his private secretary, Muradali Mamadhussen, who had gone on the trip to Zambia. The reply: 'He hasn't come back from Zambia yet.'

By now, Radio Mozambique was playing solemn music. Shortly after nine, dos Santos came on the air. The President's plane, he said, should have arrived at Maputo airport at about half past nine on Sunday night. When it failed to arrive,

search operations were launched and continued throughout the night and early hours of the morning. At about 10 minutes to seven, information was received from the South African authorities stating that a Mozambican plane travelling from Lusaka had crashed in Natal province, in South African territory. Still there were no details: nothing about who had died, who had survived. The normal hurly-burly of our newsroom had been transformed into sepulchral melancholy in the space of three minutes. But was Samora really dead? Dos Santos had not actually said that. We rushed to the main door of the radio station to watch him leaving, accompanied by the Information Minister, Teodato Hunguana. The

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anguish in their faces was discouraging for those who thought there was still a chance that the President might have survived.

That day the Security Minister, Colonel Sergio Vieira, led a delegation to the crash scene, which was not in Natal province, as the South Africans had initially reported, but hundreds of kilometres away at Mbuzini in the Transvaal. They returned with a list of the dead: one of them was Marshal Samora Moises Machel, President of the People's Republic of Mozambique.

That night, after next of kin had been informed, dos Santos returned to the studios of Radio Mozambique to give the grim news to the nation. The President was dead.

The South Africans had given the news some hours earlier, but their statement was either deliberately inaccurate or they did not have accurate information about the identity of the dead and the survivors. A journalist they said had survived was in fact dead. A presidential bodyguard, mischievously described as the head of the Ministry of Defence, was said to have perished while in fact he had survived with minor injuries. As any reporter knows, the effect of such announcements can cause terrible distress to relatives. Haste is a poor substitute for accuracy. The South African government's Bureau of Information certainly knows that but it was serving notice that truth, in this case, was less important than Pretoria's state interests.

In the flurry of assertions that emerged from South Africa in the days following the crash there was a clearly discernible attempt to absolve the authorities in Pretoria of all blame.

The plane had crashed in a thunderstorm. The Soviet pilot had been drinking. The Soviet-built Tupolev 134A had obsolete navigational equipment. The pilot was in hospital in South Africa and was being careful about what he said to journalists, in case of repercussions from the Soviet authorities.

These assertions have one thing in common. They were all later proved to be untrue.

While such mendacity is by no means proof that South Africa deliberately caused the crash, an independent jury might well ask: why lie if you have nothing to hide?

Somebody in southern Africa does have something to hide.

A few hours after the news of the crash was announced Paul Fauvet of the Mozambique News Agency took a telephone call from a correspondent of the

United Press International news agency in Johannesburg. In the course of the conversation, the UPI man said his agency had received a call from a man claiming to be a South African air-force officer. The caller had said a decoy beacon had been set up to lure Machel's plane off course. In a media world which thrives on tales of

#### Introduction

anonymous telephone callers claiming responsibility for every hijack and every bomb outrage, the silence that surrounded this particular call was positively deafening.

The plane was, in fact, following a beacon - a very high frequency Omni-directional Radio Range (VOR) signal - which the crew thought was the one at Maputo airport. It was not. If it had been, the plane would have arrived safely at its destination. Instead, at 21 minutes and 39 seconds past nine on the night of 19 October 1986, flight Charlie Nine Charlie Alfa Alfa ploughed into a hillside at Mbusini in South Africa's Transvaal Province, close to the Mozambican border. Samora Machel and 34 other people on board were killed.

An enquiry was held, involving the Mozambicans, as owners of the plane, the Soviets, as the manufacturers, and the South Africans, because the crash took place on their territory. Their report, issued after study of the plane's black box flight recorders and Maputo control tower recordings, made it clear that the plane was homing in on the wrong VOR, but a VOR broadcasting on exactly the same frequency as Maputo's.

Twelve days before the crash the South African Defence Minister, Magnus Malan, had blamed Mozambique for a landmine explosion in which six South African soldiers were injured in the Kangwane bantustan. 'If President Machel chooses landmines, South Africa will react accordingly,' he said.

On 29 October, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia cited this threat as one of several pieces of circumstantial evidence indicating South African involvement in the crash. Speaking at a meeting in Maputo of the leaders of the six southern African Frontline States, President Kaunda said this evidence was sufficient 'for us to hold South Africa directly responsible'.

Faced with accusations like this from African leaders, the South African government did what every man charged with murder would like to do. It set up its own trial and appointed its own judge, Cecil Margo.

The Mozambican government repeatedly objected to South Africa going ahead with its own enquiry, demanding instead that the tripartite investigation carried out by Mozambican, Soviet and South African aviation experts should continue, to ascertain exactly what radio signal the plane had been following.

The South Africans rejected this demand and the Margo commission continued its work until 9 July 1987, when it published a report. Not surprisingly, the report cleared the South Africans and blamed errors and negligence by the crew of the plane. But what about the decoy beacon? Why did the electronic instru-

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ments direct the plane into a hillside at Mbuzini instead of onto a runway at Maputo?

The 'enquiry' in South Africa had an answer for that: the crew must have locked on to the VOR at Matsapa airport in Swaziland by mistake. It is a fact that staff at Matsapa say their VOR was switched on at that time, even though the airport itself was closed.

But charts showing the exact flight path of Charlie Nine Alpha Alpha as well as the radials of the Matsapa VOR demonstrate that at no time did the crew carry out any manoeuvre to establish the aircraft on a track to match any of these radials. In other words, the plane was not flying towards Matsapa at any time in the flight. The charts show clearly that the plane was on a course that would have taken it into hills in Swaziland far to the east of Matsapa if it had not hit the hillside at Mbuzini. And if somehow it missed the hills in Swaziland it would have reached mountains in South Africa. These are facts. Another fact is that it took the South African regime more than nine hours to inform Maputo of the disaster. By their own admission, the South Africans were collecting documents from the plane during that time. They also made incisions in the necks of some of the people on board. Why? At the time of writing, answers are still awaited.

A statement on the day after the crash by South Africa's State President, P.W. Botha, expressing 'deep regret and profound shock' was not well received in Africa. The South African Communist Party summed up the attitude of a broad range of African opinions: 'No amount of crocodile tears from Pretoria can minimize the fact that the racist South African government saw in Comrade Samora a major foe and obstacle to their aims.'

Indeed, the depth and profundity of Mr Botha's regret and shock did not prevent his police force from firing tear gas at Witwatersrand University students who held a memorial service for Machel on the Thursday after the crash.

The real grief of the people of South Africa was expressed at services like that one at Wits. These were no crocodile tears. There were many other demonstrations of love and respect for Machel in South Africa. One stands out above all others. It emanates from two people who have come to symbolize the South African freedom struggle - Nelson and Winnie Mandela.

The Mandelas, Nelson from his cell at Pollsmoor prison and Winnie from her Soweto home, asked for permission to leave South Africa temporarily to attend Machel's funeral. The South African authorities refused, but the couple sent a telex message to Maputo and it was handed to Machel's widow, Graga. The message read:

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Never before have we made application to leave South Africa.

Today we believed that our place was to be with you physically.

Each one of us is imprisoned in different jails. We were

prevented from being present with you today to share your sorrow, to weep with you, to lighten your grief, to hold you very close.

Our grief for Comrade Samora is so deep that it tears away at

the heart. Throughout the night we have kept vigil with you.  
Throughout today we shall mourn with you for a mighty soldier,  
a courageous son, a noble statesman.

We must believe that his death will strengthen both your and  
our resolve to be finally free. For you, victory over immoral surrogate bandits. For  
us, victory over oppression. Our struggle has  
always been linked and we shall be victorious together.

A caring world is with you. It cannot and will not fail you. With  
their support and the legendary resolve of the people of Mozambique you can  
only emerge as victors.

AMANDLA!

Grara Simbine, a university graduate who joined Frelimo's armed struggle for  
independence, married Samora Machel a few months after independence in 1975.  
She was the republic's first Education Minister and still held that post at the time  
of her husband's death. Shattered by the blow, she nevertheless summoned up the  
strength to write a deeply moving reply to the Mandelas, a reply which is at once  
an epitaph for Machel, a pledge of solidarity with the people of South Africa and  
a statement of conviction that Machel's cause will triumph.

My dear sister Winnie Mandela,  
My dear brother Nelson Mandela,

In a garden there is always one flower more beautiful than the others. Your letter  
is that flower in the great garden of messages  
of comfort I have received.

On behalf of my children and my whole family I would like to  
thank you for your letter, which was, to me, a comradesly  
embrace to soothe my aching heart.

How can I express my admiration for you both? Your own suffering has been  
long and terrible but still you took the trouble to console me in my time of grief.

From within your vast prison you  
brought a ray of light in my hour of darkness.

To you, in particular, Winnie, I express my sincere admiration.  
My husband was murdered in just one day, in just one fateful

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moment. Your husband is being murdered every day, every hour. My sister, thank  
you for having the strength to console me.

One day we shall meet, either along the path of struggle or on the magnificent  
road to freedom, and then, looking into your eyes, I shall be able to express my  
full gratitude.

Dear Winnie,

Dear Nelson,

Samora, your brother, fell on the battlefield. The world will never see Mandela  
and Samora in triumphant embrace on that glorious day when the flag of freedom  
is hoisted in South Africa.

Your brother has left us on his last great journey, a journey that began in Mbuzini. Who would have believed it? Who would even have guessed that that little village would become the focus of unity between the peoples of our two countries? Every day, so many men and women die for freedom in South Africa. Now Samora's blood is mixed with the blood of those heroes. He gave his mind and his action to the freedom of South Africa. Who would have imagined that he would also give his life?

He did not complete his mission. But we will.

With his sweat, courage, intelligence and solidarity he made a decisive contribution to the unity of the peoples of Southern Africa. There are millions of us. In South Africa alone we are 23 million men and women in struggle. It is inevitable that the star of freedom will shine down on us so that Samora's blood will not have been shed in vain. This blood is the mortar that cements the indestructible unity of our peoples. The free flag of peace shall fly in the place where Samora fell. His blood will be avenged by the fighters of Umkhonto we Sizwe, whose heroic sacrifices will bring freedom to the people of South Africa. Samora no longer belonged only to the people of Mozambique. Samora and Mandela have the same stature, the same destiny; they are noble sons of Africa and of all mankind. That is why South African mothers wept along with Mozambican mothers over the physical disappearance of Samora. They felt they had lost their own son. We mothers know it hurts to lose a beloved son. It is as though the womb that generates life has been emptied.

But when we lose a son in struggle we at least have the consolation of knowing that he died for a just cause. We, Mozambican mothers, offer Samora to the South African

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people so that the guerrilla that he was, the victorious commander that he was, will live on in every Umkhonto we Sizwe fighter and hasten the coming of the day of jubilation. The end of apartheid will be the greatest tribute to the memory of Samora.

Dear Winnie,

My husband's death has left me with a great emptiness. The solitude I feel is immense. Only by continuing the struggle, contributing to the completion of his work, will my life have meaning.

I was still only a child, Winnie, when you first raised your fist against apartheid. Since then you have never wavered. I wish I had your strength and courage. In this painful hour I look for inspiration in your example.

Those who have locked up your husband are the same who killed mine. They think that by cutting down the tallest trees they can destroy the forest. But history will never forget the names of Samora Machel and Nelson Mandela. The just cause of these two men will triumph, for the greater glory of Africa and the dignity of mankind.

The paths of freedom are long and tortuous. But victory will

come one day. It is for this victory that Nelson Mandela is making his sacrifice.  
For this victory Samora Machel gave his  
life.

Here I end. Fighters never say goodbye.

AMANDLA!

A LUTA CONTINUA!

## Part One

### THE REBEL AND HIS CAUSE

We wanted to understand the phenomena of trade, buying and selling, and my father used to explain this to us through stories about domination... All the Africans in our region were boxed in by the colonial administration.  
Samora Machel

#### 1. Scaring the crocodile (1933-1963)

The youngster grazing his father's cattle in the Limpopo valley must have been distracted by something for he did what an African peasant boy must never do. He let a calf wander off and the first he knew about it was when a friend shouted to him: 'Come quick! One of your calves is being attacked by a crocodile!'

In all probability the first thought that went through the boy's head was the hiding he would get from his father for losing a calf. He ran as fast as he could to the river and there, sure enough, was the croc with its teeth sunk into the calf's leg. Without further ado, the boy jumped into the river, shouting and screaming and hitting the water with his stick. Fortunately for him, the crocodile did not call his bluff, but let go of the calf and made off down the river. The boy then pulled the calf out of the water by its tail, treated its wounds with medicinal herbs and later received, instead of a hiding, praise for his courage.

This story about the young Samora Machel comes from his cousin Paulo and is now part of the lore surrounding the late leader's personality. Those who have never herded cattle in crocodile country might dismiss the yarn as a 'St George and the dragon' piece of propaganda designed to foster a personality cult. But for Africans who grew up in cattle-herding families the story is perfectly plausible and Samora's reaction not so much brave - presumably he kept a safe distance - as shrewd and the correct thing to do under the circumstances.

The story is interesting only because Samora Machel went on to spend most of his life fighting crocodiles of a different species, sometimes getting the better of the beast and sometimes getting badly mauled, as we shall see later.

The story of Samora Moises Machel begins on 29 September 1933, at Chilembene, in what is now the Chokwe district of Gaza Province. On that day he was born into a family prosperous by Mozambican standards of the time. This prosperity was the result of hard work, thrift and good farmland. Samora's father was Mandande Moises Machel. In 1912, like countless other young Tsongas of Gaza then and now, he had gone to work in the South African mines. It was back-breaking and dangerous work, but the migrant labour system dominated the

southern Mozambican economy and able-bodied young men had little choice but to head for the mines.

The young Mandande saved enough of his earnings to buy his first plough in the early 1920s. He bought cattle, then more ploughs. By 1940 the Machels had four ploughs, hundreds of head of cattle and were farming on 30 hectares of the rich, loamy soil on the banks of

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the Limpopo river that made Chilembene one of the most prosperous and densely populated areas of southern Mozambique.

In September 1983, eight months before his death, Mandande recalled Samora as a child. The reminiscences were very much those of the proud father, and were perhaps coloured by hindsight but they give us a glimpse of the early days of the man who was to become an African folk hero.

He was my third child. We brought him up and he was always obedient, like his brothers. He listened to what we taught him and he showed us respect ... When he was a boy he was a good, hard worker. He used to look after the cattle and work on the farm. He

took the plough, along with me and his brothers...

Samora Machel emerged from the tradition of resistance against Portuguese colonial rule. His paternal grandfather was a fighter in the resistance war led by the Gaza Emperor Ngungunyana, who was captured (or surrendered; accounts differ) and sent into exile in 1895. Ngungunyana's army Chief of Staff, a general called Maguiguane Khosa, kept up the fight for another two years before being defeated too.

The Gaza Empire had been established earlier in the nineteenth century by Ngunis, led by Soshangane, who had come from what is now South Africa. Soshangane was able to establish his authority over the Tsonga and other peoples in the area, and Ngungunyana inherited an empire of considerable size which directly challenged Portuguese efforts to achieve something more than nominal control of southern Mozambique.

In the wars of the 1890s, Maguiguane Khosa was able to field an army of some 20 000 men, including Tsonga officers like Samora Machel's grandfather.

Memories of the resistance war in Gaza are handed down orally and half a century later Samora would listen to the old folks recalling grandpa Machel and the scars on his body from the Portuguese bullets. But, as he recalled many years later, the stories were not only about heroics: 'My father used to tell us about the brutality of the (Portuguese) invasion, the inhumanity of the invasion, the way they treated people who were taken prisoner.'

When Samora Machel was growing up in Chilembene there was still and there is still today a large and prominent symbol of the Gaza resistance. It is an old and very splendid tree, about an hour's walk

#### Scaring the crocodile

from the house where Samora was brought up. Its generous expanse of leaves and branches made it a natural choice for Maguiguane as a place to receive visitors,

and the local people say that this is where he held court. It was also a useful spot for this century's Chilembene herdboys to take some shade while watching the family cattle, and to muse about the past, the present and the future. They say the young Samora could often be seen under that tree; and if the glories of the Gaza Empire were among his musings then so might have been the peculiarities of Portuguese colonialism in his own times. Since this subject appears to have had a significant influence on the later development of his political ideas, it is worth quoting in some detail from Machel's reminiscences in a 1974 discussion with the Canadian scholar John Saul. He began by describing the region where he was born as rich and fertile, where the people were peasants but were not poor, and went on:

Some were even rich. Certain people, considered very important, owned tractors and ploughs, were cattle breeders and produced a variety of cereals...

We wanted to understand the phenomena of trade, buying and selling, and my father used to explain this to us through stories about domination. It wasn't the people who produced the crops who fixed the prices. It wasn't they who chose who they should sell to. It was the same in the whole of Mozambique but I am talking specifically about this region, where agriculture is welldeveloped with a lot of mechanisation.

All the Africans in our region were boxed in by the colonial administration. It was the colonial administration that recruited the buyers. All the cereals produced by Africans were bought by traders recruited by the administrators. The traders wanted to buy but didn't want to go direct to the producers. They wanted to make contact through the administration.

The administrators fixed the prices at what they called the fair the Cereals Fair. In other words, the Cereals Fair was a means of exploiting the labour of the African peasant.. In this production and exchange of agricultural products lay the very essence of things, because we were obliged to sell our products to the traders at prices fixed by the administration.

For example, we would produce and sell one kilo of beans at three and a half escudos while the European farmers produced and sold at five escudos a kilo. And the day after we had sold our crops we would have to buy these very same products at six

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escudos - double the price we ourselves received.

If on occasion, by special agreement, we managed to sell direct to a caterer or trader (for example, at four escudos a kilo) we were compelled to receive payment half in cash and half in goods...

Moreover we couldn't become traders. 'Natives' couldn't enter into any form of commerce. They could only be producers for European traders.

African cows are not registered and cannot bear their owners's brand. This enabled the European farmers to steal African cattle. At times cattle belonging to 'natives' got mixed up with the European-owned cattle and, when this happened,

the Europeans immediately branded them likewise with sheep and goats - and thus these animals automatically belonged to those Europeans.

Then there were the crops compulsorily imposed by the administration the cotton system. The cultivation of cotton is of a kind that prevents any other activity. It's a product that requires a lot of attention and consequently resulted in hunger in our region. Many people died of starvation because of cotton.

We lived through all of this, and our fathers told us about it to make us understand that this is the nature of foreign domination. And this meant telling us about Portuguese penetration and the resistance to brutality and cruelty.

And also in this region, the men are forced to go to South Africa. They are sold to the South African mines. And while a man is in South Africa his wife is taken to work for six months on the roads and in the traders' building activities, and in the fields of the European farmers.

SAUL: The sale of workers to South Africa must have affected your own family.

MACHEL: I lost many relatives in South Africa. Some returned with tuberculosis, without limbs, mutilated, blind, completely useless, and without indemnity. Others died in South Africa, including my eldest brother. When he died in the South African mines my father received a note from the administration to say that he should go and collect £40 indemnity. But they said that they couldn't hand over the whole amount all at once. He could only have £10 and the remaining £30 would stay in the cash box at the administration and he should go and request small amounts as and when he needed them. SAUL: And in this region there occurs to me another story of exploitation, that happened in 1950, the exploitation of the land.

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MACHEL: This is the biggest drama...All those who were farmers, today their ploughs and tractors are useless. All those who had good houses built of stone were expelled to make way for the settlers and forced to live in just one room. Our land was expropriated and designated for settlers. Today there's no African farmer in my region. All the land was handed over to settlers and without compensation ...The Africans were put on arid lands that don't produce anything, and the regions handed over to the settlers are irrigated by the River Limpopo.<sup>1</sup>

In 1942, when Samora was nine, a chance arose for him to go to school. His father decided that the chance should be seized so he told Samora to put down the hoe and get ready to start his studies.

It was an awkward time for a boy from a staunch Protestant family to be starting school because it was just after the Portuguese had handed over what they called 'native education' to the Roman Catholic Church. The Machels were Free Methodists with no great desire to send their son to a Catholic school, but it was that or nothing.

This imposition, in exchange for Vatican support for Antonio Salazar's fascist state, angered many young Mozambicans. In the case of Samora Machel the anger stemmed not so much from wounded Protestant piety there is no indication that

he was ever a great believer - but from a perception that the aim was, in his words, 'not to educate but to teach doctrine...', the main concern of the Mission was to indoctrinate, to make us Roman Catholics.! Samora went to a rural school at Souguene on the Limpopo riverside to study up to the highest level possible at such a school - what is called in Portuguese 'terceira classe', which literally means 'third grade'. The sense of it is: third year of primary education. And that's what it means, in fact, in post-independence Mozambique. But that is not what it meant in practice then. With much of a student's time taken up with religious education, completion of three years 'rudimentary education' took six or more years. 'There was grade IA, grade 1B, lower second grade, advanced second grade, lower third grade and elementary third grade,' Machel recalled some three decades after he began school. So he would have been 14 or 15 when he graduated to Sao Paulo de Massano Mission, to study for grade four qualifications, which an African needed to have a chance of training for a job requiring more than manual labour. This experience seems only to have deepened his loathing of the education system then in force. As he himself put it:

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Our parents had to supply ten bags of maize and five bags of beans of each type. Over and above this we had to grow rice in the mission.., and we also grew potatoes and bananas. In other words we produced and we paid to produce, because every year our parents had to pay our board at the mission. We slept on mats and the covers were brought by our fathers. We got absolutely nothing from the mission apart from the teacher. We ate stiff maize porridge with a mash made of groundnuts, water and salt.

And if some pupils didn't leave with destroyed livers or tuberculosis it was only because of the strength of human resistance.

And the maize was carefully measured out with a special piece of wood that indicated how many grammes. I don't know how much it was but they certainly knew.

It is in this period of Samora Machel's life the end of the 1940s that we find the first recorded signs of the budding politician in him. Old schoolfriends say he was known as 'The Rebel', that he ran away from school in protest at one point.

Curiously, though, he knew when to compromise. A few days before the fourth grade exams in 1950, the priests presented him with a choice; either undergo a Roman Catholic baptism or you don't sit the exams. He swallowed the pill and sat the exams. And passed. Then came another test. The Portuguese colonial regime wanted educated Africans on the labour market as soon as they had completed fourth grade. 'We're not here to train doctors,' as one Portuguese ideologue of the time put it.

The young Machel, however, wanted to continue his studies. That's fine, said the priests, you can go to a seminary and train for the priesthood. There was no other option. It was either seminary or labour market, despite exam marks and high general academic performance which should have entitled him to secondary school level education. The baptism by blackmail and priesthood-or-nothing schooling were not weapons drawn by a vindictive priest specifically for use

against Samora Machel. That was how an African who managed to gain access to school in colonial Mozambique was treated. Many of Machel's contemporaries who, like him, took part in the struggle for independence, had similar experiences. Machel later recalled his reaction to the seminary proposal:  
I said no, I won't go. I want to have secondary school education.  
That's normal. I don't want this business of the seminary. Then

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they went to speak to the administrator and blocked everything and so I didn't manage to get into secondary school. I went to Lourenço Marques (the capital, now Maputo) but that didn't work either. The padres stopped me.

He did, however, manage to get into the nursing profession, one of the most elevated positions an African could aspire to in those days. First he had to return to Gaza, to get his documentation together at the provincial capital, Chai-Chai. While there, in 1951, he worked as an orderly at the local hospital.

In 1952, he began a nursing course in Lourenço Marques, where he was attached to the Miguel Bombarda Hospital, the city's main infirmary.

The black nursing students were housed in grim conditions, in a barracks-like dormitory with poor sanitation. Samora's fellow students recall that there were three long rows of narrow beds in a single room. More than 75 nursing students slept in the room, which was in the same building as a hospital ward housing psychiatric patients. Between the two rooms there was a board partition which went only part way to the ceiling. David Muteto, who was the warden in charge of the dormitory when Samora lived there, says with a chuckle: 'There was often a lot of noise at night, when the mental patients became agitated, and sometimes they would clamber over the partition and into the dormitory. They didn't do that every night, of course. And the students were very understanding.'

In 1987 I asked a group of five of Samora's surviving student colleagues how they passed the evenings in that dormitory, 'We studied,' they replied in unison. All day they were either in classes or working in the hospital. It was a 60-hour working week.

The student nurses stuck pictures on the wall behind their beds. No political pictures, of course, since that would have been a sure-fire way of being expelled. Samora's pictures were of boxing heroes of that time and the preceding years - men like Joe Louis, Jack Dempsey, Jersey Joe Walcott and Archie Moore. He used to keep the students enthralled with enthused, blow-by-blow descriptions of the greatest fights. He did gymnastics every morning to keep himself in trim and, although he never took part in the fight game himself, his fascination for the sport earned him the nickname 'Jack Dempsey' in the hostel. Aurelio Manave, a nursing student of the time who became a lifelong friend of the future President, recalls that Samora was one of the students who discussed the current international political issues late into

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the night. Nkrumah's Ghana, Chairman Mao and the Chinese revolution, the Korean war and Nasser's Egypt. Heady days, filled with temptation for young Mozambicans with nationalist ideas. Formative days for the young Machel. Although he got on well with his fellow students, Samora had a problem with some of the Portuguese medical bosses. Basically the problem was that he talked back, which an African was not supposed to do. 'He used to argue with them whenever he noticed an injustice,' said one old friend from student days. He was still 'The Rebel'. At the end of the two year course that kind of behaviour earned him a failure mark. His old colleagues insist this failure was nothing to do with his work and study performance, which was excellent. But he had to repeat a year. It was his great pleasure to spite the bosses and come out second top of the class in 1954.

Machel became a full time nurse in Lourenço Marques, and in 1956 he was posted to the small hospital on Inhaca island across the bay from the capital. There he settled down in an informal marriage with Sorita Tchaikomo, a girl from the locally prominent Nyaka clan. Sorita bore him two children - Joscelina and Edelson - before he moved to Lourenço Marques in 1958. In the years until 1963, which was to be a watershed in Machel's life, the couple had two more children, Olivia and Ntewane.

#### Hospital politics

Back in the capital Samora set up home in 1958 in a wooden house with a corrugated iron roof in the suburb of Mafalala. He went to work at the Miguel Bombarda Hospital, but by this time he was aiming to move up in the world of nursing. He wanted to take an advanced nursing course at what the Portuguese described as 'European' level. To take this course an African needed some years of nursing experience which Samora had, and secondary schooling up to second grade, which he did not have. He did not even have first grade. He began taking private night classes, which cost him 350 escudos a month out of a salary of 1 300 escudos.

His teacher was Dr Adalberto Azevedo, who conducted classes for Africans in the garage of his father's home. After lessons Samora and his fellow students would count their money and, if there was enough, might stop at a bar on the way home. The Cervejaia Angola was the favourite for a beer and a chat.

But there was no time for riotous living. It was work all day and study all evening. Samora completed the two-year secondary education

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course in one year. He then began the advanced nursing course, while continuing his work at the Miguel Bombarda Hospital. The job there brought Machel into contact with crude forms of discrimination. Shortly after independence he explained:

In the hospital were various categories or classes reflecting the social and racial structure of colonial-capitalism, ranging from the white settler to the 'assimilated' black and even to the 'native'...there was a total lack of concern for the poor patient, which was manifested in the way the doctor or nurse looked at him, in the absence of hygiene in the wards, in licence and indiscipline among the workers.

Our people were used in the hospital as guinea pigs for new drugs and certain operations, which if successful could later be applied to the bourgeoisie in the private clinics and consultancies...Apart from some very cursory examination the patient was treated in accordance with his economic means. 2

Machel needed no special powers of observation to see the injustice inherent in the colonial medical system. Almost all blacks and poor whites shipped out from Portugal experienced it in their day to day life. There were more private physicians in one street in Lourenco Marques than doctors in the whole of the rest of the country. Said Machel: 'Eminent doctors and university professors are brought in to treat the capitalist's cold, to cure the judge's constipation, while nearby children are dying, people are dying, because they did not have the money to call a doctor.' 3

What was exceptional about Machel the nurse was that he emerged from his hospital experience with a serious analysis of the effects of the Portuguese colonial-capitalist system on the hospital.

The structures of the Miguel Bombarda Hospital were like all structures of the colonial apparatus. First, they were rigid, individualist and bureaucratic. Second, they blocked initiative and prevented the participation of workers in hospital life - power was absolute and centralised. Third, they alienated the workers, making them irresponsible, and where there is irresponsibility there is also childishness, with disastrous consequences. Fourth, they gave favourable openings for dishonest and corrupt elements

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who used the sickness of others as a gold mine to enrich themselves. These were the structures that allowed the hospital staff to work at the same time in private consultancies and clinics, where they picked up a mercenary attitude...

Machel presented this analytical critique of a decadent hospital in 1976, 13 years after he stopped working there. It no doubt benefits from hindsight but it also retains the freshness of personal experience and observation. Such clear recollection strongly suggests that in the early 1960s Samora Machel's thinking had already gone beyond simple anti-colonialism. The system he saw in operation at the hospital was run by the Portuguese but could have been run by a Mozambican elite after independence. 'The way tasks and duties were distributed, the working methods employed, all this alienated the worker from his duty towards the patients and gradually gave him a bourgeois mentality and an increasingly overt desire to copy the coloniser.' 5 (Italics added)

The inspiration of Mondlane

The development of Samora Machel's political thought in the 1950s and early 1960s cannot be seen in isolation from the growth of Mozambican nationalism of the times. This was an extremely disparate and complex process which is beyond the scope of this book to describe in detail.<sup>6</sup> An important factor to bear in mind is that the independence movement in the Portuguese colonies was never legal as it sometimes was in British and French colonies.

The Mozambican nationalist movement developed in at least three different areas. Exile organisations were formed in neighbouring countries; students and other intellectuals in Europe took part in the creation of an anti-colonial movement embracing all the Portuguese colonies; and people inside Mozambique operated through social, cultural, religious, co-operative and sports associations and clandestine political groups.

This is not to play down the importance of other forms of resistance against colonial oppression, such as labour action, but this was rarely an expression of nationalism.

Machel was involved in the complexity and frustrations of the Lourenço Marques nationalist political scene. For years it seemed that all avenues towards independence were blocked. The mere assertion that Mozambique was a country and not a

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Portuguese province was considered treason. The heavy repression of the Portuguese state made it very difficult for blacks to come together in a group, outside the classroom, dormitory or workplace, for anything more provocative than a football match.

The regime also did everything it could to prevent mingling between races and classes as this might encourage the idea of a Mozambican nation. Thus when the mulatto offspring of white fathers and black mothers tried to assert their African-ness by working with blacks in the *Associação Africana*, a cultural organization, the authorities manipulated the creation of a breakaway group for blacks only.

When the new group was penetrated by educated nationalists who started giving classes for their less privileged compatriots, the secret police closed it down.

When white anti-fascists won control of the *Associação dos Naturais de Moçambique*, a club for whites born in Mozambique, they opened it to people of all races and tried to start a night school. Permission was refused and the club itself was banned in 1961, remaining so for some years.

Apartheid was never the official policy in Portuguese East Africa, as Mozambique was called for some time in the colonial period, but that was merely a question of terminology. Colour bar, apartheid, call it what you will: this was the system in force. It prevailed in all the classic ways of South Africa. The Portuguese colonial regime's propaganda machine spread the story that there was no racial discrimination in Portugal's African colonies of Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, the Cape Verde islands and São Tomé e Príncipe. But the colonial boast of a Lusitanian multiracial society was a myth. Skin colour was a determining factor in where one lived, where one worked, what kind of education a child received, and the discrimination extended to leisure activities and sport. Machel, for example, as a boxing fan, would have noticed that blacks were not allowed to box against whites in Mozambique.

As a black man in colonial Mozambique, however, the least of Machel's concerns was discrimination in the boxing ring. What he rebelled against was the entire system of forced labour, repression of national consciousness and the institutionalized humiliation of Africans.

He became involved in the clandestine political activity of the times: the secret nocturnal meetings of men and women who sought to spread a Mozambican nationalist consciousness, a prerequisite for the removal of the colonial power from their land. They had little idea of how this goal was to be achieved, however. Inside Mozambique, it was hard to go beyond the 'subversion' of the

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spoken word. In the neighbouring countries, Mozambican exile groups were divided by ethnic and regional differences and seemed to be stuck in the rut of thinking that Portugal would eventually succumb to the force of anti-colonial argument, giving up without a fight. In 1961, however, the young nationalists found new hope with the arrival in Lourenco Marques of a man who appeared to have the qualities necessary to unite the movement and give it direction. His name was Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane. A brilliant young man, he had gone to study in South Africa in the 1940s. After his return to Mozambique in 1949 he had helped to form NESAM, the Nucleus of African Secondary Students of Mozambique, a proto-nationalist cultural and social group.

He was arrested and questioned about his activities and was later sent by the authorities to study in Portugal. They considered that he 'had been infected with a communist virus, which might affect others' in Mozambique. Harassed by the secret police in Portugal, he left for the United States where he completed his university studies in sociology and anthropology, then took a post as a research officer in the Trusteeship department of the United Nations (UN). He took leave from the UN to pay a three-month visit to Mozambique in 1961, and was able to travel widely under the protection of his position as an international civil servant. In Lourenco Marques he was a guest of the Swiss Protestant Mission, which arranged accommodation for him. His status made it impossible for the colonial authorities to stop him from holding meetings at home with young Mozambicans who, like him, were dreaming of liberation. Mondlane had a vision of a united nationalist movement which would lead his country out of the colonial night and into the dawn of freedom. Unity, leadership, the forms of struggle - these were the burning issues discussed in Mondlane's house.

Mondlane's clarity of thought, his commitment and determination, were an inspiration to the young men and women who debated with him long into the night, willingly risking infection from his 'communist virus'.

One man who treasured the memory of these meetings until the end of his days was a nurse at the Miguel Bombarda Hospital, Samora Moises Machel. He recognized that the Mozambican people had at last found a leader. No-one was more overjoyed than Machel when the Mozambique Liberation Front, FRELIMO, was formed in Dar es Salaam the following year under Mondlane's leadership. From then on, for Samora Machel, the only question was how and when he would join the new movement.

The same question was on the minds of the men who had been stand-

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ing in the shadows, across the road from Mondlane's house, checking everyone who entered. They went under the grandiose title of the International Police for the Defence of the State (PIDE) which meant, in fact, the Portuguese political police.

Lemos Macuacua, one of Samora's nursing colleagues, says the PIDE were on Samora's tail constantly after the meetings with Mondlane. In 1962, Samora was pulled in twice for interrogation.

Victor Hugo to the rescue

Through the clandestine networks, a nationalist would know some comrades, but only a few. When the PIDE began operating in Mozambique they started infiltrating the networks. It was hard to know who was a friend and who was an enemy.

The PIDE began arresting nationalists in 1961. Even some whites were thrown in jail for supporting the cause of freedom. At the beginning, whites who considered themselves Mozambicans and were for independence under majority rule found themselves in a particularly vulnerable position. They had trusted Portuguese supporters of the democrat Humberto Delgado, and had spoken freely with them at the end of the 1950s. That was a mistake. Many of these Portuguese 'democrats' wanted a solution to the problem within the colonial system and they betrayed 'Africanized' whites to the authorities.

One of the young whites who was picked up by the PIDE in 1961 was a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company, Joao Ferreira. He spent the period between May and October in detention. Ferreira had made a conscious decision to move with the Mozambican freedom movement rather than the Portuguese 'democrats'.

Ferreira recalls that in the early 1960s he would go on business to the Miguel Bombarda Hospital and among the wards he visited was the 13th, where Samora worked. It was a ward for the poor where new drugs were tried out, an unpalatable situation for both men but one which permitted important contact. That contact was never more important than the day in 1963 when Ferreira passed through a ward where he spotted a patient he and Samora knew, a man called Victor Hugo. The French author's namesake caught Ferreira's eye and indicated he wanted to speak to him. The conversation was brief. The patient had been visited by the PIDE shortly after his admission to hospital. In the course of interrogation it had transpired that the PIDE officials were under the impression they were interviewing a quite different person - Samora Machel. Victor Hugo drew the conclusion that Samora had been betrayed by

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an infiltrator as a man planning to join Frelimo. Hugo suggested that Ferreira look for their mutual friend and tip him off. Ferreira found Samora in Ward 13, got him out the back door and, in the privacy of the back stairs, gave him the bad news.

Samora did not wait for the inevitable arrest. He asked for 11 days leave, which he was due, and this was granted. Arrangements were made with a friendly Portuguese doctor, Lomba Viana, to look after Samora's family and on 4 March

he left Lourenro Marques. He took the ferry across to Catembe, then headed for Matutuine district, from where he crossed into Swaziland. Then it was a dash across South Africa to Botswana, from where he would try to arrange transport to Tanzania, to join the new, united, liberation movement, Frelimo. A few days after Samora left, the PIDE descended on the Hospital and took Lemos Macuacua in for questioning at the secret police headquarters, the notorious Vila Algarve. They wanted to know where Machel was. On holiday, said Macuacua, trying not to bat an eyelid, although he knew perfectly well where his friend had gone. He put on a good show of innocence and was released.

Ferreira was not far behind Machel. A few weeks later he and an officer in the Portuguese Air Force, Jacinto Veloso, took a plane and flew it to Tanzania where they, too, joined Frelimo. Both became Ministers in independent Mozambique. Aurelio Manave also joined Frelimo and became a provincial governor after independence. Ferreira, who was Agriculture Minister at the time of Samora's death, recalls a conversation they had years after independence in which they talked about their back-stair meeting at the hospital. Samora had been on the upper stair, Ferreira on the lower. Under the rules of racial etiquette in those days it should have been the other way round and in the post-independent conversation Samora joked: 'You see, Ferreira, even then I was your chief.' Ferreira also remembers an interesting point about Samora's reaction to the tip off that the PIDE was on his tail as a result of an infiltrator's betrayal. 'In every revolution there are traitors,' said Samora.

'Revolution,' mused Ferreira. 'Even in 1963 he was talking about revolution.'

Notes

1. A transcript of Machel's discussion with John Saul in Dar es Salaam was given to this author by Frelimo in 1974, as background for a profile which later appeared in

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the American magazine Africa Report. Until the time of Machel's death, this discussibn remained the only detailed story of his childhood told in his own words and freely available for publication. All Machel's reminiscences of childhood quoted in this chapter come from that discussion. Before the document was handed to me, Machel had been given the opportunity to check it and make alterations. It is an interesting tribute to his modesty that the only changes he had made were in scoring

out the word 'I' and inserting 'we'.

2. Speech in Maputo Central Hospital, an amalgamation of the Miguel Bombarda Hospital and the University Hospital, on 6 October, 1976.

3. Quoted in Mozaabiue Revolution, No 58 (Jan - March 1974) p 13.

4. Maputo Central Hospital speech, op. cit.

5. Ibid.

6. Details of this process can be found in Barry Munslow's Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origin#, Harlow, Longman, 1983, and in Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, by Allen and Barbara Isaacman, Boulder, Colorado,

Westview Press, 1983. Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1985.

7. Mondlane, Eduardo, *The Struggle for Independence in Mozambique*, mimeo, 1963, p 7.

8. Officially Frelimo the liberation movement should be capitalized: FRELIMO. The upper and lower case Frelimo was only adopted when it became the Frelimo Party.

However for ease of reading I have used Frelimo throughout this book.

## 2. The birth of Frelimo

On 25 June 1962, a group of Mozambicans held a meeting in Dar es Salaam, the capital of what was then called Tanganyika and later, when united with Zanzibar, became Tanzania. It was a time of dramatic changes in Africa. Many colonies were becoming independent in the great wave of decolonization that had begun in the late fifties.

The significance of what was going on was clear to people of vision on both the Left and Right in world politics. In 1959, the first issue of a new South African magazine, the *African Communist*, had declared: 'Africa is in revolt. From east to west, from north to south, the people of this great continent are arising to claim their birthright that has been stolen. Africans are uniting in powerful national liberation movements. Africa is on the march for freedom.'

The British Conservative statesman, Harold Macmillan (later Lord Stockton), was speaking of the 'wind of change' sweeping through Africa.

But things were not quite the same in Mozambique and the other Portuguese colonies. On the one hand, the Portuguese remained unmoved by the wind of change and stood firm in Africa, refusing to decolonize. On the other hand, the people of Mozambique had not united in a powerful national liberation movement. But the situation changed dramatically on 25 June 1962, at the meeting of Mozambicans in Dar es Salaam. There they created the national movement, the Mozambique Liberation Front, the Frente de Libertagao de Mogambique (FRELIMO).

The Mozambicans who took part in the founding conference had come from different parts of Mozambique and from many walks of life. Nearly all of them had been involved in some way in resistance against colonial rule and had experienced the customary reprisals. There had been the massacre at Mueda in Cabo Delgado Province in 1960, when 600 Mozambicans were murdered by the colonial security forces whilst staging a peaceful protest. There had been sporadic strikes in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, which often ended in mass arrests and deportations. Clergy and laity of the Protestant church, which had opposed the colonial regime's restrictions on education for blacks, were frequently in trouble with the authorities. Mozambicans involved in these and many other expressions of resistance felt the time had come for strong action to be taken through the agency of a united national liberation movement. This was what was created at the meeting in Dar es Salaam. Among those gathered there were representatives of groups of

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Mozambicans exiled in neighbouring countries. There were three main exiled parties at the time. One was the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (Udenamo), which had been formed in Southern Rhodesia in 1960. Another was the Mozambique African National Union (Manu), formed in 1961 from groups of Mozambican workers living in Tanganyika and Kenya. The third, and least important, was the National Union for Mozambican Independence (Unami), which was formed in Malawi.

But the key figure at the meeting belonged to none of these organizations. He was Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, an intellectual who emerged from a separate stream of Mozambican nationalist politics. His moral and political stature would later have a profound influence on the political and intellectual development of Samora Machel.

Mondlane had established contacts with all the exiled liberation parties. But as he later wrote in his book, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, he had refused to join any one of them, preferring to campaign strongly for unity. In this he had the support of President Julius Nyerere and other African leaders and it was this view that prevailed in 1962. The groups which came together at the June meeting agreed to abandon their separate identities and merged to form the new Mozambique Liberation Front, Frelimo.

Another important figure in the early days of Frelimo was Marcelino dos Santos, an engineer, sociologist and poet who had studied in Portugal and France along with other prominent nationalists from the Portuguese colonies. When Frelimo held its first congress he was General Secretary of the Conference of Nationalist Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP).<sup>1</sup>

Dos Santos had played a key role in a debate with exiled opponents of the Portuguese dictator Salazar. These Portuguese held the view that the colonial question could be resolved only after the fall of fascism in Portugal, and that all should pull together towards this goal, while dos Santos and the other Africans were arguing for autonomy for the anticolonial movements. Dos Santos and his friends won the day, although a similar issue arose after the Portuguese coup in 1974, when some of the returning Portuguese anti-fascist intellectuals were unenthusiastic about immediate independence for the colonies. Mondlane, dos Santos and the exile groups were joined at the Dar es Salaam meeting by representatives of another very important section of Mozambican nationalism. These were people who had left the country more recently and who had a more up-to-date understanding of the internal situation.

They included student militants such as Joaquim Chissano, who had been a NESAM activist in Lourenço Marques and was now President

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of the National Union of Mozambican Students (UNEMO), an organization set up by former NESAM members who had gone to study abroad - in Chissano's case, Paris.

Frelimo's first congress, held in September 1962, was attended by 80 delegates and 500 observers. Mondlane was elected the movement's first President. But this was only the beginning, and a long and stormy road lay ahead before the goal of true national unity could be achieved. Samora Machel, who was not to arrive in Dar es Salaam until the following year, would play an important part in this. The attitudes which divided the different parties, and factions within them, did not disappear overnight after the creation of Frelimo. There were those who saw the struggle from a tribalist or regionalist point of view and could not quite grasp the implications of a Front which encompassed all the Mozambicans. There were differences of opinion about how to define the enemy. Some had a simple answer: the white man. Others, like Mondlane, Chissano and dos Santos had come into contact with whites from many lands who were helping the anti-colonial struggle so had a different view. Their anti-racial position led them logically to the conclusion that there could be such a person as a white Mozambican. Some disagreed.

All these problems, in addition to differences over what strategy to use in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism, were to be expected in the country's first real national movement. The only question was who would come out on top. Would it be the tribalists, regionalists and racists, or those whose vision of an independent, united Mozambique transcended such notions?

The first congress of Frelimo, held three months after the foundation of the movement, was the first victory of the unifying forces. These forces, led by Mondlane, included the young people who had come out recently from Mozambique after taking part in the clandestine struggle against colonialism. And not only were they opposed to tribal, regional and racial positions, their ideas on how to struggle were very different from those of the older men who had lived in exile in East Africa and Malawi. These exiles were unprepared for anything except the peaceful type of struggle that had brought independence to the countries in which they lived. The first congress, however, adopted as part of its programme the declaration that all means of struggle would be used; and that meant very clearly that war was coming unless the Portuguese colonial regime changed its tune.

After the first congress, some of the founder members of Frelimo abandoned the movement, unable to accept the line. But they were a minority. Soon, it seemed that when any two of them got together in any part of the world, they would announce the creation of a new

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Mozambican party.

But the viability of Frelimo inside Mozambique became evident before long and few people paid any attention to the exiled dissidents. The real problem was that some of the dissidents had stayed inside Frelimo - and that was to lead to a crisis six years later. On one side of the gulf would be the dissidents. Leading the troops on the other side would be Eduardo Mondlane, Marcelino dos Santos, Chissano and their unlikely ally, a young firebrand from Chilembene called Samora Machel.

Note

1. Documentoe Base da Prelime, Maputo, 1977, p 3.

Samora Machel the nurse: Inhaca island hospital round 1957.

Eduardo Mondlane with Machel and other Erelimo commanders in Cabo Delgado, February 1968. Photo: Anders Johansson  
Frelimo Central Committee football team at Nachingwea camp, Tanzania, in 1968. Left to right: Alberto Chipande, Joaquim Chissano, Olimpio Vaz, non-cent'al corrunittee member (name now lost) given a place in the team because they needed a goalie, Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel (non player), Uria Sinango, Alberto Sithole, Eduardo Coloma, Francisco Manyanga. Photo: Frelimo Archive.

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With the atuthor in the liberated areas of Cabo Delgado province in 1973.

With Chinese journalists in 1971 at a captured Portuguese military post, Cabo Delgado.

Photo: Arturo Torohate.

With captured Portuguese soldiers during the independence war.

Allies with Kaunda and Nyerere at Nachingwea training camp at the end of the independence war. Marcelino dos Santos is left of Machel. Photo: Ricardo Rangel.

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Maniage to Graqa Simbine on 7 Septeinber 1975. With the newly-weds are Graga's mother and Sanora'sfather. Photo: Ricardo Rangel. Tempo  
Machel shows how it's done. This picture was taken at a commando training camp in the 1980's, when he was Prident of the Republic, but still a 7soldier and a training officer at heart.

SP hoto: Sergio Santimano. AIM

The maestro of the mass ral. Photo: Kok Nam

With the people. A bodyguard who tries to stop the handshakes finds Machel's left hand firnly on his wrist, telling hin to get out of the way. Photo: Kok Nam. Tempo.

Alone with his thoughts at the end of the day Machel returns to his official residence at Ponta Vermelha in Maputo. Photo: Kok Nam.

3. Hitching a lift to war (1963 - 1964)

The veteran South African freedom fighter Joe Slovo had a special and unique relationship with Samora Machel.

Slovo's place in the history books is guaranteed simply by what he has done for the struggle against apartheid in his own country. He became Chief of Staff of the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) and Chairman of the South African Communist Party (SACP). The leaders of the apartheid regime could never accept that it was possible for a normal white South African to identify so totally with the black majority, so Joe Slovo was singled out for special vilification in the subservient mass media. The result was that Slovo's name began to appear on banners as one of the heroes of the anti-apartheid struggle, a fair characterization.

Apart from his services to the South African people's cause, however, Slovo was involved in an apparently small but, as it turned out, rather significant event in the Mozambican liberation struggle.

Slovo spoke of this at a seminar in Tanzania in 1983, about the life and times of J. B. Marks, the late South African communist leader. Slovo was recounting the time in 1963 when he and 'JB' left South Africa to go into exile. They got to Francistown in Botswana, where a Dakota aircraft chartered by the ANC was waiting to take them and 26 other ANC militants to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, then the main rear base for southern African liberation movements.

Joe Slovo recalled:

A short while before our departing a thin, energetic young man asked if it was possible to get a seat on our plane as he wanted to join the FRELIMO forces. JB immediately took the decision that one of our cadres should be taken off the plane to make room for the FRELIMO recruit. The recruit who travelled with us (and he remembers it very well and tells the story today) is Comrade President Samora Machel.

Joe Slovo maintained warm relations with Machel till his death and was a mourner at the funeral.

In taking Samora Machel to Tanzania, Joe Slovo and J.B. Marks had unwittingly played a dramatic role in the struggle against colonialism in southern Africa. The thin, energetic young man was to prove political

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dynamite. 'At that time we were not aware of what valuable cargo we were carrying,' Slovo remarked at Machel's funeral.

The 'valuable cargo' arrived in Dar es Salaam one day in April 1963, according to Raimundo Pachinuapa, another Frelimo recruit who went through the Tanganyika conduit. Pachinuapa, from Cabo Delgado in the north, was to become a top guerrilla commander and a close friend of Machel. In a 1983 interview Pachinuapa - by then a major-general

- said that Machel joined him and many other Mozambican exiles in Ilala, a working class suburb of the Tanganyikan capital. 'Within a few days we realized that in Samora we were dealing with a leader,' he said. 1

Pachinuapa recalls that Eduardo Mondlane used to meet each new group of recruits to discuss with them what part they would play in the struggle. Machel had no doubt about what he wanted to do - military training. Samora himself

spoke 10 years later of this moment, noting that choices for the volunteers included military, educational or medical training.

'I chose the military programme. I was certain that the Portuguese would not give us independence and that without armed struggle the Portuguese would never agree to establish a dialogue with us,' he said. This chimed with the views of Mondlane, who had been using his considerable diplomatic skills to try to convince the Portuguese to talk. By the first congress of Frelimo in September 1962, he had virtually given up. 'Although determined to do everything in our power to try to gain independence by peaceful means, we were already convinced at this stage that a war would be necessary,' Mondlane wrote.<sup>2</sup> People like Mondlane and Machel had come to the conclusion that the Portuguese colonial situation was not like the English and French counterparts. As Mondlane put it: The character of the government in Portugal itself makes a peaceful solution inherently unlikely. Within Portugal the government has promoted neither sound economic growth nor social well-being, and has gained little international respect. The possession of colonies has helped to conceal these failures; the colonies contribute to the economy; they add to Portugal's consequence in the world, particularly the world of finance; they have provided a national myth of empire which helps discourage any grumbling by a fundamentally dissatisfied population. The government knows how ill it can afford to lose the colonies.<sup>3</sup>

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Mondlane accepted Machel as a trainee fighter, a decision which would not have been taken lightly. Samora was an experienced nurse and the more obvious choice would have been to send him for further medical training abroad under a Frelimo-sponsored scholarship.

But the army it was and before the end of 1963 Machel was in Algeria, as leader of the second group to go there for military training. The first group had gone in January.

According to Pachinuapa the second group had been there only a few days when a debate on basic issues took place at a meeting called by Machel. While Machel argued that the struggle was against the Portuguese colonial system and not against non-blacks, some others, led by a man called Timo Armando, said the trainee guerrillas should prepare to fight against the whites and mulattos in Mozambique. 'It was very tough,' says Pachinuapa.

Tough indeed. A Frelimo militant once told me that Samora revealed in a 1970s conversation that the argument in the barracks over how to define the enemy came to blows on one occasion. Machel had become so exasperated with a defender of the 'racial conflict' line that he challenged him to a boxing match - and gave him a sound drubbing.

The race issue would return again and again in Machel's career as a soldier and a politician, and was a point on which he was never prepared to compromise.

When the recruits finished their basic training in Algeria they returned to Tanzania, where a guerrilla camp had been set up at Bagamoyo near Dar es Salaam. Pachinuapa says, however: 'The contacts with the city did not create a

favourable situation for people who were being trained. And at that time the PIDE were sending a lot of agents to Dar es Salaam. So it wasn't good to be very close to the city.'

The Frelimo leadership and the Tanzanian government arranged for the guerrillas to move to a new site, at Kongwa, in the central Tanzanian region of Dodoma. Machel, who was in charge of most of the guerrillas, supported this and made his way with his men to Kongwa in April 1964. Machel's adversary on the racial issue, Timo Armando, opposed him on this question too, and refused to move into the Tanzanian hinterland, far from the bright lights and bars of Dar es Salaam. As far as Pachinuapa remembers, Timo set up an exile group and was later killed in a dispute with his own followers.

Machel's men may have questioned their leader's wisdom when they arrived at Kongwa. 'There were three houses there. The rest was bare land. It had absolutely nothing,' says Pachinuapa. Machel was appointed head of the Kongwa training camp, a job which set him on his way to becoming a new type of African leader: the guerrilla commander whose strengths and weaknesses in leadership

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were forged in the complexity of bush war.

He immediately set his stamp on Kongwa, in the process of resolving a very simple issue which literally provided food for thought. Pachinuapa recalls:

When we arrived in Kongwa, on the very first day we wanted to eat. So the question cropped up; who is going to cook? This was a problem because we were all graduates. We called ourselves graduates because we had done our military training. But somebody had to lead the way. Samora Machel was the first person to

be cook. He decided to be first, to set an example.

From that day on each of the senior men at the camp took a turn in the kitchen. Conditions at the camp, an abandoned farm, were not conducive to getting the armed struggle off to an early start. The men had to make mud bricks to build their own houses and had to produce much of their own food. Perhaps more serious for the would-be guerrillas was the lack of war material in the early days at Kongwa. To train his men in the military arts, Machel handed out sticks and asked the startled freedom fighters to imagine they were holding rifles. After that triumph of mind over matter, as Pachinuapa recalls, the men were taught how explosives worked - with the sandy soil of Dodoma as a somewhat improbable substitute for gunpowder.

Achieving this flight of imagination, though, may not have been Machel's greatest concern at the time, since many of the men at the camp had already been trained in Algeria or elsewhere. Pachinuapa identifies two of the more profound problems which it was the Kongwa camp's function to solve. First was the very fact that 'there were those who trained in Algeria and those who had come from various socialist countries... We couldn't have disparity of ideas based on the training and education we had received in different friendly countries... In Kongwa we found out the importance of having a single line of thought.'

Second, was the problem of building a truly national guerrilla army. In a country as riddled with tribalism and regionalism as Mozambique then was, it must have been heartening for the anti-tribalist southerner Machel to find himself shoulder-to-shoulder with Makonde speakers from the north, like Pachinuapa, and men from the centre of the country. 'We had to have a place where we could organize in terms of national unity,' says Pachinuapa. 'This place was the army, starting with the training centres. It was in the army that national unity was forged,

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that tribe, race and region were killed. But it's not the army itself that achieves those goals. It depends on the way the army is structured and led. And in fact there was a man who worked arduously to see that our army served these objectives...the head of our camps during the armed struggle...Samora Machel.' Arms did arrive at Kongwa and were soon moving south on their way to Mozambique, but the Frelimo arsenal was not exactly awesome. Supplies for the first attack, at Chai in Cabo Delgado Province, consisted of six submachine-guns, six rifles and four automatic pistols.'

There were four target provinces initially; Cabo Delgado and Niassa across the border from Tanzania; Zambezia bordering on Malawi; and Tete, which has borders with Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The infiltration of men and supplies into Cabo Delgado and Niassa was facilitated by the fact that Julius Nyerere's government was giving full support to Frelimo. But there were problems with Zambezia and Tete provinces. Zambia was still consolidating its independence from Britain, Zimbabwe was ruled by the Rhodesian settlers and the government of Dr Banda in Malawi was collaborating with the Portuguese.

During a return visit to Kongwa just before Mozambique's independence in 1975, Machel told journalists how he and his men smuggled ammunition into Tete and Zambezia in 1964. To get weapons through Malawi, he said, they hid them in mattresses. He added: 'We mixed ammunition in with maize that we produced here so that we could get through and supply Zambezia and Tete. We used to buy fish in Moudoro to mix with ammunition and grenades so that we could pass through Malawi.'<sup>5</sup>

Thus began a long and bitter relationship with Hastings Banda's government. Frelimo was forced to close its Tete and Zambezia war fronts within a few months, largely because of Malawian government hostility. One of the first Frelimo guerrillas to operate in Zambezia Province, Alfredo Wassira, recalls that when they were forced to flee back into Malawi, the PIDE, in collaboration with the Malawi government, imprisoned and killed many of them.<sup>6</sup>

Machel himself made a brief reference to this issue at a meeting in Maputo with executives of the Mozambican media just eight days before he was killed. He said that he had made two trips to Malawi, in 1965 and 1968, the first with the aim of trying to obtain the release of detained Mozambican nationalists before they could be handed over to the PIDE.<sup>7</sup> Although he did not go into detail about the second visit, well-informed sources say this was connected to the activities of a

Mozambican group which, unlike Frelimo, had been given sanctuary in Malawi. This group, Unido Nacional Africana de Rombezia (Rombezia

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African National Union) (UNAR), wanted to incorporate a huge chunk of north-eastern Mozambique into Malawi, through negotiations with the Portuguese. Despite the problems with Malawi, however, Mozambique's war for national independence moved on apace after the first shots were fired on 25 September 1964. For four years the fighting was confined to the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, which were not the most important parts of the country in either an economic or a geo-strategic sense, but which provided the forge for the creation of a political and military force which would hold together for many years of bitter struggle.

#### Notes

1. Pachinuapa, Raimundo, Noticiea, Maputo, September 26 and 27 1983.
2. Mondlane, Eduardo, The Struggle for Mozambique, Harmondsworth, 1969, p 123
3. Idem.
4. Ibid., p 14.
5. 'Kongwa: Berqo da RevoluqIo', Tempo, Maputo, 15 June 1975.
6. Munslow, Barry, Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins, London, Penguin, 1983, p 100.
7. The author was present at this meeting which took place at Casa Lichinga in Maputo on 11 October 1986.

#### Part Two

##### THE CHAMELEON ENEMY

We, accused of being imperialists, when we merely remain in territories that have always been known to be Portuguese? Colonialists when we have so generously given our blood and our resources to serve the interests of the overseas provinces? Marcello Caetano, Prime Minister of Portugal, May 1971.

When Nyasaland is free I will not rest until the greater part of Mozambique is joined to it. We are all the same people.

Hastings Banda, President of the Malawi Congress Party, May 1960.

I'll take their country (Mozambique) from them yet.

Cecil Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and Founder of Southern Rhodesia, October 1891.

#### 4. Into battle (1964 - 1967)

Samora Machel was at war for the last 22 years of his life. Indeed, he shares with General Giap of Vietnam and Chu Teh of China the distinction of being one of the few men this century to have commanded an army for two decades of almost uninterrupted war. It is not a distinction that Machel sought. He was a soldier whose goal was peace for his people.

Why, then, was he always at war and who were his enemies?

Mozambique's armed struggle for national independence was a finite 10-year event with a beginning and an ending, but it would be misleading to present it as a war with no connection to the post-independence conflict. A certain brand of simplistic journalism, principally, but not only, in the West, tends to present the view that Frelimo has waged four separate conflicts: first against the Portuguese colonial regime, then, after independence, against the Rhodesian regime, the South African authorities and a Mozambican anti-communist rebel movement. In this scenario, Machel was all right when fighting for Mozambique's independence but got into trouble afterwards by meddling in his neighbour's affairs and bringing on a civil war through bad government. The same scenario has the Malawian factor entering the picture towards the end of Machel's life as yet another example of a problem he himself created.

In reality, the Portuguese fascists, South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi and Mozambican quislings consistently worked against Frelimo's struggle for Mozambican independence from the 1960s onwards. After independence in 1975, these forces maintained their alliance. Looking back over the years of war one can see Machel's Mozambican army as a constant, while the various, anti-Frelimo forces pop in and out of the picture like substitutes at an American football match. Continuing the same analogy, however, it is important to remember that these anti-Frelimo forces are all members of the same team. Machel's 22 years of war can be seen as one prolonged military struggle against a chameleon enemy rather than a series of separate wars. The forces of Portuguese colonial-fascism, the South African military, the Rhodesian army and security, Mozambican hirelings and Hastings Banda's Malawian government - all appear as more or less permanent adversaries to Machel in his fight against colonial and racist rule in southern Africa. And lurking in the background always were rich and powerful forces in the West. When the first shots of the national independence struggle rang out on 25 September 1964, Machel did not appear to be particularly well-

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equipped for the stormy road ahead. His military experience was limited to a few months in training camps in Algeria and Tanzania, his formal education was slight, he had no experience at all of cut-and-thrust political activity within an established party and, unlike some of the early Frelimo leaders, he was unfamiliar with the intrigue and manoeuvring of exile politics.

But, as we have seen, he had already made his mark on the young Frelimo recruits in Algeria, Bagamoyo and Kongwa. He had also established firm friendships with some of the men who would stand by him in the leadership years of the future - men like Eduardo Mondlane's secretary, Joaquim Chissano and the daring young field commander Alberto Chipande. And he had won the respect of Eduardo Mondlane.

The campaign began with guerrilla attacks in Cabo Delgado Province. The most celebrated of these was an operation directed against a Portuguese administrative post in the small town of Chai. Several attacks took place about that time but the only one that was properly chronicled was the Chai operation. All the available evidence indicates that the first shots of the war were fired at Chai.

Alberto Chipande, who led a dozen men in this attack, wrote in his report: The guard came and stationed himself at the door of the house of the chefe do posto, seated on a chair. He was white. I approached the guard to attack him. My shot would be the signal to the other comrades to attack. The attack took place at 21 hours. When he heard the shots, the chefe do posto... opened the door and came out - he was shot and killed. Apart from him, six other Portuguese were killed in the first attack. The explanation given by the Portuguese authorities was 'death by misadventure'. We withdrew.

On the following day we were pursued by some troops - but by that time we were far away, and they failed to find us. 1

Not exactly Pearl Harbour. Some foreign observers were distinctly cynical about Frelimo's chances of achieving anything at all. One influential British newspaper said in November that year:

The big offensive is clearly yet to come. The fear among the Western Powers is that when it is launched, it will collapse so dismally that the Communist Powers already involved in its preparation with arms and advisers will feel obliged to move in and save

the day and the face of militant African anti-colonialism. 2

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Eduardo Mondlane, however, later wrote that 25 September 1964, 'may well go down as one of the most important dates not only in the history of Mozambique but in the history of the African continent.'<sup>3</sup> And Machel would comment after the downfall of Portuguese colonialism: 'What seemed unachievable for those dominated by reactionary and imperialist prejudices has become a fact: the victory of peasants and workers over a bourgeois army, technically fit, experienced in wars of aggression and powerfully armed.'<sup>4</sup>

The Portuguese had been preparing for war for more than a year before Frelimo operations began, and calculated correctly that the first conflict area would be in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, the two provinces separated from Tanzania by the Ruvuma river. But there are some indications that they made at least one serious miscalculation. One newspaper report in March 1963 said '...the terrain along the Ruvuma river, which forms the border between the two countries, is rugged and difficult to cross. Attempts at large-scale infiltration must therefore depend on coastal boats. At present this constitutes no problem to potential infiltrators, as hundreds of sailing vessels daily pass up and down the coast, putting in at coastal villages on both sides of the border.' To monitor the activities of these boats, the Portuguese constructed a naval base at Porto Amelia (later Pemba). By March 1963 they had completed another naval base for marine commandos at Porto Arroio on the eastern shore of Lake Niassa, not far from the capital of Niassa province, Vila Cabral (later Lichinga). Here they stationed a unit of crack troops. The terrain along the Ruvuma valley is indeed rather rough, with steep mountain climbs on either side and crocodiles in the river itself but Frelimo crossed it with ease. Indeed, in the years to come Machel frequently escorted journalists (including this author) and invited guests down the cliffs on the Tanzanian side, wading across the river with trousers under his arm, into a canoe at the deeper

parts, then up the crags on the other side and into the liberated areas on the Mueda Plateau.

It was over the river that the first guerrillas came. Large-scale infiltration through that route might indeed have been too difficult but that was not such a big problem because Frelimo only had 250 guerrillas at the time and the first operations were carried out by units of between 10 and 15 men.

About this time another front was opened in the western part of Niassa Province. On 28 September, Frelimo guerrillas crossed the border from Malawi to launch the first attack in Zambezia Province, and Christmas Day saw the first attack in Tete Province, also carried out by men coming from Malawi. Dr Banda made sure those routes did not

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stay open for very long.

Frelimo's Secretary for Defence and Security at the time was Filipe Samuel Magaia, a former soldier in the Portuguese army. Neither he nor Machel, Chief of Training, were among the commanders to enter Mozambique at the very beginning. But at the rear base in Tanzania they were receiving reports, some good and some negative, about the launching of the armed struggle.

One of the most worrying reports, which came from Alberto Chipande, concerned 'armed bandits' in Cabo Delgado. These 'armed bandits' were apparently dissidents from Manu, one of the groups which had formed Frelimo. Frelimo had decided on a strategy of protracted people's war along the lines of the Chinese and Vietnamese struggles, but these Manu dissidents had other ideas.

They moved into Cabo Delgado at the time Frelimo militants weremobilizing the peasants in preparation for people's war, launching their own 'armed struggle' one month before Frelimo. They murdered a Dutch missionary, Father Daniel Boormans, who was a popular figure in the area.

Chipande wrote later of the trouble they were causing:

...they'd simply degenerated into bandits. They'd killed a Dutch missionary. We'd got to a place about five kilometres away. The Portuguese troops backed by aeroplanes were busy there because of the missionary. We took a risk. We made contact with the Dutch missionary's parent mission, and we explained to them what had happened and that Frelimo was an honest organization and against anything like killing missionaries. This helped, because the missionaries persuaded the Portuguese that it was so and that they shouldn't kill the people in revenge. We advanced to Macomia. From there we couldn't get on to Porto Amelia, because the Portuguese had set up a blockade and they'd mobilized the people' against the bandits ...The bandits used to pillage Indian shops, and the Portuguese said we were like that. This held us back. The Indians informed the Portuguese of our tracks.<sup>5</sup>

This is the first reference by Frelimo to bandidos armados, a phrase which in the post-independence period was to become Machel's stock description of Rhodesian, South African and Malawian sponsored rebels. As Chipande's report makes clear, the epithet was not simply a pejorative way of describing Frelimo's

enemies. It was perceived as an accurate description of people who had 'degenerated' to the level of

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terrorism and looting as a form of armed action.

More than 22 years after the armed bandits murdered Father Boormans in Cabo Delgado, it is still not clear whether they were consciously trying to spoil Frelimo's war effort. They would have known that advance groups of Frelimo militants had been in the province for months, to mobilize the population for protracted people's war, and they may simply have been trying to prove that terrorism was a quicker route to independence. But one has to remain open to the possibility that they may have been agents provocateurs.

There is certainly a thread running through the story of Mozambique's independence struggle, suggesting constant interference by the PIDE and other foreign secret services from the day of Frelimo's foundation.

Adelino Gwambe was the leader of Udenamo, one of the groups which united to form Frelimo. He had been a PIDE agent operating among the Mozambican exiles in Southern Rhodesia. Gwambe admitted this but claimed he had seen the error of his ways. One wonders. Gwambe introduced a friend into Frelimo, a young black man called Leo Milas who said he had been born in Mozambique but had been taken to the United States as a child by his parents.

Mondlane accepted this and took Milas in as a senior Frelimo official. But when Mondlane went back to the United States after the founding of Frelimo, to finish his contract with Syracuse University, infighting and intrigue in Dar es Salaam almost led to the disintegration of the liberation movement. At the centre of the troubles were Gwambe and Milas, among others. Gwambe pulled out to start a new Udenamo but Milas stayed inside Frelimo. According to Frelimo documents, he was wreaking havoc.

Mondlane terminated his contract and rushed back to Dar es Salaam. Milas was given the benefit of the doubt and was not expelled, but he was told to mend his ways. The Frelimo documents of the period indicate that 'he did not wish to correct himself'. Still reluctant to throw people out of the organization, Mondlane gave Milas a foreign posting, to minimize the damage at least. Months went by, with Milas refusing to accept his new posting. Finally he was forced to leave Dar es Salaam, but was still not expelled from Frelimo. Expulsion finally came on 25 August 1964, when the Central Committee said it had discovered that Milas was not really a Mozambican at all. A Frelimo statement described him as an American citizen by the name of Leo Clinton Aldridge Jr, born in Pittsburg, Texas. The statement asserted that Aldridge's parents were also American-born and were living in California.

Aldridge was formally expelled from Frelimo on the day of that state-

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ment, by which time he was already on the outside. August 1964 was the time of the murder of Father Boormans and the looting of the Indian shops in Cabo Delgado by the terrorist dissidents of Manu.

In a letter published in the London Daily Telegraph on 21 September 1966, Aldridge denounced Eduardo Mondlane and Frelimo, and claimed that the Manu dissidents were still operating in northern Mozambique. Aldridge, then living in Khartoum in Sudan, signed himself 'Seif Al-Aziz S. L. Milas', a Muslim adaptation of his old name. And he styled himself: 'President of the Mozambique African National Union.'

There is no evidence that Aldridge was involved in the terrorism of 1964, but a curious aspect of the story is that one of the reasons given in the Central Committee's announcement of his expulsion from Frelimo was his 'cooperation with persons known to be involved with Portuguese colonialism and imperialism'. This was never publicly clarified by Frelimo but, thanks to a rare slip by the South African propaganda magazine *To the Point* on 13 July 1979, we know that one of these persons was Orlando Cristina who, while an officer in Portuguese Military Intelligence based in Nampula, visited Dar es Salaam in 1963 for meetings with Aldridge.

There are reports that the friendship continued. According to one account, Aldridge the mysterious black American and Cristina the white Portuguese spy became members of the Rhodesian regime's *bandidos armados* who operated in post-independence Mozambique under the name *Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana* (later known as the MNR or Renamo).<sup>6</sup> At first, it seems, this group's objective was simply to gather intelligence and to destabilize Mozambique to try to stop it from supporting Zimbabwean freedom fighters. Later, the declared aim was to overthrow Samora Machel's government in Mozambique. They failed to do that but they succeeded in killing thousands of Mozambicans.

Aldridge's 1966 story of continuing involvement in Cabo Delgado by Manu dissidents was a myth, but the 1964 incidents of terrorism in that province were a real setback for Frelimo. The Malawian government's blockade of the Zambezia and Tete fronts also came as a blow. But the young men trained by Machel were still able to move forward rapidly in Cabo Delgado and western Niassa.

The strategy was to work very closely with the local people and win mass political support, while mounting guerrilla operations against military targets on a fairly small scale. In the early days there were lightning, three-minute mortar and bazooka strikes against relatively weak enemy troop positions, avoiding the risks of the guerrillas suffering heavy casualties. This enabled Frelimo to establish what it called

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'semi-liberated zones' during 1965.

There were differences in the way the struggle advanced in Cabo Delgado on the one hand and in Niassa on the other.

The Cabo Delgado front was a classic 'people's war'. Just before the struggle began, 15 000 Mozambicans fled across the Ruvuma river into Tanzania to escape a massive wave of Portuguese repression. But the flight stopped soon after as people moved into areas controlled by the guerrillas, who had done a good job of mobilization in the months before the war began. Freed from forced production of

cash crops, the peasants were able to grow more food, which helped them and helped the guerrillas. Authentic liberated areas were created quite rapidly, with a food surplus that could be exported to Tanzania in exchange for consumer goods like soap and clothing materials unavailable locally.

In Niassa, however, Frelimo faced serious problems of mass mobilization, caused largely by low population density. The province is about the size of England and had a population of little more than a quarter of a million in the 1960s. The population was also very unevenly distributed, with a disproportionate number of people living in the west, near Lake Niassa, and in the south. These facts in themselves made it difficult to organize, but some authorities argue that another factor was insufficient mobilization of the people before the struggle began, with the result that thousands fled the country when the bullets started to fly in the western zone.

Some idea of what the situation was like in western Niassa can be gauged by a series of articles written in September 1965 for the London Evening Standard by Lord Kilbracken, who had visited the area with the Portuguese.

In 3,000 terrorised square miles the Portuguese, both civil and military, are now confined to five small isolated garrisons: Metangula, Maniamba, Cobue, Olivenca and Nova Coimbra. Not one white settler dares stay in the area. Their once neat holdings are today silent and abandoned. And most of the Africans - they belong to the Nyanja tribe - have fled to the mountains and islands or to Tanzania or Malawi...Throughout the battle zone all main roads have been mined by the Frelimo and are subject to ambush...I saw a dozen knocked-out Jeeps and lorries at Vila Cabral, the advance GHQ on the operational perimeter, and a total of as many again at Metangula and Cobue, which I visited by gunboat.

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The terrorism to which Lord Kilbracken referred probably reflected his attitude to Frelimo ambushes and landmines - military actions which might take the lives of civilians who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Portuguese terrorism was much more precise, as Kilbracken learned from a young colonial soldier. The soldier told him that the troops were in the habit of sending 'the blacks' in front of them along roads believed to have been mined...'And he mimicked the "knees up" stamping march they were made to adopt...'

Kilbracken's articles pointed very clearly to racist brutality on the part of the Portuguese but they also revealed a very serious weakness on Frelimo's part. People were running away to Tanzania and Malawi. Munslow writes, with testimony from people who were there at the time: 'Thousands fled across the border, and even amongst those who stayed, because of deficiencies in the political work there persisted an illusion that victory would come rapidly and no attempt was made to cultivate the fields.'<sup>7</sup>

Frelimo was bogging down a large number of Portuguese troops in Niassa, which was a positive advance, but it was also moving in a very negative direction: creating a graveyard for peasants and a liberated area for elephants and tsetse flies.

The potential for disaster was recognized very quickly by Frelimo. It is hard to prove conclusively that it was Samora Machel personally who saw the danger first but he was certainly the Frelimo leader who put his life on the line to try to show that there was another way of operating in Niassa.

Machel's first entry into the war zones of Mozambique came in November 1965, when he took up the mission of opening a new front, in the eastern zone of Niassa.

This mission sheds a very interesting light on Machel and his military tactics. The fact that he opened the eastern Niassa front is fairly wellknown in Mozambique, since it was often mentioned in official tributes. But the details were seldom mentioned, so many people were left with the impression that he went in there with guns blazing and blasted out the Portuguese. Nothing could be farther from the truth nor do less credit to Machel's eminently political style of fighting a war. Eastern Niassa was a particularly awkward place for guerrillas to operate. Machel and his unit set off on their journey through an area with no human settlements and no sources of water. They marched for four days in these conditions. On the fifth day they reached the outskirts of a village called Mecula, with the promise of succour from the local population. Unfortunately the Portuguese army had been forewarned and had encircled the village, making it impossible for the guerrilla group to enter.

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The only good news was that a traditional chief in an area near the Portuguese post of Valadim was ready to receive Machel and his men. The bad news was that this was another six days' march away.

It was worth trying, however, because the chief, whose name was Mataca, had a reputation as a man who had always resisted colonial occupation. So the guerrillas set off with no food left and water supplies unpredictable.

These were six days of misery. Some of the guerrillas collapsed with exhaustion and the survivors, including Commander Samora, had to carry extra baggage - the supplies of the fallen.

Finally they reached the outskirts of Valadim. And here we see what was driving Machel forward, despite thirst and hunger.

He disguised himself as a Muslim sheikh, to avoid being picked up by the enemy, and went off with another guerrilla, a man called Moyo, to speak to Chief Mataca. Machel's primary objective was not to start an immediate shooting war in the zone, but to win Mataca over to Frelimo. Machel had already studied the relations of power in this area and knew that Mataca dominated the people all around. He was a classic example of feudal power but his word was law and he opposed the penetration of Portuguese settler capitalism.

Machel convinced Mataca to bring all his people into Frelimo's independence struggle and to stay in Niassa, moving into a new area but cultivating the land. This was Machel the military planner, always thinking ahead. There was, for him, no point in firing some shots at Portuguese troops simply to show that the armed struggle had begun in eastern Niassa. What he had to do was to create conditions

for guerrilla struggle, and that meant mobilizing the local people to provide the essential popular support.

Like him, the future guerrillas might have to march for 11 days with little food and water. But when they reached Mataca's people they could be sure of assistance.<sup>8</sup>

The Portuguese, however, were not asleep. They knew very well how important Mataca was and resolved to capture him. A young army captain was given the task. His name was Ramalho Eanes. Eanes later became a member of the Armed Forces Movement which overthrew the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in 1974 and was elected President of the new, democratic Portuguese Republic in 1976. In November 1981 he paid a state visit to Mozambique, at the invitation of Machel. The two men warmed to each other immediately, sharing memories of the days when they had been on opposite sides of the battle lines.

At a state dinner in Maputo, President Eanes stood up to make an improvised speech. The subject was Chief Mataca, how Captain Eanes

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captured him, and how he got away. The story was told with deadpan humour and Machel sat at Eanes's side, chuckling and occasionally throwing in additions.

Eanes recalled that it was pouring with rain the night he went to capture Mataca, a legendary figure in the area. Things started to go wrong for Eanes shortly after he found Mataca's encampment, which was well-hidden in the bush. The captain was busy organizing his men to surround the place when they were spotted by a local woman, who raised the hue and cry.

Pandemonium ensued, with shots being fired all over the place. 'While shooting is going on, it is very difficult to give orders because nobody can hear,' Eanes noted. Undaunted, however, he moved ahead to what he reckoned was Mataca's house. 'I had been given the job of arresting Regulo Mataca and did not want to miss the opportunity...but when I reached him, our guide, a Mozambican woman, looked at him and said he was not Regulo Mataca. However, I had prepared the operation well and had seen photographs of Regulo Mataca in a Portuguese book so I submitted that it was in fact him.' Eanes admitted that there was still a little doubt in his mind when he arrested Mataca, but it turned out there was no mistake. He had captured the chief.

Then, however, Eanes had disciplinary problems with his soldiers. 'They had taken advantage of the dark to do a bit of looting of bicycles and other things and when I saw this I felt terrible because this did not match up to our military dignity.' (At this point in Eanes's story Machel wisecracked: 'This man sounds like an officer trained by Frelimo!') On the way back to barracks, Captain Eanes also had to deal with some of his men who thought the best thing to do with Mataca was kill him. That problem was also surmounted and the soldiers were eventually even persuaded to give some of their rations to Mataca, his wife and children.

Back at the barracks, Eanes faced the biggest problem of all. Neither the authorities in the provincial capital nor the Portuguese advance military headquarters in Nampula wanted to take charge of Mataca. They feared Frelimo

would mount an operation to free him. 'He was a troublesome catch,' Eanes recalled.

But the army was unhappy about keeping Mataca in the barracks, which was not considered the correct place for a prisoner, so Eanes moved him to the local administrative headquarters. Then, however, a Frelimo militant disguised as a devotee of Islam, dressed up in Muslim cap and gown, arrived at the headquarters and managed to get Mataca out. 'After all our efforts,' said Eanes, smiling and pointing to Samora Machel, 'this Islamised person whisked Mataca off to Tanzania.'

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In the end, then, Machel's efforts to keep Chief Mataca inside Niassa were unsuccessful. But these are the ups and downs of war and Machel's principle, rooting the war effort in mass popular support, remained intact.

For Machel, 'people's war' was not an abstract concept or a mere slogan. More than a strategy and less than an article of faith, it was a formula for success in a struggle which began with 250 Frelimo guerrillas facing some 35 000 Portuguese troops. Not all Frelimo leaders agreed with this formula.

For the ambitious and the impatient, especially among the older generation, people's war held too many uncertainties. It would be protracted struggle and a great deal could change over the years. The guerrilla army might grow to a strength of thousands and who could foretell what power its commanders would emerge with? This was a serious worry for some of the early Frelimo leaders, who conceived of themselves as politicians while the guerrillas were a quite separate breed whose function was to carry out the politicians' orders. Not surprisingly, such politicians were constantly demanding big and spectacular attacks. Their aim was a quick victory before too many cadres achieved prominence and would have to be reckoned with on independence day.

Such tensions existed within Frelimo from the days before the war began, when strategy was being debated in Algeria, in Dar es Salaam, in the training camps at Bagamoyo and Kongwa. Perhaps inevitably, the tensions and contradictions increased as the war developed, as Frelimo wrested political control from the Portuguese in some rural areas of Cabo Delgado and Niassa. With the establishment of semiliberated zones, and later liberated zones, a wider range of political and military choices had to be made. People, territory, trading networks, schools and health posts had to be defended from fierce attack by the Portuguese, testing the will and ability of the guerrillas and the peasants to sustain a long drawn out struggle.

#### The new commander

By the second half of 1966 Frelimo had consolidated its positions in Cabo Delgado and Niassa: the guerrillas, while continuing their war of ambushes and landmines, were mounting attacks on Portuguese military bases. Frelimo's situation on the ground looked promising. But there were ominous signs of changes in the enemy's battle plan, changes that would have effects reaching into the 1980s. The first signs

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appeared in 1965.

The Portuguese dictator, Salazar, had opened the doors of his empire to foreign capital, allowing multinationals to repatriate 100 percent of their profits. One of the effects of this was to make the West increase its stake in Portuguese colonialism, and not only in economic terms: military co-operation between Portugal and the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) was stepped up.

At the same time, South Africa joined the war against the Mozambicans as part of its effort to stop the advance of African nationalism. Even before the independence struggle began, Mondlane had predicted this would happen, and in March 1965 came the first report of direct South African military involvement in the war zones of northern Mozambique.

After an ambush when a colonialist patrol was completely defeated, our fighters found that many of the dead colonialist soldiers had South African identity cards. Later on, after careful study of the movements of the Portuguese troops, the FRELIMO militants remarked that in those manoeuvres, the Boer soldiers used to go in front, forming the reconnaissance group. During the fight, those soldiers are much more energetic than the Portuguese, revealing that they are used to the conditions of the African terrain.

On the other hand, in repressive actions, they are even more ferocious than the Portuguese, manifesting a kind of sadistic pleasure when torturing Africans, burning plantations and villages and persecuting and shooting unarmed African civilians who hide in the bush.

This new manifestation of the Salazar-Verwoerd alliance does not surprise anyone. But it teaches us the necessity of making the solidarity between the people of Mozambique and South Africa more active. 9

By the time Samora Machel became Frelimo's military commander in November 1966, the organization was already in conflict with most of the components of the anti-Mozambique team: the Portuguese, South African and Malawian regimes. The West was increasing its military and economic support for Portugal. The first conflicts with bandidos armados had already taken place and the Rhodesians were waiting in the wings.

Machel took command of the guerrilla forces under tragic

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circumstances. His predecessor, Filipe Samuel Magaia, was shot dead by one of his own men on 10 October 1966, while marching in Niassa province. The killer claimed his gun had gone off by accident. The killing came three months after the death in Zambia of another Frelimo leader, Jaime Sigauke. He had been head of the Department of Internal Organisation, one of whose duties was recruitment. Inevitably, attempts were made to link these deaths to squabbling inside Frelimo. In a classic piece of disinformation, a Western press agency put it this way: 'After his Defence Secretary, Philippe Magaya (sic), was killed inside Mozambique in

November 1966 (sic), Mondlane was rumoured to have organised his death as it was thought likely that he knew of a plot by Magaya to overthrow him with the aid of guerrilla officers.' The same agency claimed that Mondlane was accused of being implicated in the death of Sigauke.<sup>10</sup>

One has a sense of déjà vu when reading the editorial in the South African newspaper Business Day three days after the death of Samora Machel: Whispers of disaffection among President Samora Machel's supporters began to circulate some months ago, when the disintegration of his administration could no longer be hidden, and his sudden death in an air crash will therefore attract great suspicion.

In one version of the rumours, the loyalty of his 'palace guard' of Makonde tribesmen from the far north - the most loyal Frelimo revolutionaries - was said to be in doubt; in another, the Marxists in his Cabinet were said to be objecting to the growing influence of black nationalists and to a concomitant decline in

sympathy for the Soviet bloc.

The disaffection went deep....

And so on. In reports of killings 18 years apart we see 'rumours' and 'whispers' serving to divert attention from the most obvious suspects. Sigauke and Magaia were in fact murdered by PIDE agents. The case of Sigauke has never been seriously questioned. The Zambian authorities know that the agents were white and entered from Mozambique. The Magaia case is more complicated because there is no doubt that he was shot by a member of Frelimo. However such incidents were probed very carefully by the Tanzanian authorities and they concluded, 'after a thorough investigation, that the killer was a PIDE agent planted to kill Magaia in order to create confusion and division.'<sup>11</sup> In the 1960s, infiltration by the PIDE was a sign for Mondlane and

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Machel that the struggle was being taken very seriously by the enemy. By the second half of 1966, political assassination was part of the enemy's game plan. The leaders began to look more closely than before at the way Frelimo's defence and security apparatus was set up and found a major structural defect. There was no central command outside the Department of Defence and Security, which had been treated in much the same way as the other Frelimo departments, such as foreign affairs, finance or administration. The Secretary of the Department dealt with all the details of military and security questions and while this was workable when he had only 250 guerrillas under his command it became a serious problem when the number grew to thousands. At a Central Committee meeting in October 1966 it was decided that the army should be reorganized, with a high command operating from a settled headquarters and responsibility for the various aspects of military activity distributed in a rational way. Magaia was killed before this could be implemented and it was left to Machel, who took over from Magaia in November, and put it into operation. The department was broken into two - Defence under Machel and Security under Joaquim Chissano. The Defence Department created a National Commanding Council, headed by the Defence

Secretary and incorporating chiefs of 12 sub-departments. Machel thus immediately broke away from a military and security structure which placed an impossible burden on one man. Chissano would have a department to deal with the broad security problems while Machel could bring in promising young men to take leadership positions in the key areas of army building. He had at his disposal a national political commissar, and national chiefs of operations, recruitment and training, logistics, reconnaissance, communications, military publications, administration, finance, health, personnel and people's militias.

Similar structures were set up at provincial level. Frelimo now had an organized and structured army, leading Eduardo Mondlane to write:

By this new method of organization, each leader has a clearly defined area of responsibility in which he must use his initiative, but also has an established channel of contact with the high command. It was put into effect at the beginning of 1967, and almost immediately things began to work more efficiently: communications from the provinces began to reach headquarters with greater regularity; arms and equipment began to flow out more rapidly to the fighting areas; recruitment increased; and plans for

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new and more extensive campaigns against the enemy became operational.<sup>2</sup>

Thus began a significant development to Machel's conception of leadership and responsibility. He was ridding himself of Magaia's millstone - dealing with the minutiae of decision making - so that he could look at the whole picture of the unfolding military scene and formulate strategy. He was very conscious of the need to take and keep the strategic initiative, which meant that he and not the enemy defined the way the war was to be fought. This could only be done through a profound awareness of what was going on not just in one corner of the battlefield but in the country as a whole. Only in this way can the commander understand the strengths and weaknesses of both sides in the war, and only in this way can he anticipate what the commander on the other side is going to do next. Machel set up the headquarters of the National Commanding Council in Frelimo's new Tanzanian base camp, Farm Seventeen in Nachingwea district, less than 100 kilometres from the Mozambican border. The move from Kongwa had been made in the second half of 1965. The council held fortnightly meetings and Nachingwea's proximity to the border made it much easier for the Frelimo military leaders to respond quickly to developments in the war zones. Machel himself was not always present at the meetings since he spent much of his time inside Mozambique, but a structure and a base had been created for permanent supervision of the overall war effort.

Machel had two big disadvantages from the day he became Defence Secretary of Frelimo until the day he died. He could never match the enemy's firepower nor its economic power. This problem reached its pitch in the 1980s, when the South Africans were able to deploy an impressive array of sophisticated equipment, including submarines, advanced radar equipment, pilotless planes and the threat

of a nuclear attack, while at the same time providing weapons and rations for a surrogate army.

In 1967 Machel was not facing total involvement by South Africa but the Portuguese armed forces were well-supplied with weaponry, clothing and rations, while Frelimo was constantly bedevilled with shortages of everything it needed to prosecute the war. In 1967 Machel also had the problem of being heavily outnumbered. Frelimo's forces then were estimated at 8 000 trained and equipped guerrillas against a Portuguese force of some 60 000 soldiers. 3

Machel was extremely fortunate, on the other hand, in having the support of President Nyerere of Tanzania. Nyerere sent sympathetic

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military commanders to liaise with Frelimo in the rear bases in southern Tanzania and some of them were senior enough to release armaments from the arsenal of the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) for Frelimo when war material from the socialist countries was slow in arriving. The Tanzanian losses would be made good when the supplies eventually arrived.

The top Tanzanian military man working with Machel was Colonel Ali Mafudh, Chief of Operations and Training, head of the Military Intelligence Department and head of the Southern Command. It had been decided at defence headquarters in Dar es Salaam that responsibility for liaison with the liberation movement should come under the TPDF Operations and Training Department. Col. Mafudh recalls that Machel was an exceptional commander. 'The military command of Frelimo under the leadership of Samora was always ahead of the enemy.

Frelimo's tactics, their attacks, were moving the Portuguese forces from one place to another. Frelimo had a full initiative. Samora used to analyse political problems in relationship to the military problems very clearly. He had very clear-cut policy in matters such as strategy and tactics. And he had charisma, command, a personality. When Samora appeared and talked to you, in a matter of hours you would move in his way. He used to explain things very, very clearly. And he was also a very good disciplinarian.' Mafudh remembers only one disagreement he had with Machel over a military issue. This was when Machel wanted to bring women into the Frelimo camp in Tanzania to be given military training. Fresh in the minds of Mafudh and the Tanzanian military establishment was a TPDF attempt to do the same thing, an attempt which foundered on the rocks of human nature. 'Most of them were rendered pregnant,' as Mafudh puts it. 'We didn't want the same mistakes to occur in a Frelimo camp. We feared that it might cause confusion, the guerrillas fighting amongst themselves. So we were really, really, opposed. But Samora tried to convince us that things were different in Frelimo and that we should give them a chance. We did and they brought the first detachment of women to be trained. The result was very successful.'

The Women's Detachment of Frelimo was formed in 1967 and rapidly became a vital part of the guerrilla army. The women were given military training and political classes just as the men were but they were not deployed as frontline troops. They had the key - and very dangerous - role of moving into new areas to gather intelligence to pave the way for the advance of the armed struggle. They

would also prepare people in these areas for the coming struggle by explaining the policies and objectives of Frelimo. The Portuguese were on the lookout for this kind of thing, but their informers were more inclined to be

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suspicious of unfamiliar male faces.

This Frelimo tactic became even more crucial in the early 1970s when the Portuguese stepped up their building of aldeamentos, fortified villages designed to separate the peasants from the guerrillas. Women guerrillas were able to penetrate the aldeamentos and mobilize the people forced to live there by the colonial authorities.

Mafudh's concern about disciplinary problems being introduced into the guerrilla ranks with the arrival of women soldiers was not entirely unjustified. When I marched with Machel and his guerrillas in Cabo Delgado in 1973 we had a women's unit with us. They were sent off in mid-journey to another area because of what was described to me by a guerrilla officer as a breakdown in discipline. The details were not spelt out, but it is not hard to imagine what he was talking about.

Machel tried to keep the guerrillas aware that their decision to join the struggle carried with it a commitment to concentrate their minds on the war, but he did not insist that they live like monks and nuns. Many formed permanent relationships. In 1969, Machel himself was married, for the first time officially, to a guerrilla named Josina Muthemba, who had been one of the young people in NESAM, the student organization set up by Eduardo Mondlane in Lourenço Marques. They had one son, Samito, before she died of leukaemia in Dar es Salaam in 1971.

1. Mondlane, Eduardo, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, p15.

2. 'Phoney war' of Dr Mondlane, *Sunday Times*, London, November 15 1964.

3. Mondlane, op. cit.

4. Quoted in *Mozambique Revolution*, No. 61.

5. Mondlane, op. cit. p136.

6. Cristina's trips to Dar es Salaam and his later contact with Milas/Aldridge in the MNR May 1977 meeting in Salisbury are detailed by Phyllis Johnson and David Martin in *Destructive Engagement*, Harare, ZPH, 1986, p8. Cristina's role in Portuguese Military Intelligence is referred to in the July 13 1979, issue of the South African magazine *To the Point*.

African magazine *To the Point*.

7. Munslow, Barry, *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins*, p92 - 95, op. cit.

8. Many of the details of the story of Machel's role in opening the war front in eastern

Niassa come from Jose Negrao of Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. Jose Negrao kindly gave the present author access to his research.

9. *Mozambique Revolution*, No. 16, March, 1965. 10. *Forum World Features*, London, February 8 1969. 11. Author's interview with Colonel Ali Mafudh, who was Head of the Tanzanian

Southern Command and chief liaison officer with Frelimo in the second half of the 1960s.

12. Mondlane, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

13. These figures are taken from William Minter's authoritative study, *Portuguese Africa and the West*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 68. Eduardo Mondlane gave the same figure as Minter for Frelimo guerrillas in 1967 but estimated Portuguese troop strength at 65 000, as opposed to Minter's figure of 60 000. The Portuguese put the figure at less than 50 000, but this was at a time when they were playing down the magnitude-of the war.

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5. The years of crisis (1968 - 1970)

The period 1968 through to 1970 provides the key to understanding what made Samora Machel the kind of president he was. In those three years Frelimo faced such ferocious external assaults and such volcanic internal disruption that by all logic it should have crumpled up and died. That the movement survived and actually grew stronger was to a very large extent due to Machel's political and military ability, and to the sheer strength of will which he and his colleagues were able to muster.

Ironically, the extraordinary resilience and capacity for survival which Frelimo's leaders demonstrated in these years provided the seeds for what some critics believed was one of Machel's weaknesses in later years. He seemed to develop a dogged conviction that if the Frelimo leadership wanted strongly enough to achieve something, it would be achieved, no matter how high the odds were stacked against it.

The year 1968 got Qff to an appalling start for Frelimo, with two apparently separate internal rebellions and a worsening of relations with Malawi.

One of the internal rebellions was led by Lazaro Nkavandame, who was the Frelimo provincial secretary for Cabo Delgado, and the other by a Catholic priest, Father Mateus Gwenjere, who was a teacher at the Frelimo secondary school in Dar es Salaam.

Nkavandame was a Makonde elder, a man of some prestige in his area, who had joined the struggle at an early stage. However, he was one of those who felt threatened by the growing popularity and power of the guerrilla commanders in Cabo Delgado. He had gone into exile in southern Tanzania and so had little direct knowledge of the state of the struggle.

Mzee Lazaro, as he was known, laid down the price regulations for trade between the liberated areas and Tanzania and took a substantial percentage for himself and his friends, the local Frelimo 'chairmen' in the sub-divisions of Cabo Delgado. Since this was contrary to the movement's policy, there was a clash with the leadership. Nkavandame was also opposed to some of the fundamental policies that had been adopted at the October 1966 central committee meeting.

Specifically, he did not like the idea of abolishing the distinction between politicians and soldiers. This had made the guerrilla commanders a threat to his

parish power. Another issue over which he fell out with Mondlane, Machel and the other revolutionary leaders concerned the role of

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women: he had a traditionalist dislike of letting women out of the kitchen and into the battlefield.

Mondlane went to Cabo Delgado in February 1968 to have a look at the situation, and then went off on a previously-organized visit to the United States and Britain. While he was away, Nkavandame and his circle called a central committee meeting and demanded a quick Frelimo congress, to be held in Tanzania. The majority of people who would have been able to get to such a congress quickly would have been Nkavandame's friends, simply because of geography. They were either inside Tanzania or just across the border in northern Cabo Delgado.

A truly representative congress would have involved bringing scores of people from various parts of Mozambique, as well as from the various Frelimo representations around the world, and it would have taken some time to organize. While Nkavandame was playing his cards in southern Tanzania, Father Gwenjere was busy creating mayhem at the school in Dar es Salaam. Gwenjere had been a teacher at a Catholic mission school on the banks of the Zambezi river and had arrived in Dar es Salaam to join Frelimo in 1967. He had the best of credentials, having recruited hundreds of youngsters from his area for the movement.

The secret of his success in recruiting dawned on the leadership only after he had been given a job at the school, with many of his own recruits as students. He had used the simple expedient of promising that Frelimo would provide them with scholarships abroad.

While it was true that Mondlane was using his considerable international prestige to win study opportunities abroad for Frelimo members, and that this was essential because of the dismal educational record of the Portuguese colonialists, it was a dishonest recruiting method. The movement's leadership, not Gwenjere, decided what new recruits would do. And since it was a guerrilla movement, the bulk of the recruits were sent to the war front. This was the reality, which Gwenjere must have known while making his promises. At the school in Dar es Salaam, Gwenjere continued to argue along the same lines. He fought against the policy of having students spend time teaching in the liberated areas and promoted the idea that all of them ought to be streamed into scholarships abroad so that they could develop into a leadership class for an independent Mozambique. This basically meant that an educated elite would be created out of those fortunate enough to find their way into the school, and this elite would have no relationship at all to the armed struggle. Machel saw this as a serious problem. He was faced with the threat of a situation in which his guerrillas would be expected to undergo hunger and danger in order to provide top jobs for a post-independence elite, who would

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meanwhile spend the war years on the comfortable university campuses of the developed world. No guerrilla commander could accept such a demoralizing proposition.

To make matters worse, Gwenjere and Nkavandame consciously set about trying to turn the Tanzanian government against Mondlane, Machel and the rest of the revolutionaries in the Frelimo leadership. There was little point in using anti-socialist arguments since Nyerere's Tanzania was conspicuously moving to the left at the time, so ethnic issues were raised.

Gwenjere used Tanzania's understandable alertness against possible infiltration to push the line that white Mozambicans at the Frelimo school were probably Portuguese spies. Nkavandame, on the other hand, tried to exploit the fact that Nyerere supported the 'Biafra' secessionist movement in the Nigerian civil war, arguing that a Makonde independent state in Cabo Delgado was the target Frelimo should aim for, since it was in that province that the struggle was most advanced. It did not take long for the crisis in Frelimo to become public knowledge. In March the movement's secondary school in the quiet Dar es Salaam suburb of Kurasini was the scene of major disturbances provoked by Gwenjere. More than a hundred students, imbued with his elitist ideas, abandoned the school and it had to be closed down. In May a mob of Makonde exiles - there were many thousands in Tanzania - attacked the Frelimo office in Nkrumah Street in central Dar es Salaam and murdered a Central Committee member, Matheus Sansao Muthemba. The police were called in, there was a court case and the attackers abused Eduardo Mondlane from the dock.

During this chaos in the Tanzanian rear base, trouble of another sort was brewing in Malawi. In January a new organization had been founded there, adopting the name 'Rombezia' African National Union (UNAR). It claimed to represent another Mozambican 'Biafra', bigger than Nkavandame's. 'Rombezia' was the whole of north-eastern Mozambique, taking its name from the Ruvuma river (in Portuguese, Rovuma) in the north, to the Zambezi, which slices Mozambique in two just south of Malawi.

This was an ill-disguised attempt to work towards the incorporation of north-eastern Mozambique into a future Greater Malawi. Machel had been to Malawi in 1965 with Filipe Magaia to try to get Hastings Banda's government to be more flexible towards Frelimo. The mission was a failure. In February 1968, immediately after the creation of UNAR, Machel again went to Malawi and held talks with the Minister of Information.

Details of the 1968 meeting have never been made public. Given the

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past attitudes of the Malawian government and what was to happen in the coming months and years, one wishes one had been a fly on the wall of the minister's office.

Here we have to digress a little to understand Dr Banda's philosophy.

In 1960, before the British colony of Nyasaland had become the independent state of Malawi, he had been taking a very hostile position towards the Portuguese authorities but he was not thinking in terms of an independent Mozambique

within its existing boundaries. He dreamed then of reconstituting the old empire of Maravi, which took in bits of neighbouring countries - including 'Rombezia' in Mozambique.

This is why he said, in 1960: 'When Nyasaland is free I will not rest until the greater part of Mozambique is joined to it. We are all the same people.' But the boundaries of most African countries were similarly artificial because of colonialism. If this kind of disputation were to be legitimized, independence for African states would lead to unimaginable chaos, and the Organization of African Unity later decided that the colonial boundaries, no matter how artificial, had to remain intact.

In 1961, while Nyasaland was under British colonial rule and part of the Central African Federation, Banda became leader of government business on the basis of an agreement with Britain. That same year, Banda's hostility to the Portuguese led him to agree to re-route Malawi's foreign trade away from Beira port in Mozambique to Tanganyika. This would involve constructing a railway to link Malawi with the southern Tanganyikan port of Mtwara.

But towards the end of the year he had a visit from a special envoy of Salazar. The envoy's name was Jorge Jardim, a wealthy Portuguese business and political figure in Mozambique.

Banda's biographer, Philip Short, writes that the meeting was secret, and even Banda's cabinet colleagues were not told what was discussed. 'But its result was that he began to re-examine the position he had taken up in relation to the Portuguese authorities.'<sup>1</sup> In March 1962 he told the Portuguese Association in Blantyre that he was interested in using not only Beira but also Nacala, a natural deepwater port in Mozambique's Nampula province<sup>2</sup> To do this, the Nacala railway would have to be extended from Cuamba in Mozambique to a point inside Malawi.

In June Banda paid a visit to Portugal where the authorities told him that the ports and railways of Mozambique were at Malawi's disposal. Banda soon had a clear choice. Either he could begin to move away from dependence on Portuguese-ruled Mozambique, accepting Julius Nyerere's offer to place Mtwara port under a joint Malawian-Zambian

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authority, or he could strengthen ties with the Portuguese. In May 1964, less than two months before Malawian independence, Banda visited northern Mozambique and returned to announce that Malawi would be linked by railway to Nacala, thus increasing Malawi's dependence on the white-ruled south. Philip Short notes that while economic factors provided the public justification for the decision in favour of Nacala, Banda may have been influenced by other considerations.

In 1963 he had been given to believe, by sources he regarded as completely trustworthy, that within the next few years a situation might arise in which Northern Mozambique might be ceded to the future Malawi...The intention would be to create a buffer zone between Tanganyika and the white-ruled southern part of

Mozambique, so securing it from guerrilla attacks.<sup>3</sup>

Banda's sources, presumably Jardim or his associates, were not really so trustworthy. The Portuguese never handed over northern Mozambique to Malawi. But Banda kept up his friendship with Jardim, eventually appointing him Malawian Consul in Beira, and he continued to oppose Mozambican nationalism. When Machel went to Malawi in February 1968 Banda's government was showing no signs of moving away from its alliance with white supremacism in the-region.

In the same month Malawi exchanged diplomats with South Africa. A military attache, Colonel J. W. Van Niekerk, was included in the South African legation. UNAR, the 'Rombezia' separatist group formed the month before, had as its vice-president Calisto Trindade, a Malawian government employee. He was transferred in March to a company owned by Portugal's consul in Malawi, Pombeiro de Sousa, an associate of Jorge Jardim. UNAR's headquarters were set up in Banda's Malawi Congress Party's building.

Exactly what Machel was hoping to achieve at the February meeting is not clear. When he mentioned it to journalists in Maputo a week before his death, he did not go into detail, and I for one simply assumed he had once again been trying to persuade the Malawians to allow Frelimo to open up access routes through Malawi to Tete and Zambezia. If that was the objective, then the mission was unsuccessful. But he may have had more limited aims connected to his own military plans.

Whatever the case, it is clear that Frelimo had enough to worry about

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in 1968 without the extra headache of a separatist group supported by an African state which already had close ties with the Portuguese.

However, despite all these problems with Gwenzere, Nkavandame and the Malawians, Machel's guerrillas were advancing where it really mattered - inside Mozambique. They had taken control of large areas of Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces, establishing a Frelimo administration, Frelimo schools, farms and hospitals, a Frelimo controlled trading system and a network of air raid shelters to protect the population against Portuguese bombing. Frelimo was attacking some of the larger military forts and was occasionally able to shoot down warplanes. Word was getting back to Portugal that the army was taking heavy casualties at the hands of the guerrillas and, in 1967, 14 000 of the 70 000 youths who were supposed to be conscripted did not report for service. Compulsory military service was increased from 18 months to a maximum of four years.

Then in March 1968 the guerrillas reopened the Tete front. This was an event of major strategic significance, not only because it would overstretch the Portuguese armed forces but because the province was being developed as a linchpin for racist and colonialist rule in southern Africa. Plans were afoot to build the largest dam in Africa, the Cabora Bassa scheme on the Zambezi river, and in July the construction contract was awarded to Zamco, a consortium organized by the AngloAmerican Corporation of South African with the involvement of West German, French and Swedish firms.

The aims of the project were to supply hydro-electric power to South Africa, attract Western capital to Mozambique and bring a million white immigrant settlers into the Zambezi Valley.

Frelimo's Tete front was reopened less than three weeks after Machel's visit to Malawi, but it was not through Malawi that the guerrillas entered Tete. By this time President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia felt secure enough to allow Frelimo the use of his territory. Not only that, but he gave Frelimo a small contingent of Zambian soldiers to go into Tete with the guerrillas and help establish the first bases there.<sup>4</sup> The advance into Tete was not a simple case of the guerrillas marching from strength to strength. Use of the Zambian border was crucial and it cannot have been an easy decision for Kaunda to allow Frelimo to use it. An increase in South African military involvement in the war against Frelimo, and the entry of Ian Smith's Rhodesian forces were among the predictable consequences of the move. For the South Africans and the Rhodesians the alarm bells were ringing. Frelimo was approaching Cabora Bassa and the Rhodesian border. There was a risk of the war in Mozambique turning into an international conflict, some-

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thing which Kaunda had no desire to see.

Kaunda has sometimes been accused of a certain ambivalence towards liberation movements in southern Africa, particularly Frelimo in Mozambique, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). In 1968, however, the decision he took concerning the Tete front was both courageous and decisive.

Reopening this front was a great boost to the morale of Frelimo, wracked as it was by internal crisis. Machel, in particular, needed the chance to show that his guerrilla army was capable of pushing forward in a region that really mattered economically to the Portuguese. He also needed to counteract the myth that Frelimo's war was little more than a revolt by the 'traditionally warlike Makondes of Cabo Delgado'. The 'Makonde uprising' theme was Portuguese colonial propaganda and was seized upon by certain sections of the Western press. But Lazaro Nkavandame was quick to see that he could also take advantage. Hence his separatist ambitions mentioned earlier. Nkavandame, under pressure from the leadership because of his exploitative practices in the liberated areas, was seeking ways of discrediting Mondlane, Machel, dos Santos, Chissano, Chipande and the other revolutionaries who were making life difficult for him and winning the support of the rank and file. Nkavandame saw clearly that he needed the support of the Tanzanian authorities, so he approached them with the claim that the leadership of Frelimo was not serious about fighting the enemy.

Colonel Ali Mafudh recalls that Nkavandame managed to start 'a very serious debate' on the issue.

Nkavandame said to us, look, if we go along the border you can look across and see a lot of enemy outposts, Portuguese garrisons.

And it was true. But Nkavandame was trying to convince certain Tanzanian leaders that if these guerrillas were really fighting they would wipe out these

outposts. He said these garrisons were the main obstacles. He told us the guerrillas were not fighting, but were just deceiving the people.

Nkavandame told us that it was his group and Uria Simango, who was then the Vice-President of Frelimo, who were serious about carrying out the armed struggle.

I remember vividly that Samora gave us a very interesting lecture about why he didn't attack these outposts. First of all, he told us, if we attack these posts we will attract the war to be fought along the border between Tanzania and Mozambique, and this is

what the Portuguese would like to see.

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Also, he said, Frelimo would not be in a position to march deep inside the country. It would just be a question of hitting and running back to Tanzania. Another point which he emphasised, and I supported him very strongly, was that the more the Portuguese established these garrisons along the border, the better it was for Frelimo because they were draining the Portuguese manpower from inside the country. The Portuguese couldn't do anything and were stationed there like small islands.

Samora argued that it was better to create some routes to bypass the outposts and to continue fighting deep in the interior, rather than along the border. This was a very brilliant strategical outlook.<sup>5</sup>

Nkavandame failed in his efforts to discredit the Frelimo guerrillas. But it was always touch and go. Even with his pseudo-military arguments rejected, Nkavandame tried to manipulate Tanzanian politicians who came from the south of their country, exploiting their kinship links with people from the north of Mozambique.

It all came to nought. His attempts to have a Frelimo congress inside Tanzania early in 1968 failed. The congress was in fact held in July that year, at Matchedje, in the liberated areas of Niassa Province. Nkavandame and some of his fellow 'chairmen' refused to attend, the fighting men and women held sway and Eduardo Mondlane was re-elected President of Frelimo.

In the official report of the central committee read out by Mondlane at the beginning of the congress, only one living Frelimo member was singled out for special praise: Samora Machel. The report referred to his role in establishing the training camps at Kongwa and Nachingwea in Tanzania and noted:

The political line and military discipline which Comrade Samora was able to inculcate in the spirit of the militants in these two camps...now serve as basic elements of the national liberation struggle, without which our struggle would perhaps not have

progressed so far in the last three and a half years.<sup>6</sup>

Machel was one of several revolutionaries who had been co-opted on to the central committee at various stages after its election by the first congress in 1962.

Among the other co-opted members were security secretary Joaquim Chissano, education secretary Armando Guebuza

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and information secretary Jorge Rebelo, men who shared Machel's Marxist perspective. At the second congress all of them were elected to a new central committee, expanded from a membership of 20 to 40 and now including frontline commanders. Before the second congress, the central committee had both legislative and executive functions. The congress changed that and created an executive committee, in a sense Frelimo's 'government'. It consisted of President Mondlane, Vice-President Uria Simango, and the secretaries of the various departments. These included Machel and the three other secretaries mentioned above, as well as founder members such as Marcelino dos Santos, secretary of the political affairs department, and Mariano Matsinhe, secretary of the department of the interior. The nucleus of the post-independence leadership was now well established. (Machel, Chissano, Guebuza, Rebelo, dos Santos and Matsinhe all became members of the first Political Bureau of the Frelimo Party. This ten member top leadership body was elected at the third congress in 1977, two years after independence). The second congress of Frelimo was a triumph for Mondlane. His stand against tribalism and racism and what was described as 'regionalism' - exemplified by the Nkavandame and UNAR separatist plans - was endorsed. The final resolution also offered special praise to the women's detachment in the guerrilla army and condemned those who opposed its existence. One of the most significant aspects of the congress was the fact that it was held inside Mozambique, with Mondlane personally presiding over the proceedings. Frelimo had announced in advance that the gathering would be held in the liberated areas so the Portuguese air force was looking for the site, and indeed, they found it - a few hours too late. This was Mondlane's third visit to the liberated areas that year. In February he had been in Cabo Delgado and in May western Niassa. The former university professor and UN official was no armchair revolutionary. He had the respect and support of the guerrillas and after his re-election at the congress they carried him aloft through the forest, singing and cheering as he laughed and flung his right fist in the air in the revolutionary salute.

The jubilation did not last long.

In Ianzania, Nkavandame and his group openly opposed the decisions that had been taken at the congress. In August the Tanzanians convened a meeting at the port town of Mtwara near the Mozambique border, in an attempt to bring about reconciliation. The attempt failed, with Nkavandame insisting that he would create a Cabo Delgado separatist movement and the Tanzanians refusing to support him.

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Nkavandame went into action quickly, sending some of his supporters to the border, armed and with instructions to try to prevent any Frelimo guerrillas from crossing into Cabo Delgado. In December they pulled off a spectacular coup,

murdering Machel's deputy chief of staff, Samuel Paulo Kankhomba, as he was about to cross the Ruvuma. The executive committee met on 3 January and stripped Nkavandame of his posts. He was informed of the decision in a letter from Mondlane, which said that 'for one reason or another Mzee Lazaro has become an enemy of Frelimo'.

Less than a month later Mondlane was killed in an explosion in Dar es Salaam. The catastrophe of 3 February 1969, was described in *Mozambique Revolution*: On that day, early in the morning, our President went to the office and worked with several comrades. At about 10 a.m. he collected all his mail from the office and went to the home of a friend, a quiet place, to be able to work undisturbed. Among the mail he took with him was a book, wrapped and addressed to him. Once at the house he started opening his mail. He took the book and tore off the paper wrapping. When he opened the book, there was a great explosion, killing our President. In the course of the investigations, the C.I.D. of Tanzania found that inside the book was a bomb, inserted in such a way that it exploded when the book was opened.

Nkavandame then fled across the Ruvuma river, but not to start up a separatist guerrilla movement. He went to link up with the Portuguese. As he plodded through the bush he was probably glad that he had lost the argument with Machel over the Portuguese military outposts near the border. It was at one of these outposts, Nangade, that he made contact with the Portuguese military.<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of April 1969 Nkavandame announced that his defection meant the war was over and the Makondes should lay down their arms. Leaflets signed by him were dropped by the thousand over Cabo Delgado from Portuguese planes. A government official in Lisbon declared: 'This could mean the end of the Mozambique Liberation Front.'

Nkavandame's defection caused a lot of fuss abroad but it was a pinprick for Frelimo. His exploitative practices and hostility to the guerrillas had lost him his power base in Cabo Delgado. What really did shake the movement was the murder of Mondlane. He had been

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the architect of national unity and the flesh and blood symbol of a country in the making.

The Tanzanian C.I.D. chief, Geoffrey Sawaya, worked on the case with the co-operation of Interpol and it was established that the murder was planned by the - Portuguese secret police, the PIDE. Batteries used in the device were traced to a shop in Lourenço Marques, Casa Pfaff.

Over the years, names of individuals suspected of involvement have also surfaced.

An investigative report on a different murder, which appeared in the *British Sunday Times* in 1975, mentioned in passing that there was 'indirect evidence' that a PIDE hit man named Casimiro Monteiro sent the bomb to Mondlane.

Among Monteiro's professional achievements was the murder of the Portuguese anti-fascist leader, Humberto Delgado, in Spain in 1965. After the Portuguese

coup of 1974 he disappeared but was tried in his absence and sentenced to 28 years in prison. In 1981 the Johannesburg newspaper Sunday Times reported that Monteiro was living in South Africa and was with the self-styled Mozambique National Resistance, fighting against Samora Machel's government. Monteiro was born in Goa, fought for Franco in Spain, is wanted by the British police as a murder suspect and had no connection with Mozambique apart from having worked there for the PIDE. There are indications that the PIDE had accomplices inside Frelimo to get the package into the Frelimo office and ensure that Mondlane personally would open it. No-one has been brought to trial, however, and the closest we can come to identifying these accomplices is from an article in the British Observer. This said the Tanzanian police had two main suspects - Lazaro Nkavandame and Silverio Nungu, the administrative secretary at the Frelimo office in Dar es Salaam. The article said Nungu was caught trying to defect to the Portuguese and died on a hunger strike.'

Mondlane was given a state funeral with full military honours in Dar es Salaam's Kinoudoni cemetery. Julius Nyerere, stunned at the loss of a friend and comrade in the struggle for African freedom, attended along with many members of his government. Seventeen years later Nyerere would again stand, head bowed, over the coffin of a Frelimo President, Mondlane's successor.

At the 1969 funeral in Kinondoni, however, it was not clear just who the next President would be. Would it be Machel, commander of Frelimo's armed forces, a man who had not been a founder member but who had the support of the guerrillas? Would it be Marcelino dos Santos, the father figure and leading theoretician? Or would it be the Reverend Uria Simango, a man who had little contact with the fighting forces and a hazy idea of theory but held the key position of Vice-President?

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The next central committee meeting would decide, but Simango automatically took power in the days immediately following Mondlane's assassination. He did not last long. When the central committee met in April questions were raised about his links with the activities of men like Nkavandame and Gwenjere, and he failed to win election. Instead, a triumvirate presidency of Machel, dos Santos and Simango was formed.

Simango was furious. In November he published a mimeographed document entitled 'Gloomy Situation in Frelimo', expressing sympathy for Gwenjere, Nkavandame and Nungu and accusing his colleagues in the leadership of plotting to kill him. He was particularly hostile to Machel, Chissano, dos Santos, Guebuza and Machel's old nursing colleague Aurelio Manave, as well as Mondlane's widow Janet, who was American-born.

The document also contained oblique attacks on Mondlane himself, including a snide and unsubstantiated allegation that the woman in whose house the President had died was his 'girl friend'.

Simango, like Nkavandame and Gwenjere, was apparently hoping for support from the Tanzanian leadership. Indeed Frelimo later suggested that Simango had been the leader of a consciously counter-revolutionary group which included

Nkavandame and Gwenjere. But he did not get his way as Tanzanian support was not forthcoming.

In May 1970, at a meeting of the central committee, Simango was expelled. Samora Machel was elected President and Marcelino dos Santos Vice-President. A small group of Simango supporters followed him into the political wilderness. The Portuguese colonial authorities had been watching the traumatic upheavals in Frelimo very closely, stepping in directly from time to time to worsen the crisis - most notably with the assassination of Mondlane. They decided to strike while the iron was hot and launch their biggest ever offensive against the guerrilla forces. To mastermind this offensive they appointed a new military commander for Mozambique, General Kaulza de Arriaga, who was sworn in on 31 March 1970, at the Portuguese forward headquarters in Nampula. 'Kaulza', as Machel always referred to him thereafter, began his big operation in May, around the time that Frelimo's new President was taking office. The operation was called 'Gordian Knot', a reference to the fourth century legend telling how Alexander the Great used one mighty blow from his sword to cut a knot no-one else had been able to untie, and thus built a great Asian empire. Kaulza's 'sword' to deal the death blow to Frelimo was forged of 35 000 well-equipped and trained fighting men, 15 000 tonnes of bombs and dozens of planes and helicopters. The number of Portuguese

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troops in Mozambique was far higher than 35 000; the 35 000 were for Gordian Knot alone.

It was by far the biggest strike force ever thrown into one operation by a colonial power against an African guerrilla army. How Frelimo's new 'Camarada Presidente', heading a traumatised organization, defeated Gordian Knot and went on to lead the independence struggle to victory is one of the great stories of Africa's fight for freedom.

Notes

1. Short, Philip, *Bands*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, p 181.
2. *Malati News*, 5 April 1962, quoted in *Bands*, *ibid.* p 183.
3. *Banda*, *ibid.* p 191. (Short's sympathetic portrait of Dr Banda also sheds considerable light on the historical rationale behind the Malawian leader's expansionist aims.)
4. This has been confirmed to the author by a Zambian ex-combatant who took part.
5. Author's interview with Col. Mafudh, *op. cit.*
6. *Documento*. Base da Freimo, Maputo, 1977, p 72.
7. 'Mozambique Guerrilla Chief Defects', *International Herald Tribune*, Paris, 4 April 1969.
8. Other theories about the murder of Mondlane have been put forward over the years but the reports quoted here originate from writers who were better placed than most to get at the truth. The report referring to Nkavandame and/or Nungu as the PIDE's likely accomplices in the murder appeared in *The Observer* of 7 February

1972. The article was written by a Dar es Salaam-based British journalist, David Martin, who had known Mondlane and spent three years trying to get to the bottom of the case. The Sunday Times, of London mentioned the possible involvement of Casimiro Monteiro in the assassination in an article by Stephen Fay and Antonio de Figueiredo on 26 January 1975. The writers indicated that their revelations were based on PIDE files captured after the 1974 coup in Portugal. Figueiredo had been a close associate of one of Monteiro's victims, Humberto Delgado. The Sunday Times of Johannesburg revealed Monteiro's presence in South Africa and his MNR connections in December 1981.

#### 6. More crocodiles (1970 - 1974)

We have achieved much but we must not pause in the struggle, we must continue the fight and in particular in areas like this, from where the enemy has been driven out, we must never relax but be constantly vigilant. You know that when a crocodile bites someone and that person escapes, the animal will walk for many miles following the scent of the blood. It is the same with the Portuguese enemy. He is now in the 'town - isolated - but he is always making plans to come out again and carry on what he started.

Samora Machel

That cautionary tale of the man-eating crocodile was a favourite of Machel's during village meetings in the liberated areas. By May 1970 the Portuguese civilian and military authorities had indeed been driven out of a considerable expanse of territory. In the rural areas of Cabo Delgado especially, Frelimo was 'a strong and well-organized enemy, controlling significant masses of population', in the words of Kaulza de Arriaga.<sup>1</sup> But the Portuguese had by no means given up hope of getting back in from the towns.

It was against the liberated areas of Cabo Delgado that the main thrust of Operation Gordian Knot was directed, and it began precisely in the zone where Frelimo was most firmly implanted, around Mueda in the north. 'He (Kaulza) must have imagined that as that zone was completely liberated there must be a relaxation of vigilance and discipline and fighting spirit,' said the Frelimo provincial military commander, Candido Mondlane.<sup>2</sup>

Candido, Eduardo's nephew, may or may not have been right about the reason for Kaulza's choosing that area as the first target. But the Portuguese general's strategy was much more sophisticated than a vague hope that his crocodiles might catch Frelimo napping. He had done his homework and had worked out a military plan for reoccupying the Frelimo controlled zones.

Kaulza was a formidable enemy for Machel. An acknowledged expert in counter-insurgency, he had created the Portuguese 'sappers' and reorganized the colonial power's air force and paratroops. He was a qualified engineer, a businessman, an authority on the strategic uses of nuclear power and a key figure behind the scenes in Portuguese politics.

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He was appointed head of ground forces in Mozambique in 1969. That same year he made a two-week visit to the United States, at the invitation of the State Department. He held talks with Vietnam veteran General Westmoreland and Air Force General Ryan, before being taken on a tour of military installations around the country. Frelimo described the visit as a whole as a 'training course' for the Gordian Knot offensive. '

In 1970, when he became armed forces commander-in-chief in Mozambique, Kaulza was 55, and a three-star general with a reputation as one of Portugal's top military men. Later he described his all-out campaign against Machel's guerrillas as a five stage operation which began in May 1970 with a counter-offensive against Frelimo's southward thrust in Cabo Delgado. The second stage began in June and was aimed at cutting supply routes from Tanzania, and stage three in July involved large-scale attacks aimed at the destruction and occupation of Frelimo bases. The fourth phase, in August, involved a reduction in military activity while fresh troops were brought in from Portugal, but there was an intensive leaflet dropping operation from the air. The fifth and final phase began in September and had the fundamental objective of preventing Frelimo from regrouping.' This was the theory. And headlines proclaiming the defeat of Frelimo began to appear in the world press. In the view of some observers, Gordian Knot had gone like clockwork. The South African journalist Wilf Nussey, who followed the war in Mozambique closely, wrote in October that year:

When Samora Machel became the military leader of Frelimo recently (sic) he was dubbed the Che Guevara of Africa. He rode in on a wave of solidarity and optimism after months of vicious internecine fighting for the Frelimo leadership left vacant by the bomb-killing of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane. Since then, Frelimo's base camps in North-eastern Mozambique, just across the Rovuma river from Tanzania, have been overrun, most of its infiltration routes are blocked and its new assault wave from Zambia has been rolled back. Hundreds of Frelimo guerrillas are dead or missing. Tons of weapons have been lost. Machel still has a couple of thousand men in the Northern Mozambique wilderness, but they have lost the initiative. A series of hammer blows has forced them into disarray ... By speed and surprise, he (Kaulza de Arriaga) has shattered Frelimo concentrations. By heavily patrolling the Tanzania and Zambia borders between bases strung along them, he is throttling guerrilla movement and sup-

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plies. Against this, Samora Machel still has only foot soldiers, well armed and well trained indeed, but in the long run no match for mobility and an excellent intelligence service controlled by so experienced a soldier as Kaulza de Arriaga' Three years to the day after that article was published, I stood on a hilltop in Cabo Delgado with Machel and his top commander, Alberto Joaquim Chipande. Machel pointed out over the valley below, his arm sweeping over a wide area of the forest, and he said: 'During Gordian Knot Kaulza's forces did saturation bombing and shelling of all of this, to try to get rid of us. But we're still here, and stronger than ever.'

Gordian Knot was, as Nussey wrote, 'a series of hammer blows' but it was also something of a gamble. Kaulza had opted for a campaign with maximum publicity so he really had to have something to show at the end. That is always difficult in a bush war and Kaulza probably later regretted all the fuss that was made about his hammer blows. Machel out-manoeuvred him and Gordian Knot fizzled out at great cost to Portuguese military morale.

The liberated areas did take a -frightful pounding during Gordian Knot, however. Some people who were in the thick of the bombardment are still today suffering from the psychological trauma inflicted during that nightmare.

But the men and women who stood up to the Gordian Knot offensive changed the course of southern African history.

The Portuguese began in May by establishing a small mobile command post to facilitate infiltration in the area of Base Beira, a key Frelimo encampment in Cabo Delgado. Squadrons of 16 and 20 planes launched daily bombing raids in forward areas, while bulldozers were brought in to open a trail leading to the base.

Kaulza then had the capacity to move supplies overland for hundreds of troops, who were flown in by helicopters escorted by Fiat G-91 fighters. This was the first time fighter aircraft had been used in Cabo Delgado. Candido Mondlane recalls that eight helicopters were doing the round trip from rear base to front line and that after three days the troops they carried launched a major attack on Base Beira. This was on 12 June.

Kaulza would say afterwards that the results of that attack were 'magnificent'.

Candido said however, that 'they did not find anything. It was a complete failure for them: our fighters had already abandoned the base and our equipment is never kept there. The Portuguese limited themselves to burning the huts.' In accounts by Candido and other guerrillas who were in Cabo Del-

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gado at the time of the offensive, stories of the Portuguese forces capturing already abandoned bases come up time and time again. The guerrillas simply moved on and built new bases with the same codenames. Thus when I went with Machel in 1973 to a big Frelimo encampment called Base Beira and enquired how it had been recaptured, he explained that it was not the same base.

During Gordian Knot, however, an orderly strategic withdrawal before the arrival of the Portuguese forces was not always possible. When taken by surprise the guerrillas sometimes found themselves embroiled in fierce battles against very well-equipped troops. Two important bases, Central and Ngungunyana, were taken after six battles in one morning. 'We tried to repel the enemy soldiers but they were heavily armed,' said a guerrilla, Joaquim Gouveia, who took part in the unsuccessful defence of these bases. 6

But neither strategic withdrawals nor futile stand-up defensive actions were going to do Frelimo much good in the long run, and Machel was very conscious of that. For him the most serious problem was that the Portuguese were trying to break the vital link between the guerrillas and the people. The survival of his army in Cabo Delgado depended on the support given by the peasants, especially in the supply of food. The constant Portuguese bombardments were aimed at driving the

peasants into the government's strategic hamlets or into exile in Tanzania, leaving the guerrillas to survive on roots and berries or to abandon the struggle. Joaquim Gouveia recalls that when Kaulza's forces entered the areas where Frelimo was strongly implanted 'they killed anybody, children, old people, women - they were just killing, killing. And they were carrying away everything - hoes, machetes, pots, even mortars for pounding maize.' In areas where Frelimo was less consolidated, the troops rounded up peasants and put them in aldeamentos, strategic hamlets. Gouveia also recalls that planes were dropping 'incendiary bombs which burned everything they touched' and chemical weapons which had an even worse effect. 'They were dropping these bombs on farmland to destroy it and to ensure that there would be no crop the following year and so the people would go hungry ... they came from South Africa, in planes.'<sup>7</sup> Not only would the peasants go hungry. The guerrillas' source of food would dry up. To avoid massacres and forced movement into aldeamentos Frelimo had to move as much of the civilian population as possible to safer areas but that would disrupt the food growing cycle and cripple the war effort in the coming year. Machel had to get his men onto some kind of offensive quickly. He discussed the situation with senior commanders and with his Tanzanian army liaison man,

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Colonel Ali Mafudh, who recalled the talks years later.

When the Portuguese brought in massive forces, Samora discussed Frelimo's strategy very carefully with Chipande, Pachinuapa, Mabote and other Frelimo commanders. They decided to split up their forces into small units, even to groups about platoon strength, so that the enemy would not have a concentrated target. They marched right at the rear of the Portuguese supply lines, hitting them at the rear. So the Portuguese were forced to stop their offensive and go back and defend their rear bases.

The enemy was expecting Frelimo to regroup all its forces, concentrate them in specific areas and fight a type of pitched battle, a type of conventional war. This is what the Portuguese wanted, a specific target so they could inflict maximum damage to material and personnel. But they didn't find that target so easily because Samora and the other commanders had studied the whole strategic concept of this operation.<sup>8</sup>

In his book on the Mozambican revolution, the British scholar Barry Munslow corroborates Mafudh's overview, through interviews with guerrillas.

Guerrillas in the Tanzanian training camps returned to the country, and all participated in the counter-offensive. The colonial army was attacked by peasants with makeshift weapons fighting alongside guerrillas with kalashnikovs. Constant bombardments initially disrupted daytime production, but the peasants soon began cultivating their fields at night. When the attacks reached a certain area, the people dispersed into small groups, abandoning their houses which had been constructed under the shelter of the trees, and fled nearer to the guerrilla bases where they could be better defended. Frelimo then moved the people from the affected area to another one. A group of guerrillas would bombard the enemy

from the front with mortars, while another group circled behind the invaders to mine the roads cleared by caterpillar tractors. Peasants and the militia worked alongside the FPLM cutting trees and digging ditches to block the roads. Getting in to the liberated areas was relatively easy, but getting out again was to prove more difficult. 9  
At the time, Machel himself wisely refrained from saying too much in

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public about the defeat of Gordian Knot, realizing that the war was far from over. Even after the operation had ground to a halt, however, Kaulza was vociferously claiming it as a victory. He was hard-pressed to provide evidence more convincing than trips for South African journalists to the south bank of the Ruvuma, from where they could gaze over at Tanzania. They could equally well have done that before Gordian Knot, from the outposts Machel had decided not to attack.

Even today, 17 years later, human and material losses on either side are hard to ascertain. Frelimo and Portuguese statements seem to be talking about different wars. Frelimo says it shot down dozens of aircraft. The Portuguese say not a single plane or helicopter was shot down. There is a similar gulf in references to casualty figures.

What we do know, however, is that the Portuguese offensive in Cabo Delgado started grinding to a halt at the beginning of the last quarter of 1970. The causes and the effect of that event are equally interesting.

There were two main causes. One was the flexibility and mobility of Machel's dispersed guerrillas and civilians, which permitted them to avoid massive losses and to nibble away at the supply lines of the enemy with great demoralizing effect.

The other cause was that at the key moment, in October 1970, Machel's men fought their way across the Zambezi river in Tete Province, effectively opening up a new war front. Kaulza was caught in a trap of his own making. He had picked the decisive terrain of battle

- Cabo Delgado - gambling that Machel would put every available man and gun into defence of Frelimo positions on that front. But Machel did a classic feint in Tete, with his southward thrust over the Zambezi into a zone which had much more economic importance for the Portuguese than Cabo Delgado had. Kaulza had no choice but to transfer troops to Tete to defend, apart from anything else, the giant Cabora Bassa hydro-electric scheme. As far as the effects of the collapse of Gordian Knot are concerned, the story is not yet over. In 1987 the white racists of southern African are still trying to reverse Machel's victory. A psychological problem is involved. Whites have had their supposed racial supremacy knocked into their heads since childhood, and part of that supremacy is military.

Mozambique's post-independence sufferings are due, in very large part, to a desire on the part of white South African racists to show that Machel was naive to think that he could take on and defeat white military power. But apart from this long-term problem, Machel's victory over Kaulza had three immediate positive effects.

One was that the guerrillas and the people of the liberated areas could see very clearly that the death of Mondlane had not finished their

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movement. They still had a strong and capable leadership.

Secondly, the Cabo Delgado peasants could see that Machel was sensitive to the most important thing in their lives: the farming cycle. His strategy got the Portuguese military to pull out just before the 1970/1971 midsummer rains. There was time to plant seeds for food.

Thirdly, and possibly most importantly, the debacle forced the Portuguese military establishment to think about the future. Gordian Knot was decisive. Never again would the colonial forces try an offensive on this scale. A very perceptive article in *Mozambique Revolution* noted that:

The great losses they suffered in men and material created new contradictions among the colonialist authorities: a strong movement headed by the officers who have been involved in the war since the beginning, based on their experience, opposed what they called 'military adventures', which are extremely costly and which

are not bringing any results."

That was in December 1970, more than three years before the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement overthrew the fascist government in Lisbon and agreed to Frelimo's terms for peace.

From the time he became President of Frelimo on 22 May 1970 until the end of that year Machel was very much absorbed with the military problem of counteracting Gordian Knot, but as soon as he took office he started dealing with other matters which would have an important bearing on the future. One matter was Frelimo's international relations, another was the Zimbabwe liberation struggle.

More friends, fewer enemies

One of Frelimo's first diplomatic moves after Machel's election as President was the creation of an opening to the Vatican. Around the beginning of June, preparations began for an audience with the Pope. This was a joint venture involving the three liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies in Africa: Frelimo, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). On 1 July the Pope received the MPLA President, Agostinho Neto, the PAIGC Secretary General, Amilcar Cabral, and the newly-elected Vice-President of

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Frelimo, Marcelino dos Santos.

Machel was not well-disposed towards the Catholic church, partly, one supposes, because of his childhood experiences and partly because of the Vatican's continuing support for Portuguese colonialism. Frelimo denounced the Pope's visit to Portugal in 1967, noting that he 'decorated the head of the Portuguese Gestapo (PIDE), Major Silva Pais'. Nevertheless the audience for dos Santos was sought and took place.

A few years later Machel explained to me in conversation his attitude towards the Catholic church and religion in general. He regarded religion as a deliberately contrived and sophisticated form of superstition. 'The church is an organization - a political organization. When policy could not be justified in any other way, they invented a god to frighten people.'

But he did not want a head-on confrontation with the Catholic church, which wielded considerable influence in Mozambique. 'We already have enough on our hands without taking on the Vatican,' he said in that pre-independence conversation. This hard-headed view was no doubt partly what led him to support the idea of Marcelino dos Santos meeting the Pope. In addition, Machel knew that no matter what he personally thought of the Vatican, millions of Portuguese - including soldiers - regarded the Pope as infallible. What would be the impact on them of a meeting between their spiritual leader and men described by their government as 'terrorists'?

The audience was a triumph beyond all expectations. The Pope told the three guerrilla leaders that the Catholic church supported the struggle for justice, for freedom and national independence. The Portuguese government withdrew its ambassador at the Vatican and, although he later returned, relations between Lisbon and the Holy See were never quite the same again.

The audience was also an encouragement to Catholic missionaries disturbed by the colonial regime's brutality. In May the following year, the White Fathers pulled out of Mozambique and disassociated themselves from the colonial state. Father Cesare Bertulli, the Regional Superior of the White Fathers in Mozambique, described in detail the horrific tortures being inflicted on Mozambicans suspected of opposing the colonial regime. He criticized the bishops for turning a blind eye to the basic injustice of colonialism:

And what if the shepherds experienced in their own flesh what so generously is reserved for their sheep? Maybe their view would be

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clearer and they would change their minds and would denounce the state of injustice that is the primary cause of all other injustices. For what is the use of denouncing privately one or the other of the innumerable injustices, if the cause from which they spring is not denounced?<sup>12</sup>

Machel was moved by the morality of Bertulli's position. In 1981 he paid a visit to Italy as the guest of President Sandro Pertini. It was an official visit, filled with talks on bilateral relations and the international situation. But he insisted on private appointments as well, and one of them was to lay a wreath on the grave of Father Bertulli.

Back in 1970, however, there was nothing sentimental about Marcelino dos Santos' appointment with the Pope. This was part of a calculated policy which has formed part of Frelimo's diplomatic armoury from Mondlane's time till today. Machel called it the policy of 'making more friends and fewer enemies'. In practice it means seeking out allies in unlikely corners, while trying to reduce international support for the enemy.

It was clearly not possible to get the Pope to shout 'Viva Frelimo', but one can imagine the shock effect on Portugal's largely Catholic population of learning that the Vatican was having second thoughts about the rights and wrongs of the colonial wars.

The same Frelimo policy lay behind consistent effort to end the support of Western governments for Portuguese colonialism. The Scandinavian governments responded with non-military assistance for Frelimo and some economic measures against Portuguese colonialism. The Netherlands later became the first Western government to give assistance to Frelimo with no strings attached - the money could be used for military purposes - although the Dutch government said that it expected the aid would be directed towards less controversial ends.

But NATO powers, especially the United States, Britain, France and West Germany, consistently supported the Portuguese regime through military collaboration and economic assistance. All Frelimo could do in these countries was to encourage the establishment of Mozambique solidarity associations and pressure groups and campaign for change through the United Nations and other international organizations. Mondlane had found that the only sources of armaments and military training for Frelimo were socialist and African countries. He was able to bridge the Sino-Soviet divide and obtain such support from both Moscow and Peking. Machel maintained this policy. From 1971 until independence Machel used his extraordinary energy to bounce back and forth between the Mozambican war fronts and the

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socialist and African countries, consolidating Frelimo's position in these three vital areas.

Despite being badly shaken by the death in Dar es Salaam of his young wife Josina on 7 April 1971, he returned quickly to the war fronts. He moved for several weeks with his troops in Niassa and Tete provinces, visiting liberated zones and listening to the problems of the villagers.

Then in June he made his first European tour as President of Frelimo. In Sofia he established personal political relations with Todor Jivkov, the Bulgarian leader, and in Bucharest with President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania. The tour also took him to the Soviet Union and East Germany for talks with the authorities there, and to Italy, where he met Communist Party leaders.

The mission led to a strengthening of relations with the socialist countries and was described by Frelimo as 'completely successful'. Mozambique Revolution commented afterwards that 'these countries have been on our side since the very beginning of the struggle, supplying weapons, means of transport, clothing and other necessary materials'. The same article described the United States, France and Britain as 'Portugal's allies' and added: 'Were it not for the weapons, money and technicians that the imperialist countries supply to Portugal, there would be no war in our countries. For this reason we must consider them to be our enemies.'<sup>13</sup>

Machel had briefed the socialist allies on the situation in Mozambique after Gordian Knot. But these allies had, like all other observers of the Mozambican

scene, heard Portuguese claims of victory, or impending victory, over Frelimo. The death of Mondlane, the defection of Nkavandame, the expulsion of Simango and the onslaught of Gordian Knot were all realities that would have made the staunchest of supporters stop and think before pouring more resources into what might be a movement falling apart. There was no better way of proving that Frelimo had beaten the Portuguese offensive than taking Soviet journalists into Mozambique to see for themselves. Thus when he returned to Africa, Machel went very quickly to Zambia and then into the liberated areas of Tete province, taking a team of five Soviet journalists and cameramen with him. Chissano, meanwhile, had escorted a reporter from Pravda on a tour of Cabo Delgado. Trips into the liberated areas for foreign journalists - or 'jungle excursions' as one cadre described them to me - were always a bit of a gamble. The Portuguese knew that senior Frelimo leaders almost always accompanied these journalists and so were assiduous in trying to find out when and where such visits would take place. Frequently, journalists tended to boast to their friends and colleagues that they were

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about to undertake such missions, so there was a security problem. The information could seep back to the Portuguese and they would be on the lookout. That could mean sudden death for the journalist as well as the Frelimo leader accompanying him.

And so a great deal was hanging on the Soviet tours of Tete and Cabo Delgado. All affirmations about Frelimo controlled territory which had been made by Samora Machel in Moscow, Bucharest, Sofia and Berlin were being put to the test. If he had been less than frank with his hosts he would soon be found out. Both trips were successful. 'I am convinced that the Mozambique people led by Frelimo will win their struggle for liberation,' said Pravda's Oleg Ignatiev, who accompanied Chissano. Anatole Nicanorov of Izvestia, who marched with Machel, wrote: 'Frelimo is the only government in the liberated areas. And the government of Frelimo is the government of the Mozambique of the future.' Machel's style of leadership made a great impact, Pavel Mikhailev of Komsomolskaya Pravda wrote: 'The Frelimo President knew always how to find a common language - a language based on the feelings and mood of the people. He himself comes from the people, and therefore knows the psychology of the peasants and their needs and problems. When talking at people's meetings he knows how to find the proper examples, the correct comparisons, related to daily life, thus entering deeply into the hearts and minds of the people ... Frelimo has a leader of stature.'

This was the message that went back to the Soviet Union and its allies, and since several of the reporters were correspondents seasoned in other liberation wars in Asia and Africa their reports were undoubtedly taken seriously.

Having thus secured the continuity of Soviet bloc support for Frelimo, Machel then did what few liberation movement leaders could get away with in those days. He went off on an official visit to China, which had begun to describe the Soviet Union as a greater danger than the United States imperialism.

China's relationship with the African liberation movements had been very different from that of the Soviet Union. Moscow tended to make a decision about which movements were the authentic liberation organizations in each of the African countries concerned, thereafter supporting them to the exclusion of all others. The 'authentic' were seven well-established movements: the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, the South West Africa People's Organization (Swapo) of Namibia, Frelimo in Mozambique, the MPLA in Angola, the PAIGC in Guinea Bissau, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu), and the National Liberation Movement of the Comoros (MOLINACO).

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China, on the other hand, was less predictable after its break with the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Peking had given military training and supplied arms to most of the 'authentic' but tension with Moscow tended to lead the Chinese into a public friendliness with other groups, apparently for no better reason than that they were not supported by the Soviet Union.

Clearly this was not the most accurate criterion for assessing either the legitimacy or the effectiveness of a nationalist movement. In the clamour for the revolutionary Chinese seal of approval, agents of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, Portuguese intelligence and the South African apartheid regime miraculously transformed themselves into Maoists.

One of the big problems for agents like Jonas Savimbi in Angola was that he had never been able to give a coherent account of how he got his guns and money. A few favourable reports from the New China News Agency about his Unita group solved that problem. Whether or not he received material help from China, people believed he did, and that was useful for a man pretending to be a revolutionary. However Chinese policy towards African liberation was clearer by the second half of the 1960s. China's leaders kept their lines open to members of the 'Authentic Seven', and in making friends with organizations outside the group, they did in one instance choose a real liberation movement which was serious about armed struggle and had mass support. That was the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). Zanu guerrillas were given Chinese weapons and guerrilla training which were vital in the struggle to overthrow the Rhodesian regime. Frelimo was an 'authentic' but had managed to keep on good terms with the Chinese. However, at the time Machel set off for Peking in August 1971 the Chinese leadership's attitude towards Mozambique was, to say the least, inscrutable. Chinese diplomats in Lusaka were reported to have handed over \$8 000 the previous month to Coremo, a Mozambican exile group with links to Unita in Angola and another one of the 'unauthentics', the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa. The handout was only part of a donation which had been promised to a Coremo delegation which visited Peking in May. Arms and military training for Coremo were also said to be part of the package.<sup>14</sup>

Coremo supporters had launched a military operation in Tete in 1965, but it seems that no groundwork had been done and they were crushed immediately. About 6 000 Mozambicans fled to Zambia because of the wave of repression that followed, and the Zambian government initially assumed them to be Coremo

supporters, an assumption which proved false when the refugees were questioned. Eduardo

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Mondlane wrote later that the refugees had not heard of Coremo and 'those who were attached to any party were members of Frelimo'.<sup>15</sup>

By 1971, Coremo was of no particular military or political significance and was not recognized by the Organization of African Unity as a liberation movement. But there had been a development which made the Frelimo leaders sit up and take notice. When Machel was in Tete in July, a new Coremo foreign relations secretary had surfaced in Lusaka: the Reverend Uria Simango.

Machel knew that Simango was quite capable of playing 'the China card' to try to disrupt the Mozambican liberation struggle. In his 'Gloomy Situation' document in 1969 Simango had denounced the Marxists for bringing ideological issues into what was, for him, merely a nationalist struggle. But by February 1970 he had changed tack, claiming in a memorandum that Machel and his colleagues were imperialist agents, planning to 'eliminate physically those regarded as communists, who to us are true patriots and revolutionaries'. The same memorandum contained hints that Simango might be amenable to an approach from China.<sup>6</sup>

Given the political climate in China at that time, and the fact that Peking was already flirting with Coremo, there was a lot of room for Simango to create confusion. If the Chinese were to swing completely away from Frelimo, the consequences were unpredictable. Such a move could have led to friction between Frelimo militants trained in the Soviet Union and China. And what might the effect be on Tanzania and Zambia, where China was riding the crest of a wave of popularity, mainly because it was financing and helping to build the strategic railway from the Zambian Copperbelt to the port of Dar es Salaam?

When he came out of Tete in July 1971, Machel went to Lusaka and asked the Zambians to expel Simango, which they did.<sup>7</sup>

Machel then went off on his visit to China, as part of a Far Eastern tour which also took him to North Korea and North Vietnam. His delegation consisted of four of his top military commanders - Sebastiao Mabote, Pedro Juma, Tome Eduardo and Alberto Sande - and an aide, Sergio Viera, who had also been on the Moscow-BucharestSofia-Berlin trip.

The visit to Vietnam was basically intended as a gesture of solidarity but it also provided an opportunity for the Mozambicans and Vietnamese to learn from each other's experiences in guerrilla warfare. Machel met Defence Minister General Vo Nguyen Giap, the legendary victor of Dien Bien Phu and author of such classic works on protracted struggle as *People's War*, *People's Army*. Machel considered the long and painful Vietnamese armed struggle against foreign domination as an inspiration for the Mozambican people. In the photograph of his

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1971 meeting with Giap one can sense the electricity as the two commanders embrace. 'Giap used to send me his books,' said Machel with some emotion nine

years later, when the Vietnamese general, coming to the end of his brilliant career, paid a visit to Maputo.

The visit to Pyongyang in 1971 was also very important in establishing lasting links of solidarity between Frelimo and the North Korean leadership. The Koreans gave military assistance then and continued to do so after independence.

But Peking, where Machel met Premier Chou En-lai and other Chinese leaders, was the main stop on the tour. The meeting with Chou lasted five hours, a lot of prime ministerial time in Peking, and an indication that the Chinese Premier was interested in hearing a complete Frelimo account of the struggle in Mozambique. Machel would have had much to say about recent advances, particularly in Tete and Cabo Delgado provinces. Frelimo was not just holding its own but was advancing southwards and forcing the Portuguese army to evacuate positions where it had dug in.

The talks in Peking went well - 'a very great success from all points of view' was Frelimo's description - and the Chinese, like the Soviets, were invited to have a look for themselves. When Machel returned to Mozambique at the end of the Far Eastern tour he very soon found himself hosting a team of five Chinese journalists and cameramen. They arrived at his base camp in Cabo Delgado unarmed but wearing guerrilla battle dress: one can imagine what a hullabaloo would have followed if the Portuguese had managed to capture one of them. The visitors spent New Year in Cabo Delgado in the company of Machel and his two most senior commanders, Alberto Chipande and Sebastiao Mabote. They were able to visit a Portuguese fort taken a few months earlier. After the three-week tour, the Chinese were ecstatic. 'An excellent revolutionary situation', they said in their report for Mozambique Revolution. The New China News Agency, whose Dar es Salaam correspondent had been on the tour, published more than three thousand words about the liberation war, enthusiastically describing the battles and the politics in detail.

By the beginning of 1972, then, Machel had consolidated Frelimo's relations with both sides of the socialist world, Sino-Soviet dispute notwithstanding. Arms, ammunition and other forms of support flowed from China and the Warsaw Pact countries and Frelimo kept itself aloof from the rivalry of the socialist superpowers. The credit for originating this policy must go to Eduardo Mondlane, who won the support of both Moscow and Peking shortly after the creation of Frelimo, but continuation of neutrality in an increasingly polarized socialist world was surely largely due to Machel's fiercely independent

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approach to the ideological and practical issues of Marxist politics.

His 1971 diplomacy was also very timely. With Richard Nixon in the White House, the United States was increasing its financial support for Portuguese colonialism. As Machel was preparing to receive the Chinese journalists in Cabo Delgado, the US State Department announced the signing of an agreement for US\$435 million in Export-Import Bank Credit for Portugal. This was more than the bank had provided to all of Africa from 1946 to 1970.<sup>8</sup> The British, West German and French governments of the day, while professing their opposition to

colonialism and racism, were continuing to give extensive aid to Portugal. As a member of Nato, Portugal also benefited from Western military support, which theoretically it was not supposed to use in Africa but in practice did so in a quite systematic way.

Attempts by the liberation movements in Portugal's African colonies to persuade the Western powers to support the freedom struggle had come to nought. In January 1971 the United States and Britain withdrew from the United Nations Decolonisation Committee. 'We felt the committee was not fulfilling its mandate and that it was being irresponsible by advocating violence,' said a member of Washington's mission to the UN.

Machel did not give up trying to convert the West. In the first half of the 1970s, he had his energetic Information Secretary, Jorge Rebelo, working hard to mobilize support for Frelimo and turn Western public opinion against government policies favouring Portuguese colonialism. Mozambique Revolution, Frelimo's English-language magazine, was given a facelift in 1971 and circulation was expanded in the West. Frelimo increased co-operation with Western solidarity groups and pressure on governments was stepped up at the UN and other international fora. On the ground, too, there was a campaign: hardly a month went by without a visit to the liberated areas by a Western journalist or solidarity group activist.

While this campaign had no great impact on the major Nato powers, it had some very positive results. A Swedish company was forced to pull out of the Cabora Bassa scheme, Scandinavian support and the Dutch 'no strings attached' aid were due in part to the success of the campaign. In addition, Frelimo found itself with permanent groups of loyal supporters in many Western cities, a handy advantage in future years.

Machel also saw the importance of cultivating support within the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Consolidation of Frelimo's links with individual governments, especially Tanzania and Zambia, was a part of this, but it also meant using the channels and mechanisms of the organization itself.

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Frelimo and the other African liberation movements saw a significant improvement in their status at the OAU in 1972, when the annual summit was held in the Moroccan capital, Rabat. The movements' leaders, previously relegated to the lobbies alongside the press, were allowed into the conference room, breathing the same air as Africa's most eminent statespeople.

The characterization of liberation movements as inept groups of squabbling exiles, a very common African view in the 1960s, was fast disappearing. Men like Machel, Neto of Angola and Cabral of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde had won prestige and respect for themselves and the movements they led.

Machel went to Rabat for the summit and had an audience with the host, King Hassan II. He was a conservative ruler, not well-disposed to Marxist revolutionaries. The meeting was a sign of the changes in attitude that were taking place. Victory in the Portuguese colonies had begun to look like a very real prospect and the day might not be far off when Machel and his colleagues would

be occupying the presidential offices in their respective countries. Magnanimity towards the liberation movements had become prestigious in itself. At the Rabat summit for example, King Hassan amazed many people by suddenly announcing that he was giving a million dollars to the OAU's African Liberation Fund. After the summit Machel began building on the foundations that had been established, especially through the OAU Liberation Committee which had a key role in channelling aid to the freedom movements. In October 1972 Machel took a delegation from the committee, led by Executive Secretary Hashim Mbita, on a tour of the liberated areas of Cabo Delgado. Mbita, a major in the Tanzanian army, stressed afterwards that the delegation had not gone to 'inspect' what Frelimo was doing. But in the same breath he said: 'We went to learn what Frelimo is doing, so that the difficulties between the liberation movement and the secretariat (of the OAU Liberation Committee) would be eliminated.'<sup>9</sup> Just what these difficulties were Major Mbita did not explain, but clearly the Liberation Committee would have been in a position after the tour to assure African governments that they were not throwing money and weapons into a bottomless pit.

It was an opportune moment to improve liaison with the OAU, since the Liberation Committee was about to meet in Accra to review strategy. This was on the basis of the greater commitment to the freedom struggle which had become apparent at the organization's summit in Rabat.

Machel thought the OAU states could do a lot more to help, and when he went to the committee's meeting in Accra in January 1973, he

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made a stirring appeal to the African conscience:

We need your material support. The enemy spends about two million dollars per day to wage their war against us. Their NATO allies, namely the US, Great Britain, France and West Germany, are unsparing in their financial, economic and military support for Portuguese colonialism. We have to confront modern armies, well-equipped, combative, with a centuries-old experience of wars of aggression ... Mobilising moral, political, diplomatic and material support for our cause and involving the people in it is a major task of the committee and of the OAU. This must happen first in Africa, because it concerns our own liberation and we cannot ask outsiders for solidarity which we ourselves do not practise.

By the time he made that speech, Machel himself was already setting an example in practical inter-African solidarity. He had neither money nor guns to give away, but he had something better than both when it came to the question of what to do about one of the continent's burning issues: Rhodesia.

The Frelimo forces had crossed the Zambezi in 1970 and were in place along the Rhodesian border. The guerrillas' southward thrust was a matter of great concern to the Rhodesian authorities, not least because it had taken Frelimo closer to the road and railway linking landlocked Rhodesia to the Mozambican port of Beira. Fearing attacks on the Beira corridor, the Rhodesians had sent troops to Mozambique to help the Portuguese at around the time Frelimo began operating south of the Zambezi.

But it was not only the Ian Smith administration which was attentively eyeing the developments in southern Tete. The Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) saw that it too had a strategic interest in the area.

Zanu had run up against immense difficulties in establishing infiltration and supply lines from rear bases in Zambia. Entering Rhodesia from Zambia meant crossing the Zambezi. That natural border can be divided into three roughly equal portions: the western end between the Caprivi Strip and the bottom of Lake Kariba; the lake itself; and the eastern end stretching up to the Mozambican border. The western end leads into Matebeleland, one of the few areas where Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) had more political clout than Zanu. Lake Kariba provided a daunting geographical barrier to clandestine entry. And the eastern stretch of about 200

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kilometres was easily policed by the Rhodesians.

Zanu had a guerrilla army which was more or less confined to barracks in exile because of these intractable logistical problems. But the Zanu leaders knew their organization had massive support among the Shona-speaking majority, many of whom lived in areas of Zimbabwe accessible from Mozambique. Frelimo's activities in Tete raised the possibility of a new and vital rear base for the Zanu guerrillas.

The Chairman of Zanu, Herbert Chitepo, was based in Dar es Salaam and his first recorded contact with Mondlane and Machel was in the Tanzanian capital in 1968, the year Frelimo opened its war front in northern Tete. Frelimo had not yet crossed the Zambezi so there could be no question of discussing transit facilities for Zimbabwean guerrillas through Tete into Rhodesia. But the meeting, which took place in the Twiga Hotel just down the road from the Frelimo office, was important because it broke the ice between the two movements. Frelimo's ally in Zimbabwe was Zapu, not Zanu. In the late 1960s, for the 'authentic', dealing with Zanu was like consorting with the devil. Machel was not so sure.

After the death of Mondlane he continued contacts with Zanu. It became obvious to Machel that Zanu was a very determined and serious liberation movement and had popular support. In May 1970 he went to Lusaka to meet a Zanu delegation led by Chitepo and including the top Zanu military man, Josiah Tongogara. The two organizations agreed to work together, and in July 1970 Zanu guerrillas entered northern Tete to work alongside Frelimo and gain experience. But Machel was brutally frank with Zanu. Some years later, Tongogara recalled that Machel had said: 'We don't support Zanu. We support Zapu. But we also support the people of Zimbabwe and anyone who can show us he can start a revolution in Zimbabwe and liberate the people of Zimbabwe we will support ... Some of us, when we look at the situation in Mozambique, realize if we liberate Mozambique tomorrow that will not be the end. The liberation of Mozambique without the liberation of Zimbabwe is meaningless.' " Machel gave Zapu every chance of using the Tete route to Rhodesia. In late 1970, when Frelimo had the possibility of escorting Zimbabwean guerrillas through southern Tete to the Rhodesian border, he sent Marcelino. dos Santos to offer the first chance to Zapu. Zapu declined,

partly because of its internal troubles of the time and partly because it had little support in the Zimbabwean area adjacent to Tete. Zanu, on the other hand, was eager to grasp the opportunity. In February 1972, Machel's dilemma over Zanu and Zapu seemed to resolve itself. The two movements formed what they called the Joint Military Command, to combine operations against the Smith regime.

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But it never functioned. Zanu and Zapu could not work together militarily. In August that year Machel came out of Tete province and went to see President Kaunda in Lusaka, to tell him what Frelimo had found out through direct experience: that Zanu was a serious movement with support inside Zimbabwe, and that it should not be written off as an 'unauthentic' splinter group. Machel then went to Nyerere and gave him the same report. Nyerere and Kaunda were hosting both Zanu and Zapu and their countries were the key front line zones against the racist-ruled south of the continent, so it was important that they should have a clear picture of the situation on the ground.

In December 1972, Zanu began military operations in the Mount Darwin area in the north-east of Zimbabwe, with Frelimo's liberated areas in Tete serving as a route in and out for men and supplies. With hindsight, we can see that this was the beginning of the end for the Smith regime. It was unable to withstand the seven-year Zanu offensive which followed from bases in Mozambique.

The OAU Liberation Committee, meeting in Accra a few days after the first Zanu operations in the Mount Darwin area, listened to Machel's words with some awe. When he said: 'We cannot ask outsiders for solidarity which we ourselves do not practise,' he was speaking with the authority of a man who had done what no African leader had ever done before or is ever likely to do again. Without state power, without a flag or a national anthem, without a seat at the UN, without a conscripted army and without a presidential desk to sit at, he had opened up his country, still a colony, as a base for the liberation of another colony.

Machel's forces went on to break the back of Portuguese colonial resistance, opening up a new war front in Manica and Sofala Provinces in 1972, striking at the Beira corridor at the end of 1973, and provoking a demoralized colonial army into overthrowing the Caetano dictatorship on 25 April 1974. A few months later the new Portuguese administration was obliged to hand over power in Mozambique to Frelimo, which continued to support the Zimbabwean liberation forces until their final victory in 1980.

Samora Machel was instrumental in the liberation of three countries - Mozambique, Portugal and Rhodesia - from right wing tyranny. He was a marked man.

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Notes

1. Kaulza de Arriaga, speaking on Radio Televisao Portuguesa, 19 March, 1971, and quoted in Tempo (Lourenço Marques) No 269, 30 November, 1975.
2. Mozambique Revolution, No 46, January - April 1971.

3. Minter, William, Portuguese Africa and the West, Harmondsworth, p. 113, and Mozambique Revolution, No 50, January - March 1972.
4. Radio Televisao Portuguesa, op. cit.
5. The Star, Johannesburg, 17 October 1970.
6. Tempo, No 269, op. cit.
7. Tempo, idem.
8. Author's interview with Colonel Mafudh in January 1987.
9. Munslow, Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origin#, p. 116, op. cit. 10. Mozambique Revolution, No 44, July - September 1970. 11. Ibid.
12. Statement by Father Bertulli quoted in Mozambique Revolution, No 48, July - September 1971.
13. For the record, this issue of Mozambique Revolution (No 48) contains the magazine's first photographs of Machel out of battle fatigues. He wore a tie and a suit of unorthodox cut. He later developed a more conservative taste in suits and became known as one of Africa's most tastefully dressed statesmen.
14. 'China and the OAU: a Curious Sidelight', Lion Features, Munich, September 1971.
15. Mondlane, The Struggle for Mozambique, p. 132 (first edition), op. cit. 16. U.T. Simango, annexe to a memorandum to the 11 members of the OAU Liberation Committee, 17 February 1970.
17. Machel told me on 17 October 1973, that he had asked for Simango's expulsion from Zambia in 1971 because his presence near the Zambian border could 'cause confusion'.
18. Isaacman, Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, Boulder, 1983, p. 105. 19. Mozambique Revolution, No. 53. 20. David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe, Harare, ZPH, 1981, p. 170. This book contains a detailed account of relations between Frelimo and Zanu in the early 1970s.

### 7. The struggle continues (1974-1986)

The coup d'etat in Lisbon on 25 April 1974, was to a very large extent the result of the Caetano administration's failure to end the colonial wars, and among the liberation movements in the colonies, Frelimo was the main thorn in Caetano's flesh.

In economically-important Angola, the MPLA was in a less favourable military position than it had been in at the beginning of the decade, mainly because of internal treachery and a successful chemical warfare campaign by the Portuguese. In Guinea Bissau, the PAIGC was in a strong position militarily and had even declared independence, but the country is very small and had little strategic or economic importance for Portugal.

In Mozambique, however, Frelimo was in a stronger military position than ever before. Following the defeat of Kaulza de Arriaga's Gordian Knot campaign in

1970, Frelimo's forces had pressed south, deeper and deeper into the economically important heartland, draining men and money from an already enfeebled Portugal. Years earlier, Machel and his colleagues had correctly identified the contradiction in the Portuguese ranks that would sooner or later bring the whole colonial edifice tumbling down: the Portuguese were investing more and more in a war they did not really have to fight, and profiting less and less from their colonial stake. Like a hapless gambler on a losing streak, playing a cautious opponent who makes few mistakes, they would eventually have to throw in their cards to cut their losses. The question was, how long would the process of attrition take? That depended on, among other factors, Frelimo's military successes at home and political successes in the international arena, and the tensions within the Portuguese armed forces. It has to be remembered that the Portuguese army was largely conscript with little enthusiasm for fighting in the colonies.

The April coup brought about a radical change of government in Lisbon but it did not terminate Portuguese colonial rule in Africa. The young officers of the Armed Forces Movement who overthrew Marcello Caetano wanted out of Africa, but the man they put in power, General Antonio de Spínola, had other ideas. He proposed a ceasefire in the wars in the Portuguese colonies and a referendum, ostensibly to find out if the people wanted independence or not. At talks in Lusaka on 5 and 6 June, the new Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mario Soares, presented the ceasefire proposal to Machel, who turned it down flat, saying: 'Peace is inseparable from national independence. Only with national independence can we put an end to the

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war.' Machel laid down three conditions for peace: recognition of Frelimo as the Mozambican people's legitimate representative; recognition of the Mozambican people's right to complete independence; and the transfer of power to Frelimo. The talks were broken off but it was agreed they should be resumed in July. Machel, meanwhile, went to the Somali capital, Mogadishu, where he addressed the 11th summit of the OAU. He bitterly denounced the referendum plan, saying it demonstrated 'the lack of sincerity and the bad faith of the Portuguese colonial government'. A referendum might have made sense before the armed struggle began, he argued, but it was meaningless now. 'One does not ask a slave if he wants to be free, especially after he has rebelled, and still less if one is a slave owner.'

Some African leaders might well have replied: Why not? What has Frelimo got to lose by accepting? There was a certain mood in some African countries at the time that Spínola should be given the benefit of the doubt, that Frelimo should agree to a referendum to avoid further bloodshed. So Machel had to argue his case very forcefully in Mogadishu. He could not accept a referendum because it implied that the Mozambican people might not support Frelimo's demand for total independence, that there was some doubt about the moral validity of Frelimo's 10 years of armed struggle, that national independence was not an inalienable right after all.

In addition to the moral issue there was no reason to suppose that a referendum organized by Spínola would be free and fair. The day after the coup in Lisbon he

had declared on television that his regime would 'guarantee the survival of the (Portuguese) nation as a sovereign country in its multi-continental entirety.' And his career background gave no indication of democratic leanings. He had fought for Franco in Spain and for Hitler on the Russian front, in addition to his exploits as Portuguese commander against the PAIGC in Guinea Bissau in the early 1970s.

He was commander in Guinea Bissau at the time of the killing of the PAIGC leader Amilcar Cabral in January 1971 and when he returned to Portugal in 1973 he was decorated by Caetano and promoted to Deputy Chief of Staff of the Portuguese armed forces. Kaulza de Arriaga, who returned to Lisbon from Mozambique at about the same time, was given a much less distinguished post, chairman of the Council for Nuclear Energy. When I asked Machel a few weeks later for his interpretation of this difference in treatment of the two generals, he replied curtly: 'Spinola managed to kill Amilcar. Kaulza didn't manage to kill Samora.'

In his speech at Mogadishu, however, Machel left Spinola out of the argument. Instead, he stressed that he was ready to talk to the Por-

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Portuguese on the basis of the three principles he had laid down in Lusaka a few days earlier and he pointed out that Frelimo was negotiating from a position of strength. He noted that the Portuguese Chief of Staff, General Costa Gomes, had said in May: 'The armed forces have reached the limits of neuro-psychological exhaustion.'

Frelimo stepped up the war, taking advantage of Portuguese exhaustion. On 1 July the guerrillas reopened the Zambezia Province war front, closed since early 1965. Supplies still could not be brought across the border from Malawi, so the whole operation was carried out by guerrillas coming southwards from Zambia through Tete, under the southern tip of Malawi, then up into Zambezia. This was a long and tortuous supply line and it had taken years to set up. But Zambezia, with its rich agricultural land and two million inhabitants, was worth the trouble.

The Portuguese army in Mozambique, with about 35 000 Mozambican conscripts, was meanwhile falling apart rapidly. Mass desertions by these conscripts exposed the inherent weakness of Spinola's position: very few of his men thought there was still a chance of holding on to Mozambique. A thousand soldiers deserted in Zambezia, while others in the province simply refused to fight. Two thousand men at the Boane barracks near Lourenço Marques refused to be sent to the operational zones and high ranking officers at Nampula general headquarters declared themselves in favour of stopping operations against Frelimo.

In civilian life, too, the situation was changing by the day. Some Portuguese were aghast. Many racist settlers who could not accept the idea of an African government were fleeing. But some, the colonial diehards, stayed and plotted. They were joined by Uria Simango, who suddenly revealed that there were some whites he liked after all. He went to Beira, his home area, and found himself under threat of being beaten up by the local black population.

Some whites, however, were inclined to accept the inevitable. The district governor of Vila Pery in the Beira corridor led a delegation of white farmers to a meeting with Frelimo and asked for peace. Frelimo was receiving messages from sympathetic Portuguese residents who wanted to become Mozambicans in an independent state. Machel went on the air from Dar es Salaam on 24 July with a radio message, directed to the Portuguese army and the people of the unliberated areas in general, but with a special offer for settlers who might want to stay on in a Mozambique ruled by Frelimo.

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We greet them all and tell them that Frelimo belongs to the Mozambican people and that in our ranks there is room and work for every Mozambican woman and man, for all who wish to be Mozambican, including those who, although not born here, want

to experience and build the new Mozambique.

Only a minority of the Portuguese in Mozambique treated Machel's offer seriously. Most fled, for a variety of reasons. Many whites were so heavily involved in outrageous exploitation of blacks that they knew they would not get away with it after independence. Others were simply imbued with a racist sentiment that blacks were not fit to govern. Others fell prey to rumours, such as that Frelimo would nationalize their children.

In the period between 1974 and 1976, as many as 200 000 whites and Indians left Mozambique, finding homes in Rhodesia, South Africa or Portugal. Families were split over the issue. Teenage whites, filled with enthusiasm for the revolution and admiration for Machel, waved goodbye to their parents flying off to Lisbon. Wives stayed, husbands left. Husbands stayed, wives left.

In mid-1974 Portugal's imperial power in Mozambique was visibly crumbling. Settlers were abandoning the country, troops were deserting, refusing to fight or pleading with Frelimo for local ceasefires, without their government's approval. The talks scheduled for July 1974 in Lusaka did not take place.

In that month, however, Machel decided that the time had come to demonstrate how easily Frelimo could take out the Portuguese army garrisons along the border with Tanzania, the ones Lazaro Nkavandame had clamoured about a few years earlier. Frelimo soldiers surrounded the outpost of Namatil (also known as Omar) close to the Ruvuma river and, using megaphones, told the Portuguese to surrender or die. All 140 Portuguese soldiers came out with their hands up, but three managed to run away before they could be taken into custody. The surviving rightists in the Portuguese administration were furious and protested that Frelimo had tricked the garrison into surrendering by telling the troops that the war was over. They said it would not help the peace talks and called on Machel to repudiate the action. Machel ignored them. He had a diligent envoy, Aquino de Braganca, beavering away along the corridors of power in Lisbon and reporting back on who really held sway in the Portuguese administration. Braganca knew that a key figure was Melo Antunes, an anti-colonialist army officer who had led the 25 April coup. Antunes was the power behind the throne and he knew it was time for Portugal to cut its losses and get

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out of Africa. The army would not fight.

Although the talks that had been scheduled for July did not take place the Portuguese contacted Frelimo and it was agreed that further discussions should be held. These talks were held in secret in Dar es Salaam in August, and this time the Portuguese delegation was led by a member of the Armed Forces Movement. Then, at the beginning of September, Machel went to Lusaka where he met a delegation led by Melo Antunes, who was Minister without Portfolio. Mario Soares was relegated to number two in the delegation.

At this meeting Portugal agreed to hand over power in Mozambique to Frelimo. The Lusaka Accords on the independence of Mozambique were signed on Saturday, September 7, by Samora Machel alone for Frelimo, and by Melo Antunes and seven -military and civilian colleagues for Portugal.

This was Machel's moment of triumph. A transitional government was to be formed that month with the Prime Minister and six members of his cabinet appointed by Frelimo, while three ministers would be appointed by a Portuguese High Commissioner. Full independence would come on 25 June 1975.

After signing the agreement, Machel addressed the Portuguese delegation and Zambian leaders, including President Kaunda, who attended the ceremony. 'After five hundred years of colonial oppression, after ten years of armed struggle led by Frelimo, the Mozambican people have succeeded in compelling recognition of their rights. This is a victory of the historic courage of the Mozambican people ...' But even as he began this historic address, a plot was afoot to thwart Frelimo's victory. Before the ink was dry on the agreement a group of racist die-hards seized the radio station in Lourenço Marques and began making anti-Frelimo broadcasts.

The rebels, calling themselves 'The Dragons of Death' appealed to supporters among the elite Portuguese commando units to assemble at certain points where they would be addressed by commanders.

Machel was furious. All but one of the Portuguese delegation had left Lusaka when he was given the news, and the unfortunate army officer who had stayed behind took the brunt of Machel's wrath. The Frelimo leader accused the Portuguese armed forces chief-of-staff, General Costa Gomes, of having tried to promote an opposition movement to Frelimo, under the leadership of Joanna Simeao, a black woman who had worked with both Coremo and the Caetano regime. He telephoned Lisbon to accuse Spínola personally of double-crossing Frelimo. The next day, when he had calmed down, Machel made a radio broadcast, in measured terms, to the Mozambican people and Portuguese soldiers and civilians in Mozambique. The subject was the

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seizure of the Radio Clube broadcasting studios.

This band of thugs, consisting of war criminals, PIDE-DGS2 agents and well-known representatives of the forces of exploitation, is desperately trying to oppose the Mozambican and Portuguese peoples' wish for peace. The aim of these

elements, who have no country and no ideals, is to prevent Mozambique's independence. They are therefore trying to create a climate of racial conflict, chaos and anarchy which would serve as a pretext for the internationalization of aggression against our people. In this context, they recruited mercenary forces and sought support from racist and reactionary forces.

Our duty is to neutralize the colonial-fascist rebellion immediately. In the spirit and letter of the Lusaka Agreement, the Mozambique People's Liberation Forces<sup>3</sup> and the Portuguese armed forces, true to their word, will co-operate closely to safeguard public order, defend territorial integrity and guarantee the process of Mozambican independence.

Machel warned whites against being dragged into a confrontation which served the interests of a minority of exploiters, not the interests of whites in Mozambique as a whole. He reiterated his belief that most whites in Mozambique were 'honest workers' and called on them to refuse to co-operate with the rebels.

He also made it clear that he was sure Frelimo had the support of the black population in the Mozambican capital. 'The people must block all supplies and communications for the small group of fanatic and desperate fascist adventurers,' he said, at a time when some sections of the American international news media were claiming that urban blacks were hostile to a peasant based, communist movement. Who was right, the Americans or Machel? He was giving an order to people in the south who had been urged by others to believe that Frelimo was a Makonde movement dominated by the Chinese or the Russians or both. Would the people of the capital take Machel's order, or would they simply ignore him? Thirteen years later it seems like a silly question. Surely the people would automatically leap to the support of Frelimo, one might think. But it was not such a silly question at the time. Machel's remark about Frelimo and the Portuguese armed forces co-operating to safeguard public order was all very well, but there were no Frelimo troops in Lourenço Marques. The only forces there were the Portuguese army

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and police, so in the first days after the independence agreement public order depended on them and unarmed Frelimo organizers.

The Dragons of Death quickly showed their political stripe. They went to the capital's main prison and released about 200 PIDE agents whom the post-coup Portuguese authorities had detained, pending inquiries into responsibility for the torture of political prisoners. Other supporters of the Dragons were touring the black townships in open vehicles, shooting black Mozambicans at random.

The occupation of the radio station lasted just one weekend, ending on Monday the ninth after the Portuguese armed forces gave the rebels an ultimatum to get out or face the consequences. But although it was the Portuguese officers who gave the order, they did so in a context created by Frelimo and which provided no rational alternative.

That the Portuguese government had conceded to Frelimo's demands was one compelling reason for the army not to support the white settlers in the radio station.

But there were several other reasons. The guerrillas had moved swiftly south from the Beira corridor, crossing the Save river and establishing positions in Gaza which could be turned into military bases if the situation demanded.

In the capital, a number of political parties had sprung up in the period after the coup in Portugal, in a fairly transparent attempt to create the impression internationally that Frelimo was not the only candidate for political power. But the reality, of which the Portuguese army was only too well aware, was that Frelimo not only held sway militarily over much of northern Mozambique but also held the political initiative in Lourenço Marques. There had been clandestine cells in the city since the early 1960s and although many of the most prominent leaders had been jailed by the PIDE they had been released after the Lisbon coup. During the troubles in the city in the week following the Lusaka Accords, the Portuguese found that the Frelimo organizers were the only people with sufficient authority to keep the lid on the situation, calling for calm and persuading people to avoid violence.

A British newspaper report of the time quoted a Western diplomat in Lourenço Marques as saying: 'It was incredible the way Frelimo managed to control the situation for three days in the face of great provocation ... After 400 years of Portuguese colonialism, the Africans saw the whites trying to steal their independence. But still they remained calm, and that demonstrates Frelimo's control over the people and Frelimo's maturity.'<sup>4</sup>

All in all, for the Portuguese soldier in Mozambique, the chance to go home to his family must have seemed much more attractive than volunteering for another war against Frelimo.

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For the Portuguese settler of extreme right wing persuasion, however, there was one chance of clinging to cherished colonial privileges: South African or Rhodesian intervention. There are indications that the South African Defence Minister, P.W. Botha, was in fact planning an invasion. One report says an armoured column was positioned at Komatipoort, a South African border town about 90 kilometres from Lourenço Marques, ready to invade Mozambique in support of the rebel settlers.<sup>5</sup>

Machel was aware of the peril. In his radio broadcast of 8 September, he said: We must warn neighbouring countries which the criminals wish to involve in their desperate action that neither Frelimo nor the African and non-African allies of the Mozambican people or the international community will tolerate what would necessarily be considered imperialist aggression.

Did Frelimo really have any pledge of outside support in the event of a South African invasion, or was Machel bluffing? The mark of a good bluffer at the card table is that you never find out whether he was bluffing or not. In this case, neither the South Africans nor the Rhodesians called Machel's bluff.

Over the years, pundits have offered a variety of explanations for the lack of South African intervention. One is that the attempted coup in Lourenço Marques was launched on the wrong date, too early for the invasion plan. Another is that the South African chief of security, Van Den Bergh, had a personal feud with P.W. Botha and managed to persuade Prime Minister John Vorster to spike Botha's guns. Another is that the South Africans thought the Portuguese army might be used against them, leading to a conflict whose outcome was totally unpredictable. There could be elements of truth in all or any of these stories, but what is known for a fact is that Samora Machel issued the blunt threat quoted above. The South Africans had to take it into consideration, but whether or not Machel was bluffing remains an intriguing question to this day.

For Ian Smith's Rhodesians however, a different game plan was evolving. The director general of Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), Ken Flower, had been in contact with the Portuguese authorities for some years because of Frelimo's activities in areas bordering Rhodesia and Zanu's use of Frelimo's liberated areas as an infiltration route into Rhodesia. In 1972, Flower had gone to Lisbon

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where he discussed with Prime Minister Marcello Caetano the possibility of working together to sponsor an anti-Frelimo dissident group in Mozambique. In April 1974, just before the Portuguese coup, Flower reached agreement on the details of the plan at a meeting in Lisbon with the head of the PIDE-DGS, Major Silva Pais.<sup>6</sup>

The coup at first seemed to block the plan. As it turned out, however, the Rhodesians drew almost immediate benefits. Racist fanatics, mercenaries and black Mozambicans in the Portuguese security forces who had been involved in massacres of civilians were ready recruits for the new force.

According to Flower, the first group of volunteers for Rhodesia's new fifth column crossed into Rhodesia on June 2 as Machel and the new Portuguese authorities were preparing for their first meeting in Lusaka. Most of the 40 volunteers had been members of the Special Groups of the Portuguese army or the Flechas, the military wing of the PIDE-DGS. Blacks in this group, and in others which followed, no doubt felt that they would be in a difficult position if they remained in Mozambique, because of the danger of being recognised by relatives or friends of their victims.

At the time, nothing was known publicly about the build-up of this group, which would later become known as the Mozambique National Resistance, the MNR or Renamo, and which would go on a rampage of terror through the country.

Calm before the storm

When the fascist uprising of September 1974 in Lourenço Marques was quelled there was little or no indication of the problems that lay in store. Frelimo soldiers arrived in the capital a week after the Lusaka Accords and, in general, worked well with the Portuguese army and police. There was a serious outbreak of violence on 21 October when a clash between black civilians and Portuguese commandos led to Frelimo intervention, Portuguese attacks on Frelimo soldiers,

and barricades being set up by Frelimo supporters in the townships. This time, most of those who were killed were whites, the opposite of the September scenario. But the situation was brought under control the same day and the renegade Portuguese commandos were later put on a ship and sent off to Portugal. The events of 7 September and 21 October, 1974, were the deathbed attempts of Portuguese colonial-fascism to prevent Mozambican independence and the accession to power of Frelimo. A few months of

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peace followed.

At the time of the Lusaka Accords the Frelimo leadership had had to choose its team for the transitional government in Lourenço Marques, and the men selected were a mix of Frelimo veterans. Some were known for their achievements as guerrilla commanders, others for their political and diplomatic activities and yet others for their work in the underground in Lourenço Marques.

Frelimo decided that it was not appropriate for Machel himself to be in government during transition to independence. Joaquim Chissano, Chief of Security and Frelimo's Chief Representative in Dar es Salaam was appointed Prime Minister.

While Chissano and his team worked in Lourenço Marques to build the foundations for the independence government, Machel concentrated on strengthening ties with countries which had been providing vital support for Frelimo. In December he went to East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania, and in March 1975 to China and North Korea, to make agreements on future economic co-operation. In May he toured Tanzania and Zambia, to say thank you to the people of these countries for their support during the independence struggle. Then on 24 May he began a triumphal tour of Mozambique, from the Ruvuma river in the north to the Maputo river in the south, addressing mass rallies on the way, to explain Frelimo's policies. The tour took a month and Machel arrived on Lourenço Marques on 23 June. On the night of 24 June, tens of thousands of Mozambicans made their way to the Machava sports stadium on the outskirts of the capital to hail in a new era of Mozambican history. The rain poured down and the streets were blocked with vehicles and people. Traffic jams prevented many people from reaching the stadium by midnight, when the independence ceremony was due to begin. But the ceremony was delayed, so everyone was in time to witness this drama, the formal demise of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique. Machel, in military fatigues, stood under cover with other Frelimo leaders and with the then chairman of the Organization of African Unity, President Mohammed Siad Barre of Somalia. Barre had been, coincidentally, the first leader to give Machel a head of state's welcome, with anthems and 21-gun salute, when the Frelimo leader had visited Mogadishu in 1973.

Shortly after midnight, the Portuguese flag was lowered and the flag of the People's Republic of Mozambique was hoisted. Appropriately, the Mozambican flag was raised by Alberto Chipande, the man who, in 1964, had fired the first shot in the war. There was an explosion of joy in the stadium. Thousands of

people cheered themselves hoarse. For some members of the older generation who had lived through the worst

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rigours of colonial fascism the emotional strain was too much. They put their hands over their eyes and wept. But their tears were tears of joy.

Machel stood at attention, saluting the flag, his face drawn with emotion as he prepared to read the proclamation of independence. He was accustomed to addressing public meetings in the liberated areas but he had never seen a crowd this size. With no explanatory introduction, he began by reading Frelimo's declaration of the beginning of the independence war in 1964. His voice boomed out over the loudspeakers: 'Frelimo today solemnly proclaims the general armed insurrection of the Mozambican people against Portuguese colonialism ... Our struggle will not cease until the complete liquidation of Portuguese colonialism.' Then, to the relief of anyone who might have thought this was a declaration of a new war, he went on: 'It was with these words that almost eleven years ago...' He spoke of the centuries old history of Mozambican struggle against foreign domination, culminating in the creation of Frelimo, and the launching of the national liberation war. He spoke of the future, 'a people's democratic state, in which all patriotic strata under the leadership of peasants and workers engage themselves in the struggle to destroy the vestiges of colonialism and imperialist dependence, to eliminate the system of exploitation of man by man...'

No-one who was there that night will ever forget it. For the exploited and humiliated people of Mozambique, Machel brought a message of hope. He also exuded an electric charge, a strength of personality, a kind of royal African presence. He had put his personal stamp on the new Mozambique.

The euphoria did not last long. A month after independence, the Mozambican news magazine Tempo reported that there had been enemy infiltration over 'the porous border with Banda's Malawi' into the Milange district of Zambezia Province. There were no details and few people in the capital attached much importance to the report.<sup>7</sup>

But on 5 August the peasants of Vista Alegre in Manica Province near the Rhodesian border had the doubtful privilege of being the first to learn that only a phase of the war had been won. Rhodesian troops opened fire on them. A Mozambican army patrol retaliated. The next day a Rhodesian helicopter entered the same area and its gunner killed one Mozambican soldier. Throughout August fighting continued in Manica Province and in Tete.<sup>8</sup> Not a word of this was reported in the Mozambican or the Rhodesian press at the time. By September, however, it was becoming apparent even in Lourenço Marques that independence had not ended the war. In the centre of the capital a young man lost three fingers when a pen he found lying in the street exploded in his hands. Within a few more days more than a

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hundred similar explosive devices had been found and defused by the police. No organization claimed responsibility but the pen-bomb panic took place exactly

one year after the fascist uprising and the pens bore local inscriptions so it seems likely that the terrorists were Mozambique based.

It was not long before such people realized that there was an organized structure from which they could work - Ken Flower's group in Rhodesia. By November the Rhodesian armed forces were operating in Gaza as well as Manica and Tete. Flower, naturally enough, was keen on building up his force of Portuguese and Mozambican malcontents to undertake operations in Mozambican territory as a back-up for the Rhodesian regular forces.

The Rhodesians wanted to stop Frelimo from supporting the Zimbabwean liberation movement. So they hacked away at the war-weary Mozambican people, with the aim of demonstrating that it was better to fight alongside the 'superior' whites who were bound to win.

This was the period of the detente exercise in southern Africa. In Pretoria, John Vorster was trying to dictate the pace of a process that would lead to a form of legal independence for Rhodesia acceptable to his regime. The veteran Zimbabwean nationalist leaders Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe and Ndabaningi Sithole had been released temporarily from detention for discussions with Nyerere, Kaunda, Seretse Khama of Botswana and Machel, an informal group that became known as the Front Line.

The Front Line leaders had tried to bring some cohesion into the fragmented Zimbabwean liberation movement by forcing its various components into a coalition known as the African National Council (ANC). The theory was that the ANC would negotiate with Ian Smith for majority rule. In practice, Smith had no intention of negotiating any such thing. In March 1975 his secret service had murdered the exiled Zanu leader, Herbert Chitepo, and had managed to put the blame on the Zanu military commander, Josiah Tongogara. Tongogara, known to his men as Comrade Tongo, was arrested and jailed by the Zambian authorities. Several other senior Zanu men were also detained in Zambia in connection with Chitepo's murder. Tongogara had been the key man in Zanu's operation into Rhodesia out of Tete province and his presence as commander was sorely missed. By the time of Mozambican independence, Zanu's military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla) was in poor shape. It was supposed to be part of the ANC, led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, but most of its members supported Tongogara and Robert Mugabe. With all this confusion the Zimbabwe liberation struggle had effectively ground to a halt.

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When Ian Smith launched his first attacks on independent Mozambique in August 1975 he could hardly claim to be retaliating against a cross-border guerrilla offensive. There was none. But the attacks could have been pre-emptive strikes. The timing was curious. In July the Front Line presidents had met in Dar es Salaam and two of them, Nyerere and Machel, had argued that the detente process was getting nowhere and that it was time to resuscitate the guerrilla war in Zimbabwe. Kaunda thought it was worth continuing the search for a negotiated settlement and after the summit he renewed contacts with Pretoria through his special envoy, Mark Chona. These contacts culminated in the talks between Smith

and Muzorewa's ANC at Victoria Falls in late August. The meeting, addressed by Kaunda and Vorster, was held in a South African train perched on a bridge across the Zambezi, half in Zambia and half in Rhodesia. Smith proposed constitutional talks inside Rhodesia and Muzorewa grudgingly agreed, on condition that ANC delegates be guaranteed immunity from arrest. After hearing this perfectly reasonable request Smith walked out of the meeting, making it clear that he had no intention of negotiating an end to white rule. Kaunda's -exercise in moderation had failed.

Smith, of course, had known it would fail and he may also have known that Machel and Nyerere would then be in a position to say 'We told you so' to Kaunda. It may have been no coincidence, then, that a few days before the Victoria Falls debacle the Rhodesian armed forces had launched their first attacks on independent Mozambique.

But if the attacks in Manica and Tete were designed to intimidate Machel into refusing to support a Zimbabwean guerrilla force they failed. The Front Line leaders met in Lusaka on 15 September and buried detente. They agreed that all trained Zimbabwean guerrillas, except those detained in Zambia on specific charges, would be transferred from Tanzania and Zambia to Mozambique.

Resumption of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe depended on more than the use of Mozambican territory. Zimbabwean politics had become extremely complex in the 1970s, with all efforts to achieve unity having failed. Frelimo had developed close links with Zanu, but Zapu as well as Zanu guerrillas would be coming to Mozambique as part of the new arrangement. Unity under the umbrella of the ANC had been largely notional. Machel did not want two separate guerrilla armies operating out of Mozambique and he put unity as a condition for the use of Mozambican territory.

Fortunately many Zimbabwean guerrilla commanders were also seeking unity and in November 1975 they created a joint Zanu-Zapu military committee, which began sending fighters into Zimbabwe from

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Mozambique in January.

The Rhodesians swiftly stepped up their military operations in Mozambique, notably with air, artillery and infantry assaults on the border villages of Pafuri on the south bank of the Limpopo and Mavue south of the Save river on 23 and 24 February. Former members of the Portuguese special forces were reported to have taken part in the Mavue attack. 9

On 3 March Machel summoned all foreign ambassadors in Maputo (as Lourenço Marques had been renamed a month earlier) to hear a major announcement: the border with Rhodesia was being closed immediately and Mozambique would apply full sanctions, prescribed by the UN, as part of the international effort to free the Zimbabwean people from racist domination. Rhodesian use of the ports of Beira and Maputo for exports and imports was terminated forthwith. Henceforth, Smith would have to use the costlier routes to the sea through South Africa.

At the same time, it seemed the Zimbabwe liberation movement had at last found harmony. Zanu and Zapu soldiers were working together and the new joint liberation force had adopted a name, the Zimbabwe People's Army (Zipa). But by the middle of the year the military unity agreement had broken down and almost the entire Zapu contingent left Mozambique. Machel was left alone with Zanu once again. If that had been the end of the complications within the Zimbabwean liberation movement, Machel could have left the freedom fighters to get on with the war in Zimbabwe while he concentrated on the defence of Mozambique and the development of the Mozambican economy. But it was not so simple.

Zipa was for all practical purposes no more or no less than the military wing of Zanu. In March the Zanu commanders in the Zipa alliance had provided Machel with a list of ten men they considered their political leaders. Zanu Secretary General Robert Mugabe's name was at the top of the list. By mid-year, after the Zapu people had dropped out, Zipa was under the command of a veteran Zanu commander, Rex Nhongo, and the number two man was Dzinashé Machingura, a well-educated Zanu political officer.

Nhongo never really switched his allegiance from Mugabe, who was living in exile in the Mozambican coastal town of Quelimane, far from the war zones and from Maputo.

But Machingura was clinging to the idea of Zipa as a 'third force', a guerrilla movement which was above the destructive squabbles of past Zimbabwean politics. This had been the notion of Machel and Nyerere when they invited the guerrilla commanders of Zanu and Zapu to work together in camps in Mozambique in late 1975. But the situation had

Welcoming the new Zimbabwean premier Robert Mugabe to Beira in 1980.

Photo: Louise Gubb.

Machel and Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress of South Africa, at a 'all', in Maputo on 14 February 1982. Photo: Kok Nam. Tempo.

More friends, fewer enemies. With Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, during a visit to Moscow in 1986. Photo: Daniel Maquinasse.

Bridging the Sino-Soviet divide. Machel with the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Hua Guofeng, during a visit to China in 1978. Photo: Daniel Maquinasse.

And with Ronald Reagan. Great Communicators from opposite sides of the ideological divide meet in a cordial atmosphere at the White House in September 1985. Photo: Naita Ussene. Tempo.

With British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during a visit to London in 1983. Photo: Daniel

Independence did not end the war. This woman had an ear cut off by South African sponsored MNR bandits in Manica province in 1985, while the block

offlats pictured below was wrecked' when a powerful car bomb exploded near the centre of Maputo on 21 April 1986 Photos: AIM

'Hugging the hyena - or sidestepping the crocodile? Machel's bid for peace with P.W. Botha's administration at the Nkomati ceremony on 16 March 1984. Photo: AIM.

The crash site at Mbuzini in South Africa. Photo: Kok Nam. AIM.  
The President's coffin is carried away fr'on the wreckage of the plane. Photo: Kok Nam.

Machel's finerial, 28 October 1986. Old comrades Marcelino dos Santos (left) and Joaquim Chissano (now President) lead the pall bearers. Photo: AIM.  
Soldiers weeping at Machel'sfitneral Photo: Antonio Muchave. AIM.

"How Long Shall They Kill Our Prophets While We Stand Aside and Look ?"

- Bob Marley

UNI

Samora Machel

President oI Mozambique

Assassinated

October 19. 19S(6

Maurice Bishop

Prime Minister of Grenada

Assassinated

October 19, 1983

Forward Ever, Backward Never!

A Luta Continua!

Photo: Arthur Winner. Poster: Akinjele Sadiq.

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changed. With the departure of Zapu from the joint effort, the rump that remained was Zanu.

Machel was not sure what to make of Mugabe in these days. They had first met in November 1974 during the detente exercise, when Mugabe had been released from detention in Rhodesia to go to meet the Front Line leaders in Lusaka. The leaders had been expecting the Zanu President, Ndabaningi Sithole, also in detention in Rhodesia, and were taken aback when Mugabe, the number two man, arrived instead. Sithole had renounced the armed struggle and had been voted out of office by Zanu Central Committee members in jail. They had chosen Mugabe as the new leader. The Front Line leaders knew little of what had been going on in Ian Smith's jails and detention centres and to them the whole business smelled very fishy. A Zanu coup in Smith's prison, was how Machel described it at the time. Nyerere was equally unhappy. Mugabe was put on a plane and sent back into detention in Rhodesia.

In December he was released as part of the detente process and in April 1975 he made his way to Mozambique. This was still two months before independence and Machel was not there to meet him. The Mozambican leader had just ended his visits to China and Korea and was about to begin his triumphal tours of Tanzania and Zambia. Mugabe spent several weeks in camps with Zimbabwean guerrilla recruits before being rusticated to Quelimane, where he remained in virtual isolation from the liberation struggle for several months.

In March 1976, when the Zanu commanders declared that Mugabe was their leader, Machel took a greater interest in the man. The case of Ndabaningi Sithole had been cleared up and it was evident that he had little effective support in Zanu. By the middle of the year the Zipa high command was -prevaricating over Mugabe. The commanders were divided over whether to go it alone or to line up behind Mugabe.

Nhongo, the principal pro-Mugabe figure and the military commander of Zipa, was in an awkward position. Mugabe was far away in Quelimane and Tongogara, to whom Nhongo was also loyal, was in jail in Zambia accused of murdering Herbert Chitepo. Nhongo let Machingura, who was Zipa political commissar, do most of the talking in public. And Machingura was increasingly presenting the line that Zipa was a new and separate political-military entity with no allegiance to any of the old political leaders.

Despite the internal contradictions, the war in Zimbabwe developed in favour of the Zipa forces in 1976. It was very difficult for Machel to know which strand of Zipa to support, the Zanu loyalists or the avowedly Marxist Zipa independents led by Machingura. Until late in the year he leaned towards Machingura. Then every-

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thing happened at once. In October Zanu and Zapu had another stab at unity, forming the Patriotic Front. Tongogara and the other Zanu detainees in Zambia were released. A new conference on Zimbabwean independence was organized in Geneva. Tongogara expressed his support for Mugabe. Machingura remained aloof and did not want to go to Geneva as part of a Zanu delegation. Machingura was a very clever young man and very dedicated to the liberation of his country. But he had made a mistake. He thought that by presenting a Marxist position for Zipa - a position he probably genuinely believed in - he would get Machel's support. Machel, however, had different ideas. In his view, the Zimbabwean liberation movement was fighting for majority rule, not socialism. The Zipa leaders refused to go to the Geneva conference, and began compiling documents attacking Mugabe, denouncing Geneva and announcing plans for transforming Zipa into a political party.

At this point the relationship between Mozambique and a future independent Zimbabwe was in the balance. The complex mix of ideological, tribal and personal disputes that were taking place among the leaders of Zipa was bewildering, and Mozambican ministers and senior army officers were kept busy figuring out who was doing what and why.

In December Machel summoned the Zipa leaders to the coastal resort of Bilene north of Maputo, where he was having his annual holiday. Their meeting was decisive.

Machel came down firmly on the side of Mugabe and threw the book at Machingura and his supporters. Since Machel had until then been sympathetic to the young Zipa leaders, his attitude must have come as a shock to them. It was even more of a shock when they were arrested the following month and interned for the duration of the war. At Bilene, Machel lectured the Zipa committee on what to him was a fundamental point: knowing when to negotiate is part of being a good general. He was probably thinking of his own experiences in 1974 when, despite his strong hostility to Spinola, he had negotiated successfully with the Portuguese. At that time Nyerere had been an advocate of careful deliberation over the possibilities of a negotiated peace. Machel had listened to an older and more experienced statesman and now he expected the young Zimbabweans to do the same. He virtually ordered them to send a message of support to Mugabe in Geneva and told a group of the leaders to go to Geneva themselves and join the Zanu delegation.

Machel was angry for several reasons. For a start the Front Line presidents had asked the British government to convene the conference, and the whole exercise would be a farce without the presence of the Zipa guerrillas whose military action had weakened the Smith

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regime to the point of accepting such a conference. Secondly, the Zipa steering committee headed by Rex Nhongo had told him in March and again in September that Mugabe was their leader. Thirdly, Mugabe and Nkomo had created a political alliance, the Patriotic Front, which could go a long way towards obliging the international community to take the Zimbabwean nationalist movement as a whole more seriously. Fourthly, the Rhodesian armed forces had taken the war into his country and had set up a surrogate terrorist force. Machel had a duty to his own people to make every effort to ensure that their suffering did not drag on indefinitely.

Machel was very good at identifying the beginning of a process. He could see as well as anyone that Smith would probably sabotage Geneva, as he had sabotaged Victoria Falls. But even a flawed Geneva conference was a forum for the nationalists. Henry Kissinger had been one of the key movers in the build up to the conference. In these days anything Kissinger did attracted world attention so the Zimbabweans present were establishing their identities before a vast international audience.

As far as the world was concerned, the Rhodesia issue involved Ian Smith on one side and Mugabe, Nkomo and Bishop Muzorewa on the other. The Zimbabweans at Geneva were achieving the status of international statesmen and in future would be the key movers in all political moves towards majority rule unless Zipa could present an alternative.

By the time of the meeting in Bilene it had become obvious to Machel that the Zipa steering committee was no alternative to the Patriotic Front in the

international diplomatic arena. The Zipa commander, Nhongo, was in any case quite happy to follow Mugabe. Machingura was an articulate spokesperson for the group favouring a unique identity for Zipa, separate from the traditional movements, but this group lacked diplomatic finesse.

They had given only one international press conference, at the Hotel 'Cardoso in Maputo in September, and made a mess of it. In front of British television cameras, Machingura said Britain had no right to convene the Geneva conference and dissociated Zipa from Mugabe. As the reporter from the London Times put it: 'Wearing a brown beret and grey uniform he (Machingura) was accompanied by five senior members of the guerrilla force whose wild appearance would have been hardly likely to inspire confidence among Rhodesia's whites.' Whether Rhodesia's whites, whose army had murdered nearly 700 Zimbabwean refugees at Nyazonia in Mozambique the previous month, merited such consideration is not the point. But the Zipa men were certainly unprepossessing. It was probably just as well Machingura was

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wearing a beret since he had shaved all his hair off and looked distinctly more bizarre without a hat.

Machel's soldierly disposition led him to demand spruceness and dignified behaviour from his own officers and ministers at all times, and he expected the senior Zipa officers to have a similarly dignified presence. At Bilene, he queried Machingura's leadership pretensions and told him that he would not get in the kitchen door of State House in Zimbabwe after liberation.<sup>1</sup>

A group from the Zipa steering committee went to the Geneva conference but no settlement emerged. Afterwards, the contradiction between Machingura's group and the Zanu leadership was not resolved and Machel sanctioned the internment of the former. From then on Machel dealt with Mugabe as political leader of the guerrilla forces transiting through Mozambique, and with Tongogara, who resumed his post as military commander and kept Nhongo as his deputy. Machel had come down on the side of Mugabe for reasons that had little to do with Mugabe's personal popularity inside Rhodesia. Neither Machel nor Mugabe had any way of evaluating that at the time. But when the first free elections were held in Zimbabwe in 1980, it became obvious that Mugabe had massive support.

Notes

1. Two of the ministers chosen by Portugal took Mozambican nationality at the time of independence. One of them, Luis Maria de Alcantara Santos, later became Minister of Transport and Communications. He died alongside Machel at Mbuzini.
2. When the name of the PIDE was changed to DGS (General Directorate of Security) Frelimo stressed that it was a change of name, not of nature. The movement therefore frequently referred to it as 'the PIDE-DGS'.
3. The Mozambique People's Liberation Forces (FPLM) was the Frelimo guerrilla

army during the independence struggle. The initials were retained after independence to maintain tradition, and the military army became known as the Mozambican Armed Forces (FPLM).

4. 'Frelimo stops the backlash', The Observer, London, 15 September 1974.

5. Tempo, Maputo, 5 September 1982.

6. Martin and Johnson, Destructive Engagement, Harare, 1986, pp. 1 - 15.

7. Tempo, Lourenço Marques, No. 251.

8. These and many other details of Rhodesian attacks were given by Machel on 3 March 1976, when he announced the closure of Mozambique's border with Rhodesia.

9. Tempo, Maputo, No. 284, p. 18.

10. There is no evidence that Nyerere needed to put direct pressure on Machel to negotiate with the Portuguese in 1974. But Frelimo's hostility to Spinola was fierce, and this was reflected in an editorial in the Tanzania Daily News of 27 April 1974.

The editorial, written after consultation with a senior Frelimo official, condemned

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Spinola as a man seeking to continue Portuguese colonialism under a new guise.

Two days later, the same newspaper published a much more intelligent and statesmanlike editorial which, while questioning Spinola's policy, offered him independence negotiations and 'peace and friendship with Africa'. I wrote the first editorial. Julius Nyerere, editor-in-chief of the paper, wrote the second.

11. My account of the discussions at Bilene is drawn from an unrecorded conversation

with Machel's Special Assistant, Fernando Honwana, who often acted as an interpreter between the President and Zimbabwean leaders. To the best of my recollection this is an accurate account, but it was not possible to recheck with Honwana at

the time of writing: he died alongside Machel.

Machel of Mozambique

8. The road to Mbuzini

In the period following the collapse of the Geneva conference the Rhodesian regime stepped up attacks on Mozambique, in an attempt to force Machel to end Mozambique's support for the Zanu guerrillas. On the face of it, Machel was in a weak position. The year 1977 had started badly with massive crop and livestock losses caused by the worst floods in the Limpopo Valley in nearly quarter of a century, and there were many other factors which favoured a Rhodesian offensive.

\* After independence, Machel and his colleagues had set out without any direct experience or knowledge of state management. They would inevitably make errors of judgement which the Rhodesians could profit from.

\* Mozambique did not have a modern, well-equipped regular army. The inherited guerrilla structure of independence war days would appear inadequate in the face of big infantry and artillery invasions with strong air support. The Mozambicans

would be obliged to invest heavily in military hardware, which would severely limit the government's ability to improve the standard of living of its citizens.

\* Partly because of the growing expense of the war and partly because almost all the technicians in the country had been Portuguese and had left, the Mozambicans would not be able to repair infrastructure destroyed in Rhodesian attacks. By flattening villages and destroying roads, bridges, railways and vital telecommunications centres Smith's military chief, General Peter Walls, was doing more than stressing the cost factor of war: he was pointing out that the Mozambicans were losing the little that they had inherited from the Portuguese and would soon have nothing.

\* The Rhodesians knew the Mozambican border area intimately. Not only had they been fighting there since the beginning of the decade but they had helped the Portuguese in drawing up detailed maps of the area.

Despite these weaknesses, and heavy human and material losses in the war, the Frelimo leadership turned 1977 into a year of action on both the internal and international fronts. Internally, there were two major political events: the third congress of FRELIMO, which turned the movement into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, Frelimo, and general elections which created a national parliament, the People's Assembly, as well as local councils throughout the country. The basic components of a new power structure were thus established. Another important internal development that year began in March,

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when Machel addressed students to announce that those in the last two years of secondary school were to go into teaching, crash courses for university entrance and the armed forces. He told them that he knew they had their own personal professional desires and ambitions but that the country had not a single agronomist nor jet fighter pilot. This was the heritage of Portuguese colonialism. He appealed to the patriotism of this group, the elite of Mozambican youth, who by and large were thoroughly disgruntled with the decision. Many found themselves in military uniform at a special crash course education centre in Maputo, while others were sent to the Soviet Union for training on Mig jets. The significance of Soviet training for Mig pilots and engineers was perhaps lost on the young students. Machel knew his country was in for a long war and he did not want to rely on foreign military personnel. He wanted his own people to be able to fly and maintain the sophisticated machinery of war.

In foreign relations as well, 1977 was an important year. At the end of March, President Podgorny of the Soviet Union paid a state visit to Mozambique. The visit culminated with the signing of a 20-year treaty of friendship and co-operation, which included a clause on co-ordinating defence strategy 'in the case of situations tending to threaten or disturb the peace'.

The same month saw a visit to Beira by the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, and a 20-year friendship treaty between Mozambique and Cuba was signed when Machel visited Havana in October.

But Machel was still following his policy of 'making more friends, fewer enemies'. In April he made his first visit to the West as head of state, touring Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. A mark of the success of that visit is that later in the year the Nordic countries signed a 50 million dollar agricultural agreement with Mozambique - the biggest joint Nordic support ever given to any country up till that time.

In June Machel sent Marcelino dos Santos to appeal at the UN Security Council for military and other assistance from the entire international community, in the face of sharply escalating aggression by the illegal Rhodesian regime. At this point, Machel was making it clear that if his government was to become militarily dependent on the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries the West had no right to complain. The Western powers were being asked to help Mozambique defend itself against a regime in open rebellion against the British crown. Mozambique did in fact get a Security Council resolution calling on all countries to help Mozambique with military assistance to defend its borders against Rhodesian attacks. No Western member of the council vetoed the resolution. Considering Mozambique was a one-party Mar-

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xist state, the vote itself was a remarkable achievement, although no Western military aid was actually proffered.

It was in 1977 that two Western newcomers to the southern African political scene shuttled around the region in the wake of the 1976 failure of the great shuttler himself, Henry Kissinger. The United States Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, and the British Foreign Secretary, David Owen, brought a new Rhodesian settlement plan which became known as the Anglo-American Proposals.

The plan eventually took the same nosedive as all previous Western proposals, but not before Machel had made a strong impact on Young and Owen. When Machel was killed, Owen felt moved enough to write a warm tribute entitled 'Africa loses a realist':

If Mozambique had stood aside from the Rhodesian struggle, it might have been possible for it to establish a relationship with South Africa. A purely 'Mozambique first' line must have seemed very tempting. Just as Kenneth Kaunda and Seretse Khama in Botswana have done, Samora Machel never hesitated to support the Zimbabwe struggle. Mozambique became the home for Robert Mugabe and Zanu. It was this relationship between Machel and Mugabe that became the anvil for Zimbabwe's independence. Machel was unstinting in his support, experiencing constant raids from Ian Smith's forces and infiltration from the Selous Scouts. A crucial element in this early disruption was the support of the Rhodesian secret service for the Mozambique guerrilla movement, Renamo (the MNR). After Zimbabwe's independence, Renamo continued with the support of South Africa and became a real threat.

Machel's friendship for Mugabe and his commitment to his

cause was always thoughtful, realistic and hard-headed. He was one of the first African leaders to see the merit of the 1977 AngloAmerican proposals. He wanted to tie the power of the United States into Zimbabwe's freedom struggle and was fully aware that neither the Soviet Union, East Germany or Cuba had the clout that would be necessary to topple Ian Smith and establish an independent Zimbabwe.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, as Owen indicates, many other African leaders did not see a great deal of point in trying to tie the power of the United States into the Zimbabwe liberation struggle. But Mozambique was at the

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sharp end and Machel had more reason than most to cast around for allies in unlikely places.

There were, however, several obstacles to the establishment of good relations with the United States and its main allies. The US Congress had put Mozambique on the economic aid blacklist, Nato countries had military links with South Africa, American and British mercenaries were incorporated in the Rhodesian armed forces and, at least in Mozambique's view, the Western press was running an anti-Mozambique campaign. In addition, Washington had previously been helpful to the Portuguese colonial regime.

Machel had his first chance to discuss relations face to face with a United States President when he went to America in October 1977 to address the UN. At a meeting with President James Carter, he offered to 'wipe the slate clean' and forget about the past collaboration between Washington and Lisbon. Judging by subsequent comments from Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President did not take kindly to being reminded of this collaboration. Machel, says Brzezinski, opened the meeting with 'a five-minute tirade on the subject of alleged American support for European colonialism. Carter listened without blinking an eyelash. When Machel finally came to a stop, Carter leaned forward, looked his guest straight in the eye, and said very quietly, "Mr President, you have a very distorted view of my country".'

Machel, according to Brzezinski, was taken aback and lapsed into silence.

Brzezinski does not speculate as to what Machel was thinking at that moment.

Perhaps, however, running through the Mozambican leader's mind were memories of the assistance the United States military had given to Kaulza de Arriaga, or Richard Nixon's 435 million dollar investment in Portuguese fascism in 1971.

Machel could not get a red cent out of Washington and military aid was an absurd dream. He must have been wondering who had a distorted view of who's country.

Carter, according to Brzezinski, 'could be very blunt - and yet not manage to offend needlessly'. This inoffensive bluntness, however, was not very apparent in Carter's next remark. Brzezinski says that Carter, 'in the same relaxed tone, went on to say that he did not need a lecture from someone running a totalitarian society (and he used the word 'totalitarian') on how to govern America and what America's world role ought to be.'<sup>3</sup>

Machel did not react to this inoffensive bluntness. Unlike Carter, he had actually lived under a totalitarian regime and knew what it felt like. And he remembered

who had been ploughing money into that regime. In an interview in Maputo in May 1979 Machel was strangely courteous towards Jimmy Carter. By that time the Anglo-American

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proposals for Zimbabwe had been abandoned and there was more reason than ever to try to tell Carter what his southern Africa policy ought to be. Instead, Machel was bland.

President Carter and his administration tried to initiate a new American policy towards Africa, which for once would dissociate the United States from the injustices of colonialism, racism and apartheid. This intention is positive, but disconcerting realities remain, despite the goodwill expressed. We've observed the continually hesitant positions of the United States towards Zimbabwe and Namibia. The abandonment of the Anglo-American plan for Zimbabwe, the virtual abandonment of the five Western powers' plan for Namibia, testify to a lack of coherence or an incapacity to implement a policy of good intentions.

Machel was clear about the relative weight of the United States and Mozambique. 'We can't say do this or do that to the United States,' he said. And he added 'Carter is a man of goodwill. We will give him more time before we make a judgement.'<sup>4</sup>

The Carter administration had indeed kept a high profile in the Zimbabwe negotiations of 1977 and 1978, even giving Secretary of State Cyrus Vance an active role at one stage, but the effect on Ian Smith was not what the Patriotic Front or the Front Line States wanted. Faced with increasing military pressure from the guerrillas and diplomatic pressure from the West, Smith instituted the wrong kind of changes. While stepping up attacks on Mozambique and Zambia, he signed an 'internal settlement' with three Zimbabweans who were not part of the Patriotic Front's war effort - Bishop Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and a government-paid chief named Chirau. There would be a form of election and the country would be renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia but military and political power would effectively remain in the hands of the white minority. In the event, Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) won the April 'election' and the bishop was designated to become 'prime minister' in June.

The terms of Smith's settlement were blatantly designed to maintain the status quo. Zanu and Zapu were excluded from the elections. There was no international supervision and the Rhodesian security forces had rounded people up to force them to the polls. The UN Security Council had dismissed the internal settlement as 'illegal and unacceptable' but there were ominous signs that the government nominally headed by Muzorewa might win a certain amount of interna-

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tional recognition. The United States Senate was trying to force Carter to lift sanctions. Recognition by Britain appeared imminent after the May 1979 election victory of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party. Thatcher had referred to the Patriotic Front as a 'terrorist organization' and her observer team at the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia elections had pronounced them fairly conducted.

Machel and his Front Line colleagues, however, considered that the elections were phoney, an attempt to head off real freedom and independence for Zimbabwe. Mozambique warned that 'external complicity' in the settlement, in other words, acceptance by London and Washington, would mean continuation of the war and the danger of 'internationalisation of the conflict.'

The words have a familiar ring. This was the kind of warning - or was it a bluff? - that came from Machel in September 1974 when the fascist settlers and Simango had captured the radio station and tried to head off real Mozambican independence. Whether or not Machel was bluffing in 1974, this time he was not. It was not only the leaders of the Front Line States who were worried about the possibility of London and Washington trying to confer respectability on the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia regime. The socialist countries were also concerned, and Cuba came up with a plan to counteract the Western threat. It involved organizing an independence ceremony in an area of Zimbabwe controlled by the Zanu guerrillas, with the swearing in of a Patriotic Front government before Muzorewa could take office. This would involve taking in reporters and photographers from dozens of socialist and non-aligned countries, whose governments would then recognize the PF government.

Machel was apparently ready to give it a try. The caravan would, of course, have to enter Zimbabwe overland from Mozambique. Martin and Johnson, who give a detailed account of this extraordinary plan in *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, say that a full Mozambican mechanized battalion with artillery and anti-aircraft units was put on stand by to go with Nkomo and Mugabe and the press corps. The whole exercise was based on the theory that Mugabe and Nkomo could transform the PF from a very loose alliance of rivals into a united political front. That was Machel's dream. Earlier in 1979 he and his aides had worked out a unity scheme which would make Nkomo the titular leader while Mugabe's Zanu would have most of the power, especially on military matters. Machel seemed to think this scheme would satisfy Nkomo's vanity while protecting Mugabe's control of the guerrilla struggle. The Cubans proposed a similar structure for the PF government in the liberated areas.

Joshua Nkomo didn't like the unity plan when he heard it from the

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Front Line leaders in April and he liked it even less when he heard it revamped and incorporated in an independence scenario in June. When Machel convened a Front Line summit in Maputo to discuss the Cuban plan, Nkomo signalled his displeasure by refusing to attend. This came as a surprise to Machel since a Cuban envoy, party foreign relations secretary Raul Valdez Vivo, had told him Nkomo had agreed. Machel was then in the embarrassing position of receiving Nyerere and Kaunda for a Front Line summit with nothing on the agenda. He told Martin Mora, the Cuban ambassador, to send a message to Castro expressing his anger over the debacle.

With Nkomo's rejection, the Cuban plan fell through. As it turned out this was not a big disaster because no country recognized the Muzorewa administration as a genuine government. If the plan had gone ahead, however, the danger of

'internationalization' of the conflict which Machel warned of would have been very real. There would have been two governments in Zimbabwe, one supported by the West and its allies and the other supported by the rest of the world. South Africa might well have intervened in strength as the defender of Western interests. The rest can be left to the imagination.

For Machel, the affair was no longer simply a question of fair play for the people of Zimbabwe. By this time, more and more Mozambican quislings were being captured during Rhodesian raids and their statements gave a grim picture of Rhodesia and South African plans for Mozambique. A pattern had been set. Mozambicans working in the South African mines were recruited for military training in Rhodesia, from where they would take part in raids on Mozambique, alongside the nucleus of the 'Mozambique National Resistance' who had been members of the Portuguese special forces. The first publicized case concerned a migrant miner-turned-mercenary named Afonso Cotoi. After he was captured he said that he had been recruited in South Africa and taken to Rhodesia for military training by South Africans, Rhodesians and Portuguese.

He had been told his chief was Jorge Jardim, the Portuguese magnate who had formerly been Malawi's consul in Beira. One of the group's objectives was to assassinate Machel and other Frelimo leaders.'

Mozambique is, and was then, a poor country so recruiting mercenaries like Cotoi was not difficult. It became even less difficult after the Rhodesians and their surrogates destroyed schools, clinics and communications facilities that had been established since independence. New villages with all these facilities were attacked and peasants were murdered. For many young men, joining the bandits was the line of least resistance.

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In 1979 the growth of a bandit army was in its infancy. But it was there and it was a threat to Frelimo's efforts to build a new nation.

A way out of the quagmire appeared. The Commonwealth Conference, traditionally a forum for discussion on southern Africa, was to be held that year in southern Africa, for the first time. Lusaka, a Front Line capital, was the venue.

Machel was not a Commonwealth leader and he had only the vaguest understanding of what the Commonwealth was, but one of his strengths was that he knew his weaknesses. He wanted to know about this Commonwealth phenomenon so he sent an aide to London to investigate. The aide was the president's Special Assistant, Fernando Honwana, a man already well versed in matters related to Britain. He had lived there and taken a degree at York University before becoming a platoon commander in the Frelimo independence army.

Machel decided not to pick a fight with Thatcher. Her position was ambiguous. On the one hand she was calling the Patriotic Front guerrillas 'terrorists' but on the other hand she was committing her government to 'genuine black majority rule in Rhodesia'. There was some room for discussion.

Machel could not attend the Lusaka Commonwealth Conference but a Front Line summit was organized for the eve of the meeting in the Zambian capital,

specifically to discuss Zimbabwe strategy. President Neto of Angola, who by this time was hosting the Zapu leadership in exile in Luanda, was present and had a private meeting with Machel in a Lusaka hotel before the summit began. By chance, I was interviewing Machel in his hotel room when Neto arrived. A waiter had just poured two large measures of Haig's Dimple whisky, one for me and one for Machel. Machel had looked across at me with a wicked glint in his eye and said: 'This one is also for you, Scotchman,' as he poured his dram into mine. The joking stopped when Neto entered. Machel was visibly shocked at the gaunt and haggard appearance of his old comrade from the days of the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. Neto was dying of cancer.

By this time Machel had been well briefed by Honwana on the workings of the Commonwealth and understood that the regular Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHGM) could be very influential. But he still found the event, with the presence of Queen Elizabeth at the opening ceremony, a somewhat bizarre affair. The official cars in Lusaka had special CHGM, number plates, leading Machel to remark jokingly to one of his ministers. 'Do you know what that CHGM means? It's Chegou Hoje a Grande Mae (the Great Mother Arrived Today.)' It was not clear whether he was referring to the Queen or Mrs Thatcher.

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At the Front Line summit Machel and Neto agreed with the three Commonwealth members, Nyerere, Kaunda and Khama, on tactics for the Commonwealth conference. Working on the hypothesis that Thatcher might not be as inflexible over Zimbabwe as her 'terrorists' remark implied, and might be amenable to a solution that would rid Britain once and for all of the Rhodesia problem, they agreed that Nyerere should make a speech of moderation and reasonableness, while sticking to basic principles. Thus the Tanzanian leader, while insisting on proper elections and a democratic constitution, noted that the principle of majority rule had now been accepted by Ian Smith, who had once said this would not happen in a thousand years. Smith may have calculated that his Zimbabwe-Rhodesia manouevre would actually maintain minority rule in a camouflaged form but he could hardly say that in public.

Thatcher, on the advice of her Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, accepted Britain's colonial responsibility for Rhodesia and summoned all the parties concerned to an independence conference at Lancaster House in London. There would be free and fair elections under British supervision and with Commonwealth observers. Machel was delighted. In 1978 he had sent Mozambican soldiers into Rhodesia with Zanu guerrillas and had subsequently been briefed on the internal situation. Extensive support for Zanu was evident. The Lancaster House conference, which began on 10 September 1979, was strongly supported by Machel. Some members of the leadership of Zanu were less enthusiastic, distrusting the Thatcher government and fearing that the conference was a manouevre to cheat them out of a victory that would soon be theirs on the battlefield. Zapu leaders to whom I spoke in Lusaka immediately after Thatcher announced that the conference would be held were not only unenthusiastic - they were downright hostile to the whole plan. But Machel and his Front Line

colleagues convinced both wings of the Patriotic Front to go to London and to negotiate seriously. It is tempting to compare and contrast Machel's opposition to a vote in his own country after the Portuguese coup of 1974 and his enthusiasm for the ballot box in Rhodesia. In fact the two situations were very different. Frelimo was the only effective liberation movement in Mozambique in 1974 and what Spínola was offering was a referendum on decolonization, a question which in the eyes of the UN was not an issue: colonial powers were simply supposed to shed their colonies. Rhodesia, on the other hand, was being decolonized by Britain, with a properly supervised election to determine which of several Zimbabwean rival parties had majority support. The Lancaster House conference was a tortuous affair which

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dragged on for months. Machel kept a delegation in London throughout, not to participate in the conference itself, but to liaise with Mugabe and Nkomo and, as far as possible, with the British authorities. Machel's constructive approach to the proceedings impressed the conference chairman, Lord Carrington, and Mrs Thatcher herself. Machel was equally impressed with Thatcher's determination to solve the problem. A special relationship had been struck between the Marxist Machel and the ultra-conservative Thatcher.<sup>6</sup>

On 21 December an agreement was signed at Lancaster House, thanks in part to pressure exerted on Zanu by Machel. He was convinced the settlement on offer would satisfy the nationalists' aspirations. There would be a ceasefire, elections and independence. The Patriotic Front had to concede a major point: there would be reserved seats for whites in parliament. But taken as a whole, the agreement guaranteed majority rule in an independent Zimbabwe.

For Samora Machel the Lancaster House agreement was more than an accord to end a constitutional dispute. It was an accord to end a war in which Mozambique was an active participant. During the conference there had been major developments in Mozambique. General Walls launched some of the biggest attacks of the whole war, causing extensive destruction in western Mozambique. On the positive side, the Rhodesians had lost their most effective Mozambican quisling, André Matzangaise, the man they had appointed head of the MNR. But by the time Matzangaise was killed by the Mozambican army in October, the Rhodesians had already established a big MNR base at Gorongosa, just north of the Beira corridor.

Machel appeared to be unworried about the MNR in those days. He seemed to think it would disappear along with its creator, the Rhodesian regime. He had studiously avoided provoking the South African regime into a position of military hostility. Malawi was now a potential ally, because it had access to the ports of Beira and Nacala. At last, there seemed to be no serious obstacle to peace in Mozambique.

In fact, however, the Lancaster House agreement and Zanu's sweeping victory in the Zimbabwe elections in February 1980 marked the beginning of a new and more deadly stage in the war against Mozambique. The attacks by the Rhodesian

armed forces stopped, but South Africa then took direct control of the campaign to destabilize Mozambique.

The South African authorities had become alarmed by the rise of Samora Machel. They could not have forgotten the jubilant proFrelimo demonstrations in the black South African townships after the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique. Now, in 1980, Zim-

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babwe had majority rule because of a guerrilla army which took much of its inspiration from Frelimo, and which had benefitted from Machel's logistical support. The structure of white power in southern Africa was, it seemed, being knocked down brick by brick and Machel was visibly front and centre in the demolition squad.

The problem for the white supremacists of South Africa was not simply that Machel was a clever and resourceful enemy who was making a nuisance of himself. A more serious matter was that for many millions of people he had become a living and vibrant symbol of the liberation struggle's inevitable victory. This idealized image of Machel perceived by the youth of the sub-continent was, in a very real sense, a greater danger to apartheid than the flesh and blood president and commander in chief. A man can be killed in a second. To destroy a symbol takes longer.

After Lancaster House, the authorities in Pretoria moved quickly to begin the systematic destruction of the image of Machel and Frelimo by laying waste to Mozambique. The MNR gunmen were flown from Zimbabwe to South Africa, where they were given weapons and training which would turn them into a much more serious threat to Machel's administration. They were trained, essentially, to destroy the economy and the social fabric of Mozambique through a campaign of sabotage and terror.

The country's economic and social infrastructure had already been seriously weakened by the repercussions of the confrontation with racism. The direct economic cost of imposing UN sanctions against Rhodesia was well over \$500 million, according to UN estimates, and damage caused by Rhodesian raids pushes the figure closer to 600 million. This is more than twice the annual value of Mozambique's exports in the best post-independence external trading year, 1981. South Africa, meanwhile, had been quietly but systematically turning the screws on Mozambique, exploiting the relations of dependence which had been established in the colonial period. The South African Chamber of Mines reduced the recruitment of Mozambican miners from 118 030 in 1975 to 45 824 in 1980 and abrogated a 1928 agreement under which the government in Mozambique could use 60 per cent of the miners' wages to buy gold at a preferential rate. The port of Maputo, which had been built primarily to serve South Africa, was systematically deprived of the lifeblood of South African trade following Mozambique's independence.

Apart from cash losses caused by these developments, there was a huge social cost. Machel's government had no way of finding jobs for the men who could no

longer go to work in the Rand gold mines, nor for the 10 000 other people who had been laid off in the Beira area as a

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result of sanctions against Rhodesia.

Despite all this, there were some important advances in the period up to 1981, the year in which South African sponsorship of the MNR began to show itself in terms of a much greater capacity for destruction. By 1981 more than 10 000 hectares of farmland had been put under irrigation. Production of cashew nuts, the country's main export, was the highest since independence and total earnings from all exports reached the record level of \$250 million. New factories were being built, notably to manufacture textiles and process timber. Hundreds of health posts had been constructed and every district in the country had at least one professional health worker. More than 10 000 primary school teachers had been trained to deal with an education explosion: primary school attendance had doubled since independence and secondary school attendance had quadrupled. Between 1977 and 1981, the gross national product increased by 11,6 per cent.<sup>7</sup> In 1980, Mozambique had been an enthusiastic founder member of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), a regional alliance formed to break the chains of dependence, especially on South Africa. Mozambique's ports and railways were a key factor in the SADCC strategy, since they could be developed as alternative trade routes for landlocked countries dependent on South African harbours. Predictably, South Africa started blowing up the Mozambique routes in 1981, sometimes using its own troops, sometimes MNR surrogates.

On the defensive

The most striking difference between Frelimo's strategic position before and after 1981 is that, broadly speaking, the earlier period was characterized by an almost permanent military offensive, while in the last years of Machel's life he was almost permanently leading a defensive campaign. It is true that in the anti-colonial struggle it had been necessary to defend the liberated areas in the north, but the salient feature of that struggle was a driving, inexorable guerrilla advance. It is also true that during the war with Rhodesia most of Frelimo's military effort went into the defence of territory under foreign attack. But if one looks at the broader picture of an alliance between the Mozambicans and the Zimbabwean liberation forces, one can see that it was the Rhodesians who were constantly on the defensive. Machel and Tongogara, the Zanu military commander, were leading armies with separate identities but complementary roles against a common enemy

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who was losing ground day by day.

The South African enemy was much more formidable in military terms and wielded enormous economic power over most of the SADCC countries. Machel was never in a position to allow the African National Congress (ANC) to establish guerrilla transit camps such as Zipa and then Zanu had set up. Indeed, it is

doubtful that the ANC ever requested such facilities since it is fighting a different kind of war, based on tiny guerrilla units which can base themselves more comfortably in South Africa's black townships than in neighbouring countries. But Machel did allow the ANC to set up an office in Maputo and gave shelter to refugees from apartheid. Pretoria claimed this was a cover for the establishment of ANC command and coordination facilities in Mozambique, and that guerrillas were infiltrating into South Africa from Mozambican territory. The Nkomati Non-Aggression Accord of 1984, under which Mozambique and South Africa agreed to see that their respective territories were not used as springboards for military attacks on the other, has been interpreted in some quarters as a tacit admission by Frelimo that there was some truth in Pretoria's charge.

In fact, however, the accord was a declaration of intent for the future and the only significant tacit admission of past activities came from Pretoria. Under the terms of the agreement the South Africans closed down the MNR radio station, which the MNR had always claimed was inside Mozambique but which was in fact in the Transvaal. Thus Pretoria was publicly confirming that the MNR had enjoyed facilities in South Africa. That linkage, of which the radio station was only a small part, had not previously been admitted because no group which is sponsored by the apartheid regime could expect to be seriously considered as a representative of African interests.

Mozambique, on the other hand, never made any secret of its political and moral support for the ANC, which continued openly after Nkomati. What Machel agreed was not to permit the ANC to operate militarily out of, Mozambique and not to allow radio incitement to violence in South Africa.

But the subsequent systematic violation of Nkomati by South Africa, after Frelimo had taken measures to prevent the ANC from bothering Pretoria militarily, indicates that bashing the ANC in Mozambique was not Pretoria's main objective.

The target was the SADCC, which threatened P.W. Botha's plans for 'a constellation of states' in southern Africa, with Pretoria as the main star in the firmament. Mozambique was central to the SADCC, Machel was central to Mozambique. All post-Nkomati destabilization of Mozambique indicates that Pretoria's alleged concern over the ANC

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presence in Mozambique was a red herring.

But that was not clear on 30 January 1981, when the South African armed forces launched their first direct and open attack on Mozambique, and white commandos killed 12 opponents of the regime who were living in Matola on the outskirts of Maputo. Journalists who visited the scene reported that a white soldier was killed in the raid and his body was left behind. His helmet bore a painted swastika and the words 'siege heil'.

Machel was furious, not just at the South African regime but at the fact that the invasion force had driven with impunity past the big army barracks at Boane on the road between South Africa and Matola.

A mass rally was organized in Maputo on 14 February. Machel presented eight army officers accused of treason, collaboration with the enemy or failing to act against the invaders. But the main thrust of his anger was directed against the South African white supremacists. Tens of thousands of people heard his impassioned address which became known in the lore of local journalists as the 'Que Venham' (Let Them Come) speech.

We do not want war. Peace is a fundamental principle of our life.

But if they come here, what are we to do? Let the South Africans come but let them be sure that the war will end in Pretoria. Let them come and we shall put an end to war once and for all. There

will be true peace in our zone.

A Maputo pop singer, Yana, even wrote and recorded a successful song called 'Que Venham', based on Machel's speech. Behind all this open defiance, however, there was a mood of apprehension and a realization that a potentially disastrous mistake had been made. The attack had been possible, said Machel, because 'we underestimated the enemy. The end of the war in Rhodesia created a general feeling that finally there was peace in our country.' Machel was right. Peace had not been achieved. But the attack on Matola was a mere sideshow compared to what the South Africans had been preparing for Mozambique since early 1980 when they took full control of the MNR. The gunmen were given bases in the Transvaal and were trained to use heavy weapons. A new internal base was set up, at Garagua, near the Save river. New strategic targets were defined, notably the Beira Corridor, which no longer served the interests of white supremacists but now served as a vital external trade route for a free Zimbabwe.

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As all this was being prepared by the South African military and intelligence authorities, Machel and his colleagues were drawing up ambitious industrial, agricultural, educational and communications plans with the aim of dragging the country out of underdevelopment by the end of the 1980s. But these were plans for a nation at peace. There were some indications that Machel was not entirely lulled into an illusion of peace in 1980. In September that year formal ranks were introduced into the armed forces. Machel himself became Marshal of the Republic and veteran Frelimo leaders were given a variety of ranks from general downwards.

This was an inevitable stage in the process of building a modern military structure but it offended some people's sense of nostalgia for the good old egalitarian days of the independence war. It was a move that seemed to signal a departure from the informal guerrilla structure that had worked so well in the past. But, with hindsight, one can see that Machel was using his breathing space to do something which might be rather difficult to do later were there to be a further military conflagration. The first-time distribution of officers' insignia to former guerrilla commanders and political leaders inevitably creates a certain amount of strain because some soldiers feel that some people have not been given the ranks they deserve. The grumbles that were heard in the relatively peaceful days of

September 1980 were easily contained. A year later it would not have been so easy, in the midst of a new enemy offensive.

In 1980, the MNR had been given a list of targets for 1981 by Colonel Charles van Niekerk of South African military intelligence. There was a strong emphasis on the Beira area and the year did in fact see attacks on road and rail bridges, the pipeline which carries fuel to Zimbabwe and the destruction of marker buoys at the entrance to the port. Much of this was carried out by the South Africans themselves, some of it by mixed groups. The MNR became a handy way for Pretoria to shift responsibility for its destabilization on to what they could describe as a Mozambican opposition.

In the ensuing years, Machel would argue that there was no Mozambican political opposition. In the sense that the MNR never produced a convincing political programme this is true, but they were able to recruit extensively from men who lost their power and privileges when Frelimo won power and from the virtually unguarded labour reform prisons. Tribalism has also been a factor, with recruitment carried out on the basis of arguments that this or that group is not sufficiently represented in the government. A few former Frelimo guerrillas, disgruntled for various reasons, also joined, and some migrant workers in South Africa were recruited by means of cash payments. There were

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also illegal migrants in South Africa who were recruited by being told the alternative was prison.

But the big increase in recruitment which took place in the early 1980s must be very largely attributed to the prolonged drought, which created desperate food shortages in much of the southern half of the country. A former British ambassador to Mozambique, John Stewart, once told me that he agreed with Machel's characterization of the MNR as 'armed bandits'. In the appalling situation created by the drought, the ambassador said, it was not surprising that large numbers of young men would accept the offer of a gun to go on a rampage of looting, seizing by force whatever was available. This armed banditry and terrorism, alongside actions deliberately calculated to sabotage the national and regional economy, was the main MNR mode of operation until the time of Machel's death. With intensive South African training, however, the MNR also developed a certain amount of genuine military capacity and the army found itself in real clashes.

The three years that followed the January 1981 raid on Matola were marked by an escalation of the conflict which focused world attention on Mozambique. A dramatic sequence of events occurred in May 1983.

First, a captured white South African, Peter Benjamin Schoeman, appeared on Mozambican television and said he had been caught while trying to carry out a number of missions, one of which was 'the assassination of the President of Mozambique'. The South African government protested and claimed Schoeman was a common criminal. They said that although he had been a South African soldier he was no longer a member of the armed forces. Pretoria presented the

Schoeman affair as a Mozambican propaganda operation. If it was, it was singularly inept since peace talks which Mozambique had requested with South Africa were just about to take place in the South African border town of Komatipoort.

Second, on 23 May the South African air force entered the war for the first time as a strike force rather than a logistical aid to the MNR. Impala and Mirage jets swooped in on Matola, firing dozens of rockets at the town and killing six people. The number of deaths was small but the terror effect was great. As diplomats and journalists toured the stricken town afterwards, the South African government claimed the air force's targets had been ANC guerrillas. I was one of the first journalists there, arriving before anyone from the government or army headquarters. We were able to tour the town freely. Three of the dead were Mozambican workers in a jam factory which came under rocket fire. A little girl was killed outside her parents' house. A Mozambican soldier died guarding a bridge. And there was one South Africa - an ANC member who was hit while

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washing a car outside a small building which stored clothes for South African refugees.

Many houses, occupied by Mozambicans with no connection to the ANC, were destroyed or badly damaged by rocket fire. About 40 Mozambicans were wounded. But wherever we reporters went to inspect the damage, there were indications that the ANC had once had a presence there. In one damaged house we entered there was an ANC poster on the wall. The Mozambican family who lived in the house told us they had found it there when they took possession, 18 months earlier, and had kept it on the wall because they liked it. At the jam factory, a militiaman pointed out a nearby house and said that ANC people used to live there, but that they had left a long time ago.

In other words, apart from running a small clothes store, the ANC had long since moved out of Matola. South African intelligence was apparently out of date. Exactly one week after the air raid on Matola the South Africans brought 1980s military technology into the war, to try to find out a little bit more about what was really going on in Mozambique. A pilotless spy plane, supplied by the Israelis, flew effortlessly across Maputo province, feeding film to a jet flying behind. This, in turn, was transmitting the pictures back to South Africa. The Mozambican forces apparently had not the faintest idea of what was going on. The plane in front was not responding to requests for identification. The army command waited until it was approaching the air space over Machel's presidential offices, then decided enough was enough and ordered it to be shot down. It was duly shot down but by then South Africa had excellent aerial footage of southern Mozambique. The accompanying plane turned round and went back to South Africa. Only when the spy plane was fished out of the sea did the Mozambican armed forces realize what they were up against.

Facing remote control armed bandits and remote control warplanes, Machel knew that the war had taken on proportions his country was not equipped to deal with. He calculated that a non-aggression pact with South Africa might put an end to all

this. Negotiations with Pretoria continued until, with a great flourish, the Nkomati Accord on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness was signed on 16 March 1984.

In exchange for an end to South African aggression, including attacks by MNR, Machel's government would ensure that the ANC did not operate militarily out of Mozambique. It was a controversial decision that puzzled many of Frelimo's supporters and friends round the world. ANC members were obviously unsettled by the accord and there were one or two ANC statements that

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could be judged intemperate. However the movement's President, Oliver Tambo, took a statesmanlike and balanced position when he addressed a news conference in London. Tambo acknowledged that Machel and his colleagues were doing 'what they think is necessary'. He added: 'I'm not sure that in their position I'd have gone quite so far, but it must be accepted that the South African regime had decided to destroy Mozambique, to kill it as a state, and the leadership was forced to decide between life and death. So if it meant hugging the hyena, they had to do it. The rest of us, we must accept that position, but we also had to defend our position.'

It could all have been done quietly but Machel said no. He insisted on a public ceremony, as a matter of principle, refusing to make backdoor deals as at least one other government in the region had done.<sup>8</sup>

The accord was signed in a specially created neutral piece of land beside the Nkomati river on the border between the two countries. Machel declared that the accord was a victory for Frelimo's policy of peace. On a visit to Western Europe in October 1983, and in discussions with American foreign affairs officials, he had asked for Western pressure on South Africa to sign such an agreement. It was not simply a matter of putting on a brave front. During that period I listened to Machel talking on many occasions, both in public and in private, and my impression was that he sincerely believed the South Africans had been pushed into an agreement which their friends in the West would oblige them to respect. He was also very aware that it would hurt the leadership of the ANC, not necessarily in terms of the movement's struggle on the ground but in terms of appearing to lose a close African ally. Shortly before signing the accord, he met the ANC President, Oliver Tambo, at the holiday house in Bilene, the same place he had had a showdown with the young Zipa commanders in 1976. This time, however, the situation was very different. Machel was doing the explaining. He was basically concerned about a real threat to the survival of the Mozambican state, in a situation which showed no sign of an imminent ANC victory in South Africa. The ANC would not be locked out of Mozambique, but Mozambique could not be used as a base for military activities. ANC members who had bona fide jobs in Mozambique could stay in these jobs and others would have to live in refugee camps, except for an ANC diplomatic mission with a staff of 10. About 200 ANC members left Mozambique, which gives an idea of the threat the ANC presence in Mozambique posed to the Pretoria regime. In comparison, some 20

000 Zimbabwean guerrillas left Mozambique in 1980 after the Lancaster House agreement.

Machel's position appeared to be based on the assumption that the

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South African regime was persecuting Mozambique solely because a few ANC guerrillas were slipping across the border. If that was his assumption then he had become very naive. What seems more likely is that Machel was cleverly taking advantage of the South African government's propaganda line that his country was to blame for the violence in South Africa. That line had been echoed, in somewhat muted form, in certain influential sections of the Western press. By winning American support for a pact that would force the South Africans to drop the MNR, a creation of the white racists in the region, Machel was getting something for nothing. The ANC was not his creation. It had existed before P.W. Botha was born and would survive and flourish whether or not the Mozambique border was available. The MNR, on the other hand, was doomed to die a natural death when its umbilical cord was cut.

Machel was only half right. The ANC did indeed flourish without the Mozambique border. He himself had indeed made a favourable impression with Western leaders, to the extent that they were prepared to concede that he was not quite as bad a Marxist bogeyman as had been suspected. And since he was suing for peace in southern Africa they were prepared to lean on Pretoria to be reasonable and sign a pact. But the bottom line was enforcement. No Western country would force P.W. Botha to live up to the Nkomati Accord and call off the MNR. The ceremony beside the Nkomati was a charade. P.W. Botha shook hands with Machel while supplies were being flown into Mozambique for the MNR. Pretoria soon began beefing up the MNR base at Gorongosa. They called it Casa Banana. When Casa Banana was captured by the army (with decisive Zimbabwean support), more than a year after the Nkomati Accord, the diaries and documents left behind showed that Samora Machel had been cheated. The South Africans had never intended living up to Nkomati. They had been moving supplies in to the MNR and had even built an airstrip at Casa Banana. Among the visitors to the bandit base had been Louis Nel, the South African Deputy Foreign Minister.

The South Africans had started major MNR operations out of bases in Malawi in 1981 and after Nkomati these operations were stepped up. Malawi became a focal point of destabilization. The Mozambican authorities made many protests to Malawi, culminating in a visit to Blantyre on 11 September 1986, by Machel, Kaunda and Mugabe. When Machel set out on that trip he was angry. He detested Banda and had on several occasions described him in my presence as a fascist. Machel wanted foreign journalists to know the outcome of the confrontation with Banda in Blantyre, so he invited the entire foreign press corps in Maputo to go with him. When the reporters arrived at Maputo

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airport in the morning they were told by an apologetic protocol official that the Malawian government had sent a message saying no foreign journalists were allowed in the country - there was a general ban on foreign reporters and this would not be lifted for the summit talks.

Machel heard this on the plane. As one of the correspondents left standing on the tarmac, I cannot describe his reaction to the news. People who were on board, however, say he blew his top. On arrival in Blantyre he had a message sent to Maputo saying he wanted all correspondents from West and East at the airport for a press conference when he returned.

'What will you do if Malawi does not drop its support for the MNR?' someone asked.

'We will place missiles along the frontier and we will close the border to traffic between Malawi and South Africa going through Mozambique,' he replied. That was a serious threat, considering that an average of 70 trucks a day were passing through Mozambique's Tete province on the international route to the ports of South Africa.

Five weeks later, Samora Machel's plane crashed into the hillside at Mbuzini in South Africa when he was returning from a visit to Zambia.

Notes

1. The Times, London, 21 October 1986.
2. Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution*, Westview, Boulder, Colorado and Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1983, p. 185.
3. Bzrezinski, Zbigniew, *Power and Principle*, New York, Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1983, p. 527.
4. Machel in an interview with Allen Isaacman and Iain Christie in Maputo in May 1979.
5. AIM Information Bulletin, No 15.
6. This special relationship became strained in early 1980, during Zimbabwe's transition to independence under a British Governor General, Lord Soames. Attempts had been made to assassinate Mugabe, thousands of Zanu members trying to return to Zimbabwe from Mozambique to vote in the vital independence elections were prevented from doing so by the British administration; and Lord Soames was threatening to ban Zanu from standing for election in certain areas. Machel notified Thatcher's government that the Zanu members in Mozambique were armed, that it was no fault of theirs that they had not returned to hand in their weapons, and that it would be difficult for him to stop them from resuming the war in the event of Mugabe being murdered or Zanu candidates being unfairly banned. The threat to ban Zanu candidates was withdrawn, and Mugabe emerged triumphant in the elections. Afterwards, Machel invited Soames to a champagne reception at the palace in Maputo, where he described Mrs Thatcher as the best British Prime Minister since 1965, the year of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).

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7. The Economy of Mozambique and Apartheid's Detrimental Action, Mozambique.

que News Agency (AIM) publication, 25 October 1986.

8. A security agreement between South Africa and Swaziland which came into force in

February 1982 was kept secret until 31 March 1984, two weeks after Nkomati.

The text of the agreement and the public acknowledgement two years later can be found in *Destitutive Engagement*, Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986, pp. 332.

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Part Three:

PORTRAIT

OF

A

REVOLUTIONARY

We learned much, we made mistakes and saw how to correct them. In doing so, we evolved a theory out of our practice; and we found that this theory of ours, evolving out of our practice, had already acquired a theorization under different circumstances, elsewhere, in different times and places. This theory and theorization is Marxism-Leninism.

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9. Homegrown Marxism

The story is told of a visit to Maputo in the early 1980s by the Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler, a serious scholar and a man of good intentions towards Mozambique. Early in the visit he started trying to find out where Frelimo's Marxism had come from.

Was it that many Frelimo leaders had earlier been members of the Portuguese Communist Party? Or was it that Frelimo had sent large numbers of people for training in socialist countries and they had returned with Marxist ideas?

When Frelimo leaders convinced him that neither of these hypotheses was correct, the puzzled sociologist raised the question at a meeting with Samora Machel.

'When did you first read Marx?' asked the visitor, getting straight to the point.

'Well', said the President, 'when I was young I used to help my father, who was a peasant.' He went on to describe how the African peasants were paid much less for their produce than were the Portuguese settlers, and spoke of the various facets of exploitation he had witnessed as a child.

Ziegler, becoming impatient, said: 'Yes, Mr President, but when did you first read Marx?'

'Well', said Machel, 'in later life I joined Frelimo and took part in the armed struggle.' He went on to tell of the policy conflicts within the movement, such as the story of Nkavandame and the new exploiters.

Not to be fobbed off with this blatant evasiveness, the sociologist insisted: 'Yes, yes, but you still haven't said when it was that you first read Marx.'

'Oh that,' said Machel. 'During the liberation struggle somebody gave me a copy of a book by Marx. As I read it, I realized I was "reading" Marx for the second time.'<sup>1</sup>

While this was, no doubt, an honest reflection by Machel on the origins of his Marxist convictions, it is surely only part of the story. During his teens and twenties, events round the world were obliging intelligent young people in colonized Africa to think about Marxism, to take it into consideration even if not necessarily accepting its tenets. In 1949, when Samora was 16, the revolution triumphed in China. In a peasant nation communists had defeated the rich and powerful through protracted war. Five years later another peasant army led by communists, this time in Vietnam, defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu. In 1959 Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba. In Africa, decolonization had begun and leaders professing socialist views were capturing the imagination of young men and women all over

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the continent. Kwame Nkrumah became a continental hero in 1957 when he led the people of Ghana to independence from Britain. Then came Sekou Toure, Lumumba, Nyerere.

Countries emerging from colonialism were ignoring the caveats of their former rulers and were establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union, China and other socialist nations.

Events like these inevitably influenced the thinking of Machel and the other Frelimo leaders.

In the early days the organization was ideologically heterogeneous but it did not take long for the revolutionary elements within the leadership to put their socialist cards on the table and have them projected internationally as official Frelimo policy. A classic example of this appeared as an editorial in the March-May 1966 edition of Frelimo's English language magazine, *Mozambique Revolution?* This editorial, about 'the lesson that recent events in Africa teach us', was an unstated but clear reference to the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah in a coup that year. He had tried to decree revolution from above without building a Marxist party to guarantee the active participation of the workers. The Ghanaian people accepted the coup passively, without staging a single major demonstration. The Frelimo magazine argued that:

... fundamentally, it is necessary to encourage the people to participate in the political life of the country, further, it is necessary to reject a concept in which the Revolution (socialism) is built by an active nucleus of leaders who think, create and give everything, and who are followed by a passive mass, who limit themselves to receiving and executing. This concept is the result of a weak political conscience, and expresses lack of confidence in the fighting and revolutionary capacity of the people.

As early as 1966, then, Frelimo had the beginnings of a socialist agenda and the leaders had put considerable thought into what they meant by socialism. By 1969

Eduardo Mondlane was ready to be more specific. In an interview shortly before his assassination Mondlane said:

I am now convinced that Frelimo has a clearer political line than ever before ... The common basis which we all had when we formed Frelimo was hatred of colonialism and the belief in the necessity to destroy the colonial structure and to establish a new

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social structure. But what type of social structure, what type of organization we would have, no-one knew. No, some did know, some did have ideas, but even they had rather theoretical notions which were themselves transformed by the struggle. Now, however, there is a qualitative transformation in thinking which has emerged during the past six years which permits me to conclude that at present Frelimo is much more socialist, revolutionary and progressive than ever and that the line, the tendency, is now more and more in the direction of socialism of the Marxist-Leninist variety. Why? Because the conditions of life in Mozambique, the type of enemy which we have, does not give us any other alternative. I do think that, without compromising Frelimo which still has not made an official announcement declaring itself Marxist-Leninist, I can say that Frelimo is inclining itself more and more in this direction because the conditions in which we struggle and work demand it.<sup>3</sup>

It has been suggested that Mondlane and Machel were strongly influenced by Marcelino dos Santos. His Marxist views developed while he lived in exile in Europe - through participation in politics at international level, through university study and through contact and debate with European and African intellectuals. But while dos Santos played a key role in the ideological development of Frelimo, no-one who knew Machel and Mondlane well would believe that they could be led by the nose, even by a man of dos Santos' intellect and powers of persuasion. What seems more likely is that there was a symbiotic relationship between these three men. With their different backgrounds and temperaments they undoubtedly learned from each other.

A key factor in the development of Machel's Marxist perspective was the experience of Frelimo in the national liberation struggle. It is hard to evaluate the ideological impact on Frelimo of the simple fact that the socialist countries were supplying arms to the anti-colonial movement in Africa while the capitalist powers of Nato were helping Portugal. Any suggestion that Frelimo received its ideology from Moscow as part of a package, with AK-47s and bazookas as a sweetener, would have received a sharp denial from Machel, but the solidarity and material support of the Marxist powers impressed him to the extent that ever after he referred to them as 'our natural allies'. More important in the ideological development of Machel, however, was the experience of Frelimo in the liberated areas of the north. There, decisions had to be made on economic questions, principally involving trade. Previously, all shops had belonged to Portuguese traders

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and, as in Machel's native province of Gaza, the traders systematically cheated the peasants, with government approval. As Frelimo's war effort enabled the movement to gain control of large areas, the settler traders fled. What kind of trading system was to replace that one? The only thing Frelimo could do was establish a trading link with southern Tanzania, with peasants carrying produce such as cashew nuts over the Ruvuma and bringing back items such as cloth. The porters would receive a small payment in cloth and salt. In the case of Cabo Delgado, the trading system was under the control of Lazaro Nkavandame, the movement's Provincial Secretary, and his subordinates, the district chairmen. Nkavandame and the chairmen also had people working for them in their private fields.

Before the war had started, there had been much coming and going between the people of Cabo Delgado and southern Tanzania so the Mozambicans had a fairly good idea of the cost of items over the border.

It soon became apparent that the system was not working in a way conducive to keeping the support of the peasants. They began to complain that they were getting a worse deal from Nkavandame's men than they got from the Portuguese traders. Nkavandame and the chairmen were accused of profiteering, and speculation in scarce items such as shirts.

Leaders such as Mondlane and Machel then had to face up to these difficult facts. What were their young guerrillas fighting and dying for? Why were the peasants in the war zones and the liberated areas making sacrifices? Was it simply to replace one group of exploiters by another? Machel would have been in a particularly vulnerable situation if the problem had not been resolved. As Defence Secretary he was responsible for ensuring that the military struggle moved ahead, and to do that he needed to convince the guerrillas and the peasants who supported them that independence would not simply be colonial medicine dispensed by Mozambican doctors. Not surprisingly, he was in the forefront of the fight against Nkavandame's proto-capitalism. Socialism had been espoused verbally by Frelimo since 1966, but the Nkavandame affair galvanized the left in Frelimo into actually trying to put it into practice in the economy of the liberated areas. Tanzania, the liberation movement's main rear base, also had its lessons in socialism for Machel and the leadership of Frelimo as a whole. They had the opportunity to witness the unfolding of the exciting debates on socialism that took place there in the late sixties and early seventies. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 had defined a Tanzanian road to socialism, but Julius Nyerere would not accept Marxist positions on some fundamental issues, such as class struggle.

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Tanzanian Marxists struggled on within the ruling Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), scaling the heights at one point with the adoption of the TANU Guidelines which led to workers' takeovers of factories in early 1971.

Nyerere enjoyed the devotion and respect of the Marxist inclined people in TANU, even if they did disagree with his negative attitude towards some aspects of Marxism. He was always considered the architect and the best guardian of the socialist advances that had been achieved thus far.

Machel, by this time President of Frelimo, was coming and going between Tanzania and the liberated areas of Mozambique, frequently meeting President Nyerere and constantly learning about the various forces interacting in that young country seeking its own, unique path to socialism.

In public, Machel always insisted that he had no political disagreements with Nyerere. The two men were the closest of friends and, after Machel's death, Nyerere arrived in Maputo before any other foreign dignitaries to pay emotional tribute to his old comrade, lying in state in the stateroom of City Hall.

The two men differed profoundly, however, on the historical question of whether or not there had been class antagonism in pre-colonial Africa, for many years a theme of fierce debate between Marxist and non-Marxist socialists. Nyerere expressed his non-Marxist position in a 1962 TANU pamphlet:

Both the 'rich' and the 'poor' individual were completely secure in African society. Natural catastrophe brought famines, but it brought famines to everybody - 'poor' or 'rich'. Nobody starved, either of food or of human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism...

The European socialist cannot think of his socialism without its father - capitalism! Brought up in tribal socialism, I must say I find this contradiction -quite intolerable...

African socialism ... did not have the 'benefit' of the Agrarian Revolution or the Industrial Revolution. It did not start from the existence of conflicting 'classes' in society. Indeed I doubt if the equivalent for the word 'class' exists in any indigenous African language; for language describes the ideas of those who speak it, and the idea of 'class' or 'caste' was non-existent in African society.<sup>4</sup>

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This idyllic view of the African past was not shared by Machel. In 1983 he put his position in this way:

Our history validates the thesis that the motive force of history is class struggle. Class struggle was and is a reality of the African continent.

Our pre-colonial society was familiar with complex state formations, such as Monomatapa and Gaza. They were political and social systems of a feudal type, at differing stages of development.

In some there survived elements of earlier slave systems, in others there were already emergent mercantile strata which, in another phase of history, would come to shape a new evolution in society.

In all of them there was a distinction between exploiters and exploited.

Colonial repression of these state formations and the integration of society into the capitalist and imperialist system, which was emerging in the era, brought new historical changes.

The antagonists within the society facilitated colonial occupation. Representatives of the exploiting strata betrayed the national cause and made an alliance with the foreigner to continue the domination and exploitation of their own people. Once the country was conquered the betrayers of the nation were also subject to domination, since they in turn were betrayed by their erstwhile ally.'

Machel's intellectual commitment to the concept that class struggle was not something imported into Africa by the colonialists, but a phenomenon which already existed there, was part of a more general conviction that Marxism was not holy writ from Europe. He would become angry at the slightest innuendo of the 'foreign ideology' heresy.

I once incurred Machel's wrath by asking him to explain how Frelimo hoped to popularize Marxist-Leninist concepts among the largely illiterate workers and peasants of Mozambique. This was in 1979, two years after the third congress of Frelimo had transformed the movement into a Marxist-Leninist party. Samora, dressed in his customary battle fatigues, looked sternly across the table, wagged an admonishing finger, and said: 'That question is based on a misconception of what Marxism is. The thinking behind the question is that Marxism is a foreign experience. So how will they learn it if they can't read?' The interview continued with some telling revelations about Machel's world view:

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MACHEL: Listen, and this is the principal point, Marxism-Leninism is a class science. Who is it who makes Marxism? Who makes this science after all? Is it the scientist closeted with his books?

A science belongs to its creator. Who is the creator of Marxism-Leninism? It is a science of class. It belongs to its creator, the working class. Its creator is the people, the people in their centuries-long struggle against the different forms and systems of exploitation. Its creator is, above all, the working class which, because of its specific role in society, is capable of conceiving of a new society, a new type of relations among the people.

Now then, who is the best Marxist? Is it the person in the library reading tomes - or the one doing the job? Scientific socialism was not forged and developed among those who spend all their time in libraries and universities. That is a lie! It was not the agronomists who invented geometry. It was the peasants, in the demarcation of their land. They invented the science right there.

The Mozambican workers have a long experience of suffering and struggle against slavery, feudalism and capitalism. How do you interpret this? Who were the people who took part in the long march in China? Were they from the university?

CHRISTIE: But Mr President, you yourself have said that socialism cannot be built with an illiterate population...

MACHEL: That's right. During the literacy campaign. Party members are the object of a special literacy drive aimed at raising their scientific knowledge and conceptions of the world. To be able to read, to have the capacity to synthesize experiences, to raise them to the level of theory.

There are two things here. One is to see where the theory comes from, where the ideas come from. They come from praxis! Now we want the people to synthesize this praxis, to have the capability to synthesize their experiences.

Thus the illiterate peasants in Cabo Delgado learned the essence of the system of exploitation of man by man that the new exploiters of the Simango/Lazaro group tried to introduce in the liberated areas. No Marxist went there to say: 'Look, this is exploitation, this is this and this is this.' They didn't read it in any books, but they felt it. These new exploiters, let's fight them. It was these peasants who struggled and brought about the victory of the cooperatives over exploitative commerce and big landowners. It was the peasants! They struggled and made people's power, class power, triumph over feudal and bourgeois power

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that the new exploiters tried to impose. They didn't know where the door of the university was. They didn't even know the way there.

The people's liberation war, our military science which defeated the colonial-fascist generals, was drawn up and developed by our own illiterate people. Marxism-Leninism did not appear in our country as an imported product. Mark this well, we want to combat this idea. Is it an imported product or merely the result of reading the classics? No. Our party is not a study group of scientists specializing in the reading and interpretation of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Our struggle, the class struggle of our working people, their experiences of suffering, enable them to assume and internalize the fundamentals of scientific socialism. The same struggle contributes to the continuous development and enrichment of Marxism-Leninism, which is the common property of all exploited people and classes.

In the process of the struggle we synthesize our experience and heighten our theoretical knowledge. It's different from first studying the theory of how to wage a war and then going out to do it.

We did it and now we synthesize.<sup>6</sup>

In that off the cuff torrent of words, Machel, with his rudimentary formal schooling, had an argument for his old friend, the university educated Nyerere. While the Tanzanian insisted that language expresses the ideas of those who speak it and, ipso facto, there could have been no classes in Africa because the word didn't exist, the Mozambican was saying that the peasants had no word for the right angle either, but that didn't mean they couldn't mark one out at the corner of a field. For Machel the national liberation struggle had been more than a fight by Mozambicans determined to control their own destiny. The very process of protracted people's war brought contradictions into the open, forcing fighters and, peasants to think beyond the immediate problem of removing Portuguese

colonialism. The word 'class' may not have been in their vocabulary but the 1967-70 Frelimo crisis obliged all involved to look up the dictionary of scientific socialism, metaphorically speaking.

It was a question of the survival of the liberation struggle. When that struggle was won, however, Frelimo faced some daunting obstacles to building the kind of socialist state envisaged by Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries. Securing enthusiastic support from the people for the socialist revolution was not the problem. After proving itself

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capable of harnessing the energies of the people to batter down the doors that led to political independence, the Frelimo leadership enjoyed massive public confidence. Who could doubt that Samora Machel was the man to lead the way to prosperity and equality for all Mozambicans?

As the world knows, Mozambique was far from achieving Machel's goals by the time of his death. To examine the reasons for this in detail in this volume would turn it into a history of modern Mozambique instead of a reflection on the life of Samora Machel. But some description of the problems Frelimo faced in leading the struggle to build socialism in Mozambique may help us to better understand the man. Here, I will not go into problems such as the bankrupt economy which Frelimo inherited from the Portuguese, or natural disasters such as drought and floods. These would have taken place even if Frelimo had chosen capitalism instead of socialism.

Three problems which have a direct bearing on Frelimo's choice of scientific socialism spring to mind.

The first is the problem of creating the right kind of party and democratic structures to spearhead the revolution.

Second is the lack of an organized proletariat which, for Marxist socialists, is the sine qua non of a socialist revolution.

Third is the perennial bugbear of Marxists in the underdeveloped world: how do the peasants fit in?

#### Establishing people's power

After independence, Frelimo had to find ways of creating a structure for people's power, both through workplace democracy and through establishing a Party within which the working class, in alliance with the peasantry, would be able to exercise its role as the leading force of the Mozambican revolution.

The initial structures of people's power in post-colonial Mozambique were known as Grupos Dinamizadores, which translates loosely as 'Dynamic Action Groups'. These were grassroots political committees elected in workplaces, villages and city neighbourhoods. For Mozambicans who had not taken part in the armed struggle for independence the 'GDs' provided a first taste of organized political activity. The GDs set up co-operatives, produced wall newspapers in factories and residential neighbourhoods, organized literacy classes, anti-crime patrols and political discussions, and re-opened abandoned shops. When rented property was nationalized in 1976 the GDs were so well

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implanted in society that they were able to produce an inventory of what had been taken over within a week or two of the decision.

At the time of Machel's death the Dynamic Action Groups were still functioning as local community organizations but in workplaces they had been replaced by new structures. First Production Councils had been established, superseding the GDs at work, then the councils themselves were superseded by unions in each industry, under the umbrella Organizacao dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos (OTM), the Mozambican Workers Organization. Workers were in fact experiencing a transformation of the social relations of production, becoming increasingly involved in planning and control.

Creation of the Dynamic Action Groups had been a transitional step in transforming Frelimo the liberation movement into Frelimo the political party. One of the tasks of the GDs was to raise the political consciousness of the masses to make this transformation possible.

Frelimo the liberation movement held its third congress in February 1977 in Maputo, after several months of preparation and explanation. The congress announced the creation of the Frelimo Party, a MarxistLeninist vanguard organization whose 'historic mission is to lead, organize, orientate and educate the masses, thus transforming the popular mass movement into a powerful instrument for the destruction of capitalism and the construction of socialism'.

In line with Machel's thinking on theory and practice, detailed earlier in this chapter, theoretical knowledge of Marxism was not a prerequisite for party membership. There were no signals, like 'candidates with an understanding of dialectical materialism stand a better chance of admission', to deter the illiterate masses, although people who joined were expected to make the effort to learn to read and write and to try to move towards theoretical understanding.

Admission to the party was almost automatic for people who had been members of the liberation movement. Others went through a rigorous selection process, in which the key phases were interviews with the GDs (which remained in existence after the creation of the party), presentation before colleagues or neighbours, and vetting of the resultant file by Frelimo headquarters. The aim was to find out if candidates were of good character and committed to defending the interests of the majority of the people. If a candidate was exposed as a former agent of the PIDE he or she would not be admitted. Evidence of committed community work, on the other hand, would stand one in good stead.

Frelimo was riding the crest of a wave in this period. Rhodesian military attacks were beginning to take their toll but there was no dampening of popular support for Frelimo and its policies. In October,

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Machel went to the UN and, in a speech to the General Assembly, he attacked the 'profoundly anti-democratic' aspects of the AngloAmerican proposals for a Rhodesian settlement and pledged continued Mozambican support for the

Zimbabwean liberation struggle. He could do that only because he knew he had the Mozambican people behind him.

Enthusiasm for Frelimo's socialist programme and the policy of solidarity with the Zimbabweans was obvious to foreign observers. Michael Kaufman of the New York Times wrote in November: 'If enthusiasm has waned in other places (in Africa), it is palpable here. The experience of Mozambique is only two years old and any instantaneous reading of revolutionary changes is subject to revisions. Still, there is evidence that the degree of mobilization and national purpose attained here is great and may be more durable than anything black Africa has known.'

When the party leadership moved into top gear with its recruiting campaign in 1978, people flocked to Frelimo in their tens of thousands. By the time of the fourth Frelimo congress, in 1983, the party had 110 000 members.

Under the surface, however, there was a problem with the party. While membership was growing, not enough attention was being given to ensuring that the party would assume control over the state, as it was supposed to do in the terms of third congress decisions.

The problem started at the top. There was no full time party leadership. Frelimo had a Political Bureau and a Secretariat but all the members of these bodies had jobs in the government or the army. It was not until 1980, three years after the creation of the party, that this situation was changed. Two members of the Frelimo Political Bureau and Secretariat, Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo, were relieved of their ministerial posts in April 1980 to become full time party secretaries. Western press reaction was that two 'hard-line Marxist ideologues' had been shunted aside and that this was a signal that Samora Machel was moving away from Marxism. In fact it was quite the opposite. Machel had realized that the party needed senior people at its head if it was to function properly and had therefore put dos Santos and Rebelo in charge of revitalizing Frelimo. The point most observers missed was that it had taken Machel three years to take this step which, in his own terms of reference, was absolutely fundamental. He had lost valuable time. The party had begun to lose some of its dynamism.

The April 1980 decision was important and was followed by a major Party-building effort. This was a crucial moment in the country's history, with Frelimo more popular than ever because of the successful

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policy of backing Zanu and the resultant independence of Zimbabwe. The Party mobilization effort grew in the run-up to the 1983 congress, but in that year, Machel decided to send dos Santos to Beira to take charge of Sofala Province, essentially a government job. This left Rebelo as the only member of the Politburo with a fulltime party job or rather two fulltime jobs - Secretary for Ideological Work and First Secretary for Maputo. While it is true that there was a shortage of cadres, Machel's reluctance to put more of his top political people into fulltime party work, and his own increasingly sporadic involvement with party

activities, suggest that the President's absorption with state business had distracted him from the importance of the party.

Over a long period Machel had spearheaded an exercise aimed at making Frelimo a permanent feature of Mozambican life, an organization which would always embody the hopes and aspirations of his people. Then he seemed to begin to take Frelimo for granted, assuming it could get along under its own steam.

That said, however, it has to be added that the Frelimo he left behind is by no means moribund. The Party could be a lot more dynamic than it is but it does actually function throughout the country, in a way that is quite exceptional in Africa. Mozambique is still a genuine one-party state, not the 'no-party state' which characterizes so many African countries.

What about the workers?

A problem in building socialism in Mozambique was the difficulty of developing a strong, permanent and skilled working class as opposed to a workforce based essentially on casual, unskilled plantation and port labour, migrant 'miners in South Africa and a small, unorganized workforce in the factories.

At the time of independence a considerable number of Mozambicans were working for wages, in African terms a very considerable number, but there was not a great deal of proletarian cohesion or working class consciousness.

There were the Mozambican migrant miners in South Africa, some 115 000 of them in 1975. But they were not a real force for class leadership inside Mozambique. During their spells in South Africa they were industrial workers but on their return they rejoined the disparate peasantry.

Internally, much of the working class had been Portuguese. At the time of independence there was only one black Mozambican loco-

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five driver, to give but one example Wage earners in the ports and on construction sites tended to be casual labour, paid by the day. Plantation workers were not only casual but seasonal. Towards the end of the colonial period some job barriers began to fall as the Portuguese grew more and more concerned about Frelimo's advances, but there was no substantial change to a scenario in which blacks were by and large confined to casual, menial and unskilled jobs.

By contrast, at the time of Machel's death there was a permanent skilled black working class, trained since independence. It was still small but Africans had learned not only how to run the machines but how to manage the factories: and all the engine drivers were Mozambicans.

This leap into the twentieth century was achieved partly through employing thousands of foreign teachers and technicians - cooperantes - to transmit the skills that had been so jealously guarded by the Portuguese settlers. But it could not have been done without the enormous effort that was made in basic education in the years following independence, an effort which brought thousands of people to the level of understanding required to absorb technical skills. The problem Frelimo inherited at independence was compounded by the rules of the Portuguese fascist corporate state, which prevented the development of real

labour unions. This is not to say that there were no strikes or other forms of labour action in Mozambique. There were, particularly in the ports where there was a large contingent of wage labourers. But repression had led many workers into believing that the most they could hope to achieve was an occasional wage deal. Free association of workers, on the other hand, might have led to the growth of class consciousness. Machel put this problem in a nutshell in a meeting with about 1 500 Maputo workers in October 1976.

Many of you took part in strikes under the impression that this was a nationalist approach. But there is no political struggle without political consciousness.

A stevedore might have said: 'I am not going to unload these crates because they pay me so little.' But the crates contained weapons, ammunition and bombs for the colonial army to use in fighting Frelimo. So they went and paid the stevedore more and he did the unloading. Who was the winner? The Mozambican people because of the stevedore's pay rise, or our enemies who had more bombs in their hands with which to massacre the Mozambican people?

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By the time Machel made that speech the working class as a whole had derived some significant benefits from the Frelimo government's policies. The state had introduced a virtually free health service, free education for children and literacy classes and night schools for adults. Thousands of poor black families had been enabled to move from the townships into the previously white-occupied, high-rent modern apartments and houses of the cities. This had been done by nationalizing rented property, most of it owned by Portuguese settlers and much of it lying empty since the settler exodus round the time of independence. Blacks had not been banned from living in the cities, but apartheid was effected by economic means and the property owners refused to lower their rents even when the houses had been abandoned. After nationalization, rents were pegged to wages, making such accommodation accessible to black workers.

Machel noted, however, that the actions of many workers did not correspond to the new situation. There were go-slows in support of wage demands, and there was widespread negligence and absenteeism. There was a lack of class consciousness, a failure to see that 'the current situation is radically different from the past'. He explained:

The worker of the colonial period could struggle only for his personal benefit. He tried to solve life's difficulties through pay. But his pay did not give him access to ownership of land, or to private medical clinics, or allow him to send his children to university, or to live in a cement house. The worker today, with his power, can decide the destiny of his own country ... Today, with our power, we have created the conditions for using the fruit of our labour for our own betterment.

The President used the platform that day to try and convince the working class that they should increase productivity since, as he put it, 'our government is destroying the very basis of exploitation'. The speech was followed by the

creation of shop-floor, embryo trade union structures known as Production Councils, whose role was not to seek higher wages for their own members but to get workers involved in planning and controlling production and raising productivity for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Convincing the workers to accept this would mean showing them in practice that they were not being hoodwinked by a dishonest leadership lining its own members' pockets while demanding sacrifices from the people producing the wealth.

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Towards the end of Machel's life there were several verified instances of corruption or dishonesty among middle level officials. Some stole money and fled to Portugal. But Machel kept a tight discipline in force where his top Party and government policy makers were concerned and no evidence of serious financial impropriety was ever produced against people in the top echelons of power."

Corruption and dishonesty among the leadership may be endemic in underdeveloped countries but Machel and his senior colleagues kept Mozambique's reputation clean in that respect. Foreign aid officials and embassies had nothing but praise for the way the administration managed to ensure that aid arrived where it was supposed to arrive and was not siphoned off along the way for the benefit of political leaders.

But in mobilizing the working class to assume its leading role in the revolution, Machel did more than merely convince the workers that the country's leadership was not living in luxury at their expense. He also ensured that they had a role in party life that was disproportionate in terms of the worker - peasant ratio in the country. At the time of the fourth congress in 1983, more than 90 per cent of the population were peasants. But in the Frelimo Party, 54 per cent of members were peasants and 19 per cent were workers. And at the congress, workers comprised 26 per cent of the delegates, while 29 per cent were peasants and 13 per cent were soldiers.

... And what about the peasants?

After independence, Machel accepted advice that huge, mechanized state farms were a socialist way of producing a crop surplus in Mozambican conditions without exploitative relations of production. It looked good on paper. But these farms required massive investment in foreign exchange, for the importation of tractors and other machinery, as well as fertilizer and pesticides. The machinery required spare parts and fuel, also imported.

Crop production on these farms, therefore, made heavy demands on the country's scarce hard currency resources. Stimulating small-scale farming by peasant families and co-operatives also carries a foreign exchange cost. Hand tools and consumer goods have to be imported in order to encourage peasants to produce for the market. If not they will have little to buy with the money they earn.

Therefore the government had to make foreign exchange allocations for both state and peasant farming, and the former was given priority. Two statistics make this clear. In the four years following the 1977

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Frelimo congress, Mozambique imported £50 million in agricultural machinery, including 3 000 tractors. This was mainly for the state farms. The peasants, on the other hand, saw their supply of hoes dry up. After independence, local production of hoes fell to less than half of the preindependence level and imports were stopped.<sup>9</sup> The story is told of a senior planning official in Maputo who was presented with a draft import budget which included several million meticaïs (the national currency) to buy pots, mirrors, watches, belts, combs, trinkets and assorted odds and ends to stock rural shops. He threw out the proposal angrily, arguing that the state was not going to use its funds to buy baubles when the money could be used to import useful things like food. But, of course, the junior official who had made the proposal was right. When peasants found there were no goods to buy for the money they received for their crops there was no incentive to produce for the market.

This kind of thinking helped to cripple peasant agricultural production and increase the flow of rural people to the towns. And so people who had been food growers became food consumers who did not produce. The state farms, plagued with administrative, economic and technical problems, were unable to meet the higher demand. The chief economic planners were refusing to invest in peasant farming. The planners seemed to have the idea that peasants could get on perfectly well by themselves because they had done so for centuries. There was an abstract concept that the Frelimo Party should 'mobilize' the peasants to produce more, while the government should 'invest' in big farming enterprises.

The planners did not seem to understand that the peasants needed consumer goods, to say nothing of hoes and other hand tools, vital for peasant agriculture. A simplistic explanation for this situation would be to refer to Machel's Marxism and accuse him of an ideological dogmatism that considered peasants almost irrelevant to the revolution. This is very far from the truth.

In many speeches he made clear his preoccupation with bringing peasants into the twentieth century, as part of a general modernization of the country. He chided new city dwellers for bringing with them peasant habits:

The father eats at the table and has better food. His children and wife, or wives, eat in the kitchen or the yard, seated on a mat, with a stick in one hand to chase away the chickens and a mug of water in the other. The father is well-dressed and shod, and the children

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ragged and barefoot. There may be shortage of cash for the child's milk, but never for father's beer.<sup>10</sup>

Some might interpret this remark as showing a bias against the peasantry but it could be more accurate to see it as a defence of the rights of wives and children, the majority in every family, peasant or otherwise.

Machel was deeply aware that it was the support of the peasants of northern Mozambique which carried Frelimo to power. He never underestimated the importance of this support.

Quite early in the development of the peasant farmer versus state farm problem he noticed that something was amiss. In August 1978 he dismissed the Agriculture Minister, Joaquim de Carvalho, and said in a statement:

Systematically giving priority to technology, he scorned the people's initiative and contribution. The sector of family (agricultural) production, our country's main source of agricultural produce, was disregarded.

The following year, Machel again made the party's policy clear, saying that 'stimulating the family farmer requires a commercial network to supply the farmer and his family with indispensable articles and to acquire his surplus production'. There was no doubt in Machel's mind that the peasants were getting a raw deal, but the government bureaucracy did nothing to remedy the situation.

In 1982, the journalist Joseph Hanlon, then based in Maputo as a correspondent for the British Broadcasting Corporation and the London Guardian newspaper, toured the fertile province of Zambezia and was taken aback by what he saw. Hanlon had first visited Mozambique in 1977 and afterwards wrote a serious critique of Mozambican agricultural policies for the London-based New Scientist. He followed the development of these policies with a keen eye for detail, apparent in his later comments about Zambezia in 1982:

Frelimo had encouraged private shopkeepers to return to rural areas, and many did. Furthermore, the state established marketing brigades to go to more remote rural areas to buy peasant and co-op surplus. So by 1981 the state had set up a reasonable rural

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commercialization system. But it gave the shopkeepers and brigades little to sell to the peasants in exchange ... the shops were empty except for salt, tea, curry powder, a few men's clothes and the ubiquitous tinned beans. It had been three years since anyone had seen bicycle parts. Goods to rural areas simply came at the bottom of the list<sup>11</sup>

It seemed that government officials had paid no attention to what Machel was saying. On the other hand, it could be that the party leadership was not insisting hard enough on budgetary changes to back up the clear orientations given by the President. It is one thing to demand help for the peasants, and another to ensure that the finance is provided.

In 1982, however, Machel began to take decisive action. Typical of the man, it was a fact-finding mission on the ground that made him blow his top. In March of that year he toured his native province of Gaza, where more than a hundred communal villages had been established since disastrous floods there in 1977. Thousands of peasant families had responded to Frelimo's call to start a new, socialist way of life by creating these villages, but the enthusiasm had been allowed to wane because of lack of support from the provincial authorities.

Machel sacked the provincial governor, Major-General Joao Pelembe, a man who had joined Frelimo in the same year as himself and had gone on to become a top guerrilla commander. It was a painful decision, as the official statement made clear. Machel sent in Oscar Monteiro, a member of the Party secretariat and Minister in the President's office, to govern Gaza. Very quickly Monteiro redistributed 40 000 acres of unused land to peasant farmers. This was quite clearly Machel's decision. Then, at Frelimo's fourth congress in 1983, the Party leadership acknowledged in much more blunt terms the problems the country's peasants were facing as a result of flawed decisions. At the congress, Machel presided over formal scrapping of the failed policies which had funnelled massive investment into unprofitable state farms, while virtually no money was available for tools and consumer goods to stimulate peasant agriculture. Big state farms were broken up into smaller and more manageable units, millions of hand tools were imported and more land was given to the peasants.

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1. This story comes from a senior Frelimo official who was present at the discussion. A slightly different version was published in the Portuguese weekly *Ezprelo* in 1982.
2. In 1967 the name of the magazine changed from *Mozambiesn Revolution* to *Mozambique Revolution*.
3. This quotation from an interview conducted in 1969 by Aquino de Braganca appears in John Saul's introduction to the 1983 edition of Eduardo Mondlane's *The Struggle fot Mozambique*.
4. Nyerere, Julius K., *Ujams: Essay, on Socialism*, Dares Salaam, 1968, pp. 3 - 4.
5. Part of a speech given in Berlin on 11 April 1983, at celebrations to mark the centenary of Marx's death. This speech and several others quoted in the present volume are available in English translation in *Smors Machel: An African Revolutionary*, published by Zed Books Ltd in London in 1985. This collection of Machel's speeches and writings, edited by Barry Munslow and translated by Michael Wolfers, and with a bibliographical note by Colin Darch, is the most comprehensive and useful work of its kind available in English.
6. Interview with Samora Machel in Maputo in May 1979, conducted by Iain Christie and Allen Isaacman.
7. Transport Ministry officials in Maputo provided this information to the author. They added that the one black locomotive driver was a PIDE agent.
8. In the period from independence until Machel's death, the highest ranking Frelimo militant ever accused of financial impropriety was Francisco Langa, a veteran guerrilla commander and member of the Central Committee. He became head of the government's office for assisting refugees and liberation movements. Langa

was put under house arrest for embezzling state funds and in May 1980 he committed

suicide before he could be brought to trial.

9. Detailed analysis of this problem can be found in Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*, London, Zed Books Ltd. 1984, from which these statistics are taken.

10. Speech in Maputo on 13 February, 1982. 11. Hanlon, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

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10. The sophisticated weapon

Among the many contributions made by Samora Machel to the liberation struggles of southern Africa was his fresh and vigorous approach to the issue of race.

Race has been a factor in these struggles almost by definition, since they have all arisen out of the exploitation and oppression of blacks by whites. What Mondlane and Machel rejected, however, was the notion that skin colour was an indication of who was friend and who was foe. For them, racial oppression was a fundamental grievance, but that did not mean the enemy could be defined in terms of colour. For them the fundamental contradiction was between the Mozambican people and the Portuguese colonial system. The enemy was that system and those who enforced it.

Mondlane and Machel wanted white racist regimes removed from power in Africa but they also insisted that Frelimo's struggle was not an anti-white crusade. They were not the first African liberation movement leaders to proclaim this as a policy but they were among the first to carry it beyond a mere declaration of principle, and in circumstances which were often difficult and dangerous.

Machel often talked about the problem of race in terms of inferiority and superiority complexes. He saw that there were those, both white and black, who had been unable to break away from the mental conditioning which decreed, for example, that whites were good managers, Asians were good accountants and blacks were not much good at anything except manual labour.

Reactionary whites treated blacks as beasts of burden and many blacks beaten down by years of oppression had had their minds thoroughly colonized. I recall a graphic example at the time of the independence celebrations in June 1975, when I was sharing a room at the Hotel Cardoso in Lourenço Marques with a Tanzanian friend. An elderly black hotel porter approached me, wringing his hands apologetically, to ask if I could help locate one of the guests, whose name he did not know but who, as it turned out later, was the Tanzanian. To describe the man the porter said, in English, with some embarrassment: 'He's a kaffir like me, but he's, well, well, I think, your ... friend.'

Reduced to the status of 'kaffir', an underdog, it was clearly beyond the porter's comprehension that a white man and a black man could be friends, and he was reacting as though he was on a strange planet. Samora Machel destroyed that inferiority complex in millions of his compatriots, by leading a victorious struggle against Portuguese

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colonialism. For the Hotel Cardoso porter and many other people the message that the country was free did not sink in immediately. But gradually Mozambicans realized they had won the dignity of being free citizens of an independent nation. They were kaffirs no more.

Privileges based on race were swept away. The law, health care, education, housing, job opportunities - all were freed of racial discrimination.

From his early days, however, Machel looked beyond the obvious outrage of white supremacy to see the danger of reducing the definition of the enemy to 'the white man'. He was aware that a black neocolonial government could simply substitute itself for the Portuguese authority and carry on as before. He was conscious of the fact that some black Mozambicans wanted whites expelled from the country, but tended to regard this not so much as a simple reaction to years of oppression as a desire to fill the exploiters' shoes.

The way he tackled these problems over the years was by doggedly insisting on a class - not a race - analysis of society's problems, by constantly challenging the would-be 'new exploiter', by imposing political and economic measures that would remove privileges based on race and by making education available to the black masses who had been kept in ignorance by the colonialists.

He would never reject on racial grounds participation by non-blacks in Mozambique's struggle for independence and later for development. He used to say that Frelimo had white and black comrades, and white and black enemies. For him, the struggle was against the system of exploitation, not against a colour. He summed up this view in one of those picturesque metaphors he loved to use: 'The louse, the tick and the bug are not all of one colour, but none of them drinks water or milk - they live off blood.'

Sparing the prisoners

During the independence struggle Frelimo often stressed that it was fighting Portuguese colonialism, not the Portuguese people, who were victims of fascist oppression. Even Portuguese soldiers, the targets for Frelimo's bullets, were looked on with a certain sympathy. Frelimo's policy was to spare the lives of prisoners and deserters from the Portuguese army and to hand them over to international organizations such as the Red Cross.

An article in *Mozambique Revolution* of October-December 1968 noted that: 'The Portuguese soldiers cannot understand how they are

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supposed to be fighting for Portugal in a foreign country. All they want is to go home to their families.' This analysis, first formulated under Mondlane's leadership, was also defined by Machel when he became President of Frelimo. In a 1972 interview he told this author:

When we capture Portuguese soldiers we do not kill or mistreat them. Our people know that these men are participating in the war because they were forced to.

They are not defending their own interests or the interests of the Portuguese people, but the interests of Portuguese capitalists and international imperialism. Then there are the Portuguese soldiers who desert to us. These we consider our allies. Their desertion is an act of support to our struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Frelimo's policy of clemency towards Portuguese prisoners was not reciprocated by the Portuguese army and secret police. After the ceasefire in 1974, Frelimo handed over about 150 captured Portuguese soldiers. The Portuguese did not have a single Frelimo guerrilla captive to hand over in exchange. There can be little doubt about what had happened to them.

By insisting that Frelimo forces should spare prisoners and deserters, and should not behave in the same way as the colonial forces, Machel and Mondlane were doing three things: first of all they were claiming the moral high ground in the international political arena; secondly they were encouraging Portuguese soldiers to desert or even mutiny; and thirdly they were obliging ordinary Mozambicans to advance politically beyond the view that the struggle was about killing whites and nothing else.

That this last point was a problem is well illustrated by the observations of a 24 year old Ugandan student at the University of Dar es Salaam, who visited Frelimo's liberated areas in northern Mozambique in September 1968.

Tremendously impressed with what he had seen, he wrote a paper on the subject which was published in a university journal under the title Fanon's Theory on Violence: Its Verification in Liberated Mozambique. The following is an extract: It must be seen that the 'invincibility' of the enemy is just fraudulent; he is invincible because he has never been challenged by a revolutionary force using the correct methods of revolutionary violence. Hence in Mozambique, it has been found necessary

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to show peasants fragments of a Portuguese soldier blown up by a mine or, better still, his head. Once the peasant sees guerrillas holding the head of the former master, the white man's head cold in death, the white skin, flowing hair, pointed nose and blue eyes notwithstanding, he will know, or at least begin to suspect, that the picture traditionally presented to him of the white man's invincibility is nothing but a scarecrow. Once the 'native' peasant in Mozambique and, I am sure, elsewhere has discovered that the oppressor can be destroyed, he moves with great speed engineered by the hatred for the enemy long in him. However, once the peasants' passions are aroused, they usually swing to the other extreme; that all white men are devils, and all white prisoners must be killed. Any association with whites on the part of the African militants is a sign of treason. This position is not entirely wrong, but needs to be corrected in the interest of waging a scientific struggle.<sup>2</sup>

The student was Yoweri Museveni, who was later given military training by Frelimo and participated in the war against the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. Museveni subsequently led a guerrilla war against the governments of Milton

Obote and Tito Okello before becoming President of Uganda himself in January 1986.

The point about this quotation is that it shows the breadth of contrary opinion which Mondlane and Machel had to face up to when insisting that it was entirely wrong to kill all white prisoners, regard all whites as devils and consider associating with whites as treason. Museveni's model peasant motivated by the sight of the white man's severed head, would have taken some convincing, while Museveni himself was certainly not the only radical scholar who saw some merit in that peasant's point of view.

In addition, some prominent African political figures were not keen on accepting Geneva Convention rules in the liberation struggles of the times. Sheikh Karume, the controversial Zanzibari President, explained his position at a pro-Frelimo rally on the spice island. The Portuguese, he said, did not eat ugali (maize porridge) and since that was the only staple food the Frelimo guerrillas had at their disposal it was better just to kill prisoners.

The Frelimo leadership agreed with the proposition that black Mozambicans had been conditioned into harbouring a kind of religious fear of the Portuguese, believing them to be invulnerable and that 'it was necessary that our people should see the colonialists falling under the fire of our weapons, for then all the mental inhibitions created by

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previous oppression would begin to dissolve.<sup>3</sup> But Machel did not buy the idea of cutting off prisoners' heads to emphasize the point, nor did he share Sheikh Karume's views on the dietary question. And with good reason.

Machel knew that the Portuguese soldiers were being sent to Africa on the pretext of defending 'white civilization' against a perceived African savagery and childlike innocence. There was no better way of counteracting that myth than by treating prisoners well, showing them what Frelimo was really like and then releasing them to spread the word among their friends in Portugal. Machel and his colleagues in the Frelimo leadership calculated correctly that this would sharpen the existing contradictions in Portuguese society. The clemency policy, combined with successful battlefield strategy, would increase tensions between the Portuguese generals and their junior officers and men. In the bush of Cabo Delgado province in 1973 Machel told me he foresaw an army coup in Portugal: others who were closer to him say he was thinking along these lines as far back as 1968. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the coup which took place in April 1974 in Lisbon, and which led to the breakup of the Portuguese colonial empire, was directly linked to Machel's subtle combination of military strategy and political action.

What Machel had done was to bring to light a bond of common interest between his own black African army and a great many white soldiers on the other side. Remarkable evidence of this came shortly before independence in 1975, when Portuguese soldiers arrived in Lisbon from Mozambique with a white cloth running the length of their ship. On it were the words *Fafamnos como a Frelimo. Poder Popular. Lets do it like Frelimo. People's power.* After independence he

always emphasized that the liberation movements in Angola and Guinea Bissau also played an important role in bringing about the coup. In fact, however, Mozambique was the main point of pressure on the Portuguese regime at that historical moment.

White Africans and black Portuguese

Samora Machel grew up with a Portuguese colonial policy on nationality that was calculated to humiliate, or at least confuse, blacks. Whites whether they were born in Portugal or Mozambique, had Portuguese citizenship as a right. There was no such thing as Mozambican citizenship. Blacks were considered 'natives' until they could prove that they had become 'civilized', at which point they might be granted

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assimilado, or honorary Portuguese, status. An assimilado had to be able to read and write Portuguese and was expected to accept Portuguese culture and abandon 'tribal' culture.

The relatively small number of black children who gained entrance to school were encouraged there to aspire to assimilado status. It was very tempting. Assimilados were exempt from the forced labour which was demanded of 'natives' and, if they could afford it, could live in one of the few areas of Lourenco Marques reserved for 'civilized' blacks, not far from where the whites lived.

An assimilado was allowed to be in the 'white' city at night, as long as he or she carried an identification card proving his or her privileged status - a document which in effect said he was almost as good, but not quite as good, as a European. The doors of 'white' restaurants, clubs and theatres were still closed to assimilados because they were black.

Machel was very frank about his own background in Lourenco Marques. 'I was an assimilado. I was Portuguese, not because of my identity card, but because of the way I acted.' His job as a nurse was one of the best a black person could hope to get in colonial Mozambique. The salary and the social status locked Machel into the rat race of the times. 'I had great admiration for the bourgeoisie,' he said.

The admiration wore off and, with it, Machel's short-lived assimilado status. The Samora Machel who slipped off to Tanganyika in 1963 to join Frelimo had consciously rejected the colonial brainwashing and was ready to assert his own and his people's 'Mozambican personality'. As he put it: 'I liberated myself and fled. I threw away the salary, but I also threw away the colonial mentality.'<sup>4</sup>

The experience of having been an 'honorary Portuguese' left a profound mark on Machel. He had seen, first hand, assimilado status for what it was. It had nothing to do with equality. It was second class citizenship of a foreign country. Machel, Mondlane and the other revolutionaries in the leadership of Frelimo were determined that there would be no such mystification over race and nationality in the new Mozambique. 'Our aim is to win complete independence, establish people's power, build a new society without exploitation, for the benefit of all those who identify as Mozambicans,' Machel wrote in 1974.

This position had implications for the many non-blacks in Mozambique who supported the armed struggle for independence. The support was manifested in

different ways. Three months after the armed liberation struggle began in 1964, the PIDE smashed a clandestine Frelimo cell in Lourenco Marques. At least two whites, the poet Rui Nogar and journalist Joao dos Reis, were among those jailed. Even before that some whites had volunteered for the armed struggle, such as Jacinto Veloso and Joao Ferreira who took the plane and flew

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to join Frelimo in Tanzania.

Frelimo left other white militants inside the country to undertake clandestine espionage and reconnaissance work behind the lines. Prominent among these was Jose Luis Cabaço, whose job as an advertising man enabled him to take photographs of key military targets which proved valuable to Frelimo front line forces. Some people of mixed race and Asian origin also threw in their lot with Frelimo at an early stage.

What nationality were such people? Most of them had been born in Mozambique but, as we have seen, there was no such legal status as Mozambican nationality. Machel took the line that non-blacks who were rooted in Mozambique and who were ready to fight for the country's independence under the leadership of Frelimo were to be considered Mozambican.

... there are whites born in Mozambique who want to join our ranks. We do not consider these as foreigners who support us.

These we consider our allies. Such a man is one of us and it is his duty, just as it is my duty, to liberate Mozambique.'

Mondlane and Machel said simply that race and colour did not count as criteria for evaluating militancy or nationality. And there is a strong argument that this policy helped to avert a bloodbath. Towards the end of the independence struggle there were about a quarter of a million whites in Mozambique. Frelimo's anti-racism probably encouraged whites to accept the change of government rather than fight to the last out of fear that they were to be driven into the sea.

Like the policy of clemency towards deserters and captured Portuguese soldiers, the general line on race and nationality had a political and military pay-off as well as a moral basis. Machel would later describe it as one of his 'sophisticated weapons' in the confrontation with apartheid South Africa.

Black power rhetoric

It was not without a struggle that Mondlane and Machel succeeded in establishing anti-racism as part of Frelimo's political armoury. At the end of the 1960s the Simango group in Frelimo saw this as a useful stick with which to beat the revolutionaries. The group played on the fact

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that white supremacist behaviour and colonial brutality over the years had inevitably turned many blacks against whites in general. The real reasons for the group's differences with the revolutionaries had nothing to do with racial questions, but they used race as a lever. Uria Simango, for example, complained

that the whites who had joined Frelimo were 'Portuguese nationals' who were 'determined to infiltrate the Central Committee as members'. He added: Marcelino dos Santos played a very important role to achieve this, on the basis that they were also Mozambicans as the black masses - that they should not be discriminated against - a definition which was not established by any organ of Frelimo.<sup>7</sup>

What Simango was really annoyed about when he said this was that the Central Committee (which did not contain a single white at that time) had refused to elect him President at its April 1969 meeting in Dar es Salaam after the death of Mondlane. Since he had been Vice President he had been hoping to leap into the presidency automatically.

The early stages of that meeting were dramatic. Samora Machel had been with his troops in Cabo Delgado Province when Mondlane was murdered in February. 'I heard about it on the BBC,' he told the meeting. 'The report said you were discussing the leadership question.' Machel was speaking in a hoarse whisper, filled with emotion. He spoke in Portuguese but the words 'the leadership question' were in English. He repeated these three words, slowly, in English. He went on:

Do you know what our first question is when we lose a commander in combat? It is not the leadership question. The first question is: what were the circumstances of his death? When I arrived here I mentioned this and some of you said it was just BBC propaganda. But it wasn't, was it? Some of you wanted to discuss the leadership question, as soon as our President was dead.'

By his own account Simango spent 15 hours talking in his own defence. He had been accused of 'collusion with all forces that could be used against the President's (Mondlane's) leadership', 9 and of being connected to Nkavandame's secessionist plot and the manoeuvres of Father Mateus Gwenjere. Gwenjere had mobilized the students to

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rebel against the leadership for two reasons: Mondlane had given white Mozambicans - Portuguese nationals, Simango called them - teaching jobs at the school and, secondly, Mondlane was insisting that all students spend some time teaching in the liberated areas.

Simango's statements in the months after that Central Committee meeting expressed support for Nkavandame and Gwenjere and compared another Frelimo renegade, Silverio Nungu, to Jesus Christ. Since Nungu was the man most suspected of being the PIDE agent who ensured the book bomb was delivered to Eduardo Mondlane, such language was not well received by the other Frelimo leaders'

Nkavandame was expelled from Frelimo for having engineered the murder of Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, a top Frelimo military commander, and Simango was expelled from the movement at a meeting of the Central Committee in May 1970. Nkavandame went to work immediately for the Portuguese colonial regime, making appeals to the freedom fighters in his native Cabo Delgado to surrender. Simango waited until after the Portuguese coup d'etat in 1974 before throwing in

his lot with the Dragons of Death. Another of Simango's cohorts, Miguel Murupa, deserted to the Portuguese in the wake of the April 1969 Central Committee meeting and went to work as a propagandist for Portuguese 'multi-racialism'. With hindsight, then, it is easy to see through the group's black power rhetoric. But it was not easy at the time. Enough confusion was created within the Tanzanian administration to enable the group to engineer the deportation in 1968 of white Mozambican teachers at the Frelimo school. This was a particularly serious blow in the field of medical care for wounded guerrillas and sick civilians in the liberated areas. One of the expelled teachers was the medical instructor, Helder Martins (later to become independent Mozambique's first Health Minister) and nursing courses had to be suspended for three years. Machel later described the extent of the disaster:

In the past three years fighters have died for lack of medical care, members of the population have died, because we were not in a position to provide even a minimum of medical aid ... We lost the battle because the political awareness of our students was not such as to permit a true grasp of the meaning and the importance of the battle that was being fought, and they thus allowed the enemy to come in their midst ... Racism led to disunity between students and teachers. Claiming to be very revolutionary, students who had yet to show proof of true revolutionary commitment fought against teachers who had already given ample proof of

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their dedication to the people's cause, solely because the teachers were white. Combining selfishness and ambition, the students rejected a programme of studies planned to meet the immediate and urgent needs of the struggle and demanded programmes that would give them diplomas and privileges so that they could exploit the people in the future. They wanted to become an elite of parasites, acquiring wealth and social prominence at the expense of the people's suffering<sup>21</sup>

Mondlane and Machel did not abandon the white militants who had been expelled from Tanzania. Havens were found for them in various countries where they could continue to make some contribution to the struggle and all were eventually to be given positions of responsibility in post-independence Mozambique. These men and women were a tiny minority among the whites of Mozambique. Most whites thought of themselves as Portuguese and began to abandon the country when the spectre of majority rule appeared on the horizon. They could not accept the idea of a predominantly black government, and particularly a revolutionary one. When Machel began to take radical measures, such as the nationalization of rented property in 1976, the waverers also fled. Colonial Mozambique had been a bizarre society, in which penniless Portuguese were able to attain wealth and stature almost overnight. In its twilight years the colonial regime tried desperately to lure large numbers of Portuguese into Mozambique to act as a barrier against the nationalist advance. Humble clerks were given huge bank loans to have blacks build apartment blocks which were then rented out to

anybody except blacks. It was not unusual to find a Portuguese railway worker who owned a dozen flats, the rent for which gave him a life of luxury while the black workers who actually built the flats lived in squalid slum conditions. Machel's government changed all that with the nationalization measure. No-one could own more than two homes, one to live in and one for holidays. For most of the Portuguese who had stayed, perhaps mistaking Machel's anti-racism for a sentimental attraction to whites, that was the end of the honeymoon. They upped and left. Most of the white residents who stayed were people who had opted at the time of independence for Mozambican nationality, a right conferred on all who had been born in the country. Some of these also dropped out when living conditions became more and more difficult as the war against Mozambique was stepped up.

But thousands stayed, to share as equals in the joys and sorrows of

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the black majority, to celebrate the achievements and grumble over the problems, just as everyone did. There were problems. Whites, with the higher level of education they had been given in colonial times, often occupied senior posts, to the resentment of black people who felt blocked from upward mobility. The army command, for reasons best known to itself, tended not to recruit whites and that too generated a feeling that whites were being favoured. But whites would stand up at workplace meetings and complain about discrimination, demanding the right to be given a gun to defend the country. Machel had actually created thousands of white Africans and he was proud of it.

In August 1982 General Magnus Malan, the South African Defence Minister and a man who nurtured a deep and lasting hatred for Machel, complained that Mozambique was threatening South Africa by concentrating sophisticated weapons along the border. Machel pounced, 'No sensible person could think that an underdeveloped and poor country like ours, with so many wounds of war still bleeding, could threaten the sovereignty, territorial integrity or stability of any state, especially a power like South Africa. In fact the only thing the regime has to fear is our example. This, yes.' Machel, who was addressing a meeting of the Frelimo Central Committee, said yes, it was true that Mozambique had sophisticated weapons. But these were not rockets. They were policies representing a civilized alternative to the barbarity of apartheid.

Because it is socialist, Mozambican society defines people and their fulfilment as its strength and reason for its existence. On the African continent, and especially in southern Africa where the scars and wounds of slavery and colonialism, historically and predominantly European and white, are still felt and present, we have built a Party, a nation, a way of life in which colour does not matter, race does not matter, region or tribe does not matter.

Everything that causes unnecessary division has begun to fade from the people's consciousness. This is the sophisticated weapon that threatens apartheid.

Ours is not a society in which races and colours, tribes and

regions coexist or live harmoniously side by side. We went beyond these ideas during a struggle in which we sometimes had to force people's consciousness in order for them to free themselves from complexes and prejudices so as to become simply, we repeat,  
simply people...

We say in all sincerity that the white South Africans, the Boers, are not our enemy. They are not foreigners in their country nor in  
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our continent. They are African people, like us. It was racism and fascism that deformed the mentality of South African whites, that led them to cast themselves in the role of 'the chosen people'.

This was the essence of Machel's thinking on race. It was why the leaders of the South African apartheid regime hated him so much. He threatened to turn their own volk against them.

During the discussions revolving around the Nkomati Non-Aggression Pact with Pretoria in 1984, Machel had several meetings with the South African Foreign Minister, Roelof 'Pik' Botha. Samora knew that Botha was a cattleman, like himself, and he asked if the South African had cows of different ragas, a Portuguese word which can mean race, breed or colour. It was translated for Botha as 'colour'. Botha replied that he had, and Samora went on to ask if he kept them all in the same place, regardless of raga. Botha said that he did keep them all in the same place and Samora concluded by asking why he treated his cattle as equals but insisted on separating the South African people on grounds of raga. Botha had no answer.

Notes

1. Interview first published in the Sunday New,, Tanzania, on April 2 1972.
2. Museveni's essay appeared in Eeay. on the Liberation of Southern Africa, produced by the Department of Political Science, University of Dar es Salaam, and published by the Tanzanian Publishing House in 1972.
3. Editorial in the first issue of Mozambique Revolution to carry Samora Machel's picture on the front cover. July-September 1970, No. 44.
4. These reminiscences by Samora Machel, at a dinner in Nampula Province in 1977, are quoted in Hanlon's The Revolution Under Fire, p. 189.
5. Samora Machel, Establishing People'. Power to Serve the Matte., TCLSAC, Toronto, 1976, p. 2.
6. Sunday News, loc. cit.
7. Uria Simango, Gloomy Situation in Frelimo, mimeo, November 1969.
8. Transcribed by the author from a tape recording of the Central Committee meeting.
9. Mozambique Revolution No. 43, p. 9.
10. In his Gloomy Situation in Frelimo statement (see footnote 7) Simango said

Nungu had been brought before members of the Mozambican public (presumably in the liberated areas) and accused of crimes. 'Drama of Christ before Pilate, the Roman ruler!' wrote Simango.

11. Mozambique Revolution, No. 58 pp. 12 - 17.

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It was a warm October evening and the scent of the flowering cashew nuts hung sweetly over the small rural settlement of Nangade in northern Mozambique. This was 1973 and the villagers of Nangade were in their ninth year of war against the Portuguese colonial armed forces. Nangade, in the province of Cabo Delgado, was Frelimo territory, liberated but still subject to attack. In the morning I had bruised a rib while hurling myself into an air raid shelter when a Fiat G-91 screamed low overhead pumping what I suppose were rockets into the bush. But now the atmosphere was calm - President Samora would address the villagers. His theme that night was one he would return to over and over again in the coming years. It was the question of the abuse of power and authority. In Nangade Frelimo's power and authority did not amount to very much, if one compares it with rule over a country or even a town. Frelimo unquestionably ruled there - despite Portuguese denials at the time - but that meant only running a trading network, a school, a rudimentary hospital, a civil defence unit and a political council.

But Machel thought the question of abuse of power important enough to let it dominate the discussion. It took precedence over issues such as what the Portuguese armed forces might be up to out there beyond the trees. Most of the rally, in fact, was taken up with discussion about young local women with illegitimate children whose fathers were uniformed Frelimo cadres. Machel spoke to young women with babies and asked who the fathers were. That political commissar who comes here from time to time, said the first. The security chief who visits us, said the second, and the third blamed an itinerant Frelimo school inspector.

Machel was not so much concerned with illegitimacy but more with the fact that three women picked at random from the crowd all had babies by itinerant Frelimo officials. 'Don't allow the vices of the colonialists to take root here,' he said, and warned particularly against school staff using their prestige to seduce girl students. He made it clear that he was not prepared to accept that the Frelimo uniform was a passport to sexual gratification.

Then, and in his years as head of state, Machel was keenly aware that abuse of power, deliberate misuse of authority and military indiscipline were the surest ways of losing the prestige and popularity which Frelimo had painstakingly built up since the beginning of the struggle. His constant hounding of criminals in uniform was not the result of any inner saintliness on his part, but was born out of the conviction that it

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was necessary for Frelimo's survival and success as a political force. In the liberation struggle he would lecture on the evils of teachers impregnating girls at Frelimo schools, not only on simple moral grounds but also because it would discourage parents from sending their children to school. The implications were obvious, since provision of free education in the liberated areas was one of the things that attracted people to Frelimo.

After independence, the battle against bullying, arrogant behaviour by members of the armed forces, the police force and security officials was an obsession with Machel. When he arrived in Lourenço Marques in June 1975 at the end of the Transitional Government it did not take him long to discover that there were serious problems with some of the guerrillas who had been sent to the capital after the ceasefire.

The guerrillas had arrived in the city to a euphoric welcome from the local people. Nothing was too good for the conquering heroes. They had no money but that was no problem. They got their food at the barracks and the 'povo' plied them with alcohol and other favours. But obviously that could not go on indefinitely. When the initial euphoria wore off, the people expected the guerrillas to calm down, sober up and behave like a disciplined army. Some did and some didn't.

The problems burst into the open on 13 December, six months after independence. A communique issued at the end of a four day army meeting chaired by Machel spoke of soldiers arresting people arbitrarily, violently mistreating detainees, raping women and committing other abuses. A group of offenders, stripped of their military uniforms, was presented at the meeting. Commanders were ordered to exercise stricter control over their men and a series of tough penalties were introduced for offences, including one month's imprisonment for drinking while in uniform and a year in jail and dishonourable discharge for any soldier found drunk while in possession of a weapon. No soldier could enter a cinema without buying a ticket, nor demand free busrides or restaurant meals.

The reaction was swift. On 17 December, 600 disgruntled soldiers in the capital mutinied<sup>2</sup> They occupied an ammunition depot and a few other strategic points but were quickly rounded up and by the 19th all was quiet. The ringleaders were officially described as imperialist agents, planted much earlier in Frelimo ranks, who had incited 'corrupt and confused elements' to stage the mutiny as a reaction to the 13 December measures. The mutineers spent five years in jail before being pardoned and released.

Machel's handling of the army in this early period of independence, his insistence that the army was there to serve the people and not the other way round, undoubtedly helped to sustain its popularity through

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the difficult years of the conflict with Rhodesia. There were occasional reports of serious breaches of discipline and of legality by members of the defence and security forces but the issues did not become a big point of debate again until January 1980, the end of the Rhodesian conflict.

In that month the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border crossing at Machipanda was reopened, because of the Lancaster House Agreement and the end of hostilities. As Maputo based journalists were heading home from Machipanda after the event, they stopped over in Beira and were there advised to break their journey because Machel, who had been attending a Front Line summit in the city, was about to address a rally.

The rally turned out to be the beginning of one of the most remarkable episodes of his presidency: the 'ofensiva'. He had apparently decided that the end of the conflict with the Rhodesians was the moment to turn his attention - in a more confrontational way than before

- to some of Mozambique's internal problems. From that day on, the offensive was presented by the local media as a campaign spearheaded personally by Machel. It was aimed at rooting out the 'enemy within' and clamping down on inefficiency, negligence, corruption and abuse of power by the authorities. Beira, capital of the central province of Sofala, was the obvious place to start the ofensiva. By 1980 this boom town of the early 1970s was a depressed and depressing city. Beira's former prosperity had been created by the fact that it was the natural entrepôt for landlocked Rhodesia and a holiday centre for beach-loving, prawn-mad Rhodesian tourists. The beginning of the end of that prosperity came on 3 March 1976, when the government announced that Mozambique was imposing the full package of UN sanctions against Rhodesia.

Four years later work was still going on at the port but when the President toured its facilities he found apathy, neglect, theft and a demoralized work force. It was typical of Machel to single out a security problem at the port for special mention when he criticized the management. Grass growing in areas around the wharves had been allowed to grow chest high, and, on spotting this, the President called over one of his old guerrilla, companions, Colonel Oscar Monteiro. 'Oscar', he said, 'what could we have done in conditions like this in the old days?' Monteiro replied: 'Matter of fact I was just thinking about that. We could have got a sabotage unit in here, hidden in the long grass. No trouble at all.' A Rhodesian sabotage unit's success in blowing up oil storage tanks in Beira a few months earlier was fresh in everybody's mind.

However, the apathy and lack of vigilance in Beira was -probably

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closely related to Frelimo's failure to win over the city, body and soul, as it had done in Maputo. This was one of those peculiar contradictions in Mozambique, peculiar because Beira had been a centre of white racism in colonial times and it should have been easy for the young Frelimo government to make its mark. It was here that pro-Frelimo Catholic missionaries being deported had been assaulted by angry Portuguese mobs at the airport. The mobs even held demonstrations against the Portuguese army for its failure to quell the fight for independence. There had been, as Machel pointed out in his January 1980 speech, 'racism in the hotels, in the buses, in the restaurants, in the boarding houses, on the beaches, everywhere'. It was the repressive fiefdom of Salazar's top gauleiter, Jorge Jardim, who held

sway as the colony's representative in the Portuguese National Assembly, Chairman of the Beira Chamber of Commerce, Consul for Malawi and owner of the local press.

Not surprisingly, Frelimo had arrived in Beira in 1974 to a heroes' welcome but, in the years that followed, genuine support for the movement had waned. Machel had apparently become concerned about this and decided to take action in early 1980, when the coming independence of Zimbabwe made Beira crucial to the future of the whole subcontinent. Beira was not only an entrepôt for Zimbabwe but for Malawi and, through Zimbabwe, for Zambia and Zaire. With the end of sanctions, a well motivated Beira population and an efficient Beira port could provide a major boost for the Mozambican economy and make a dramatic difference to the fortunes of Mozambique's neighbours, reducing their dependence on the South African transport and port system.

But Beira was not well motivated and this was not only because of economic problems. Repression was in the air. In the second half of the 1970s one could smell it - and sometimes see it. In 1977 a young white Mozambican journalist there showed me the rope marks left on his biceps after having his arms tied behind his back for criticizing the authorities over a human rights violation. Yet the young man still supported Frelimo. Puzzled, I asked him why. He made a remark to the effect that we reporters in Maputo didn't know what was going on in Beira, and didn't know who was running the city. He would not expand. Only on 11 January 1980, as we awaited Machel's speech in Beira did I begin to get a sense of what that remark was about. Before going to the rally, Machel visited the railway station, an impressive domed structure. When he arrived in the great hall he stopped and, of course, the entourage stopped too. There was silence. Machel looked around, smiling. Then he began whistling and, having noticed the marvellous acoustics of the station, went on whistling. After a while, people

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noticed what he was whistling. It was a Frelimo song called 'Nio Vamos Esquerer', meaning 'We Will Not Forget' and it contains lines like 'The father of four children who was called boy. We won't forget that.' This reference to the colonialist habit of referring to black men as 'boys' had no obvious implication in Beira at that moment and to many of those present it seemed gratuitous. Later in the day it became clear what was going through Machel's head. But one got a preliminary sense of it in the motorcade from the railway station to the football stadium where the rally was to be held. People were lined up along the roadside, standing at attention, unsmiling. It was like a funeral procession. A local journalist on our press bus at the back of the motorcade told us the Beira people had been ordered by the local authorities to behave like that. A Maputo based Mozambican photographer, Ricardo Rangel, sitting beside me on the bus, blew his top. He leaned out of the back of the bus in this highpowered procession and screamed at the people: 'CARNEIROS, CARNEIROS!' (Portuguese for sheep). The people looked at Rangel with some amazement as he shouted: 'Why are you standing at attention?' Who was this lunatic in the presidential entourage capable

of such sacrilege? This seemed to be the question written on the faces of the people.

As the column sped along towards the stadium, it was not only reporters and photographers who looked on open-mouthed at this display of regimentation. A government minister told the press party later in the day that the President and his advisers had also noticed it and had been gravely disturbed by the scene. It was something completely new for the President, who was accustomed to cheering, waving crowds.

At the rally it became apparent that Machel was well-informed of the ills of Beira. 'Ndo vamos esquefer ...' he began singing in that rich, if sometimes out of tune, baritone. The crowd joined in. What had been forgotten?

In his speech, Machel recalled the arbitrary arrests, the torture, the rape and the murder carried out by the agents of the colonial administration and the PIDE. 'Beira was a centre for the training of criminals. Jardim's agents humiliated the population, brutalized the population, abused women.' He described Beira as a city 'with particular traits, where there is tribalism, racism and regionalism, and a population filled with complexes'. He said the local authority had been infiltrated during the Transitional Government by former agents of the PIDE and members of the Portuguese fascist party, the ANP.

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They were the ones who received Frelimo here in Beira. They offered cars, houses, they set up parties and also set up a 'nice girl' for the Frelimo commanders ... Then these former enemy agents infiltrated government structures, enterprises, factories, infiltrated everywhere and took the reins. And up till now we have not removed them ... Some of those who the day before had been murderers of the people managed to become our administrators.

How can they be good administrators for Frelimo? ... By occupying positions of responsibility, they installed injustice in Beira and that created confusion among the population. They used our power to wreak violence on the people.

As he spoke, Machel was looking from side to side at the Beira dignitaries on the platform with him, and the crowd cheered as he said:

A crime committed by a police inspector is never discovered, because he's the one who appoints the investigation team. He orders the dossier to be filed away and so the crimes, abuses, rapes, the ideological, physical and moral attacks go on. We all know the story of the animals meeting to choose their chief. They chose the leopard, who began to use a big chair and to wear clothes. At night the chief, with his court, went out to hunt other animals.

Relatives of the victims came to complain to the chief, who would always answer: 'Did you notice the characteristics of the animal that ate your child?' the complainant would retort: 'The only characteristic we saw was that the animal had a tail.' But the chief had his tail inside his trousers and remained seated all the time.

So it was impossible to identify him.

The President went on to describe specific abuses of authority, such as officials embezzling money and teachers giving girl students high marks in exchange for sexual favours. But with this last remark he ran into a problem that was not unusual in his spur of the moment admonitions 't mass rallies. It was misinterpreted, perhaps deliberately so by the 'leopards'. That night in Beira couples were stopped in the street and ordered to produce evidence that they were married. Those who could not were locked up. Machel's own words were being turned against the very reforms he was demanding in Beira. A few weeks later the then Transport Minister, Jose Luis Cabago,

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went to Beira and talked to port workers. He was met with silence when he asked them to talk frankly about their problems and the problems of the port. Cabaco insisted that Machel and the government were determined to stamp out the rampant intimidation in Beira, and eventually some people spoke out. As soon as Cabago left town they were arrested by the local authorities and it took presidential intervention to have them released.

Machel was not so naive as to think the Beira problem could be solved by a single visit from him, and thereafter by some judicious knuckle rapping, long distance from Maputo. What he had done was distance himself and Frelimo from an unpopular administration in Beira at a crucial moment for that city and its pivotal role in southern Africa, and paved the way for corrective action. The next step had to be the removal of the provincial governor, Fernando Matavele, because even if he personally had clean hands he was ultimately responsible for allowing the situation to deteriorate as much as it had done. The new governor would have to be someone with the political experience and vision necessary to carry Beira into the 1980s. And so, as part of a major government reshuffle in April 1980, Machel took the unprecedented step of putting a member of the Frelimo Party Political Bureau in charge of Sofala. The man chosen was MajorGeneral Mariano Matsinhe, the Interior Minister, and a leading figure in the independence struggle. The job given to Matsinhe was effectively that of provincial governor, normally held by second-tier Frelimo leaders, but to make it clear that Matsinhe was not being demoted he was given the title Minister-Resident. He was the first of three Politburo members to be put in charge of Sofala before the province was returned to the hands of a lower-level person in 1986. It has to be stressed that the abuse of power issue was not the only reason for putting top men in the Beira hot seat. There was a whole range of problems related to executive incompetence, negligence and corruption which had to be tackled urgently because of Beira's vital new regional role.

But the 1980 experience in Beira indicated that Machel was back on the warpath against those who were jeopardizing Frelimo's popularity. It took him nearly two years after the Beira rally to turn abuse of power into a national issue, but when he did so it was in dramatic style. At a mass rally in Maputo on 5 November 1981, Machel began his speech on a sombre note:

We are here today to analyse an abnormal situation that has arisen in our country.  
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we have witnessed systematic violations of legality: violations of the constitution, violations of laws and regulations and violations of our principles. A particularly serious aspect of this situation is that these violations are in many cases committed by members of the defence and security forces. They are committed by members of the Mozambique Armed Forces (FPLM), by members of the police force and militias and by personnel of the Ministry of Security (SNASP).

He then went on to list a series of abuses by members of these forces which were 'the result of the continued presence of values and practices from colonial-capitalist and tribal-feudal society, and mistakes and deviations that are the result of our own failings'. There had, he said, been theft by soldiers and militiamen at control points, rape, arbitrary arrests, beatings, intimidation and extortion. 'Aggression and torture are used as a means of punishing mistakes, which are often imaginary, and as a means of making people confess to crimes, committed or not.'

By this time, however, Machel's analysis of the reasons for the problems had developed considerably from the 'imperialist agents' scenario of 1975 and the fascist infiltration explanation of 1980. To be sure, he still spoke of the distinction 'between our heroic defence and security forces, forces that defend the people, and the reactionaries, the enemy agents, who are infiltrated into our forces'. But this time he was ready to be more specific about what he meant by enemy agents. It was actually a concept shared by Machel and his colleagues in the Frelimo leadership over many years. When they talk about enemy agents or imperialist infiltration they are not necessarily - in fact not usually - talking about physical penetration by agents of the CIA or the South African intelligence services. They are talking more in the sense of the penetration of ideas and behaviour patterns which are contrary to those of the Frelimo leadership. For them, Frelimo is more a way of life than a political party. In his November 1980 speech Machel summarized it this way: 'More than ever before the demarcation between us and the enemy is an ideological demarcation, a boundary line drawn by behaviour, by identity with the people.' He went further, to note the lack of politicization in the post-independence defence and security forces, in contrast to the old days when he was running the Frelimo camps in Tanzania, and said that now: 'Whoever enters confused, leaves confused.' His frankness on this question is worth quoting in detail:

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This is why, when these elements act as members of the defence and security forces, we find the profound marks of their origin, their past. The marks of the past have remained. The hatreds, the repressed sentiments did not die, particularly

among those who did not directly experience the process of armed national liberation struggle ... The white of humble origin, who at school was humiliated by the doctor's son, today, if he is in Security, takes satisfaction in arresting, humiliating the one who humiliated him as a child ... The coloured who is now a CID officer, takes the opportunity to take revenge on the white family, or the coloured but richer family, that would not let him marry the girl he wanted. The black who is now in the police force likes to arrest the Indian or white to demonstrate that now he is someone, that now he has power. He wants to take revenge for the hatreds, the repressed resentment, the humiliation he has suffered. There is also the tribal problem among the blacks who are today in the police or militias. If one is from the south, he arrests those from the north, just to show his tribal superiority. But he lets off the real criminal, because he comes from the same tribe ... In all these cases, we find the use of our power - and this is the problem - the use of our uniform, our weapons, to satisfy petty hatreds and repressed personal resentment. This is not what we fought for. We shall not allow this to happen in the People's Republic of Mozambique.

We shall punish all these cases severely.

Machel's speech was broadcast live on Radio Mozambique to the nation. He said he had been made aware of the situation by members of the public and he called on anyone who came across such abuse in future to report them without hesitation. 'And woe betide him who dares to exact reprisals against a citizen who denounced his abuses. For him, no leniency. Let that be very clear.' He told the people that they themselves had the power to arrest any member of the defence and security forces caught in the act of committing a crime. He said it was compulsory for security men to show identity cards when requested, adding: 'We do not want secret police. We do not need them.' He warned that defence and security men accused of crimes would be subject not only to internal disciplinary processes but would face severe punishment in the civil courts as well. The police and security forces were absolutely forbidden from making arrests or searching people's homes without a warrant. To make the message clear, Machel presented his ministers of jus-

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tice, security and interior and two deputy defence ministers on the platform, declaring that they would personally be held responsible for ensuring that a clean-up took place.<sup>2</sup>

The speech, later published under the title 'The Enemy Within', had a serious impact.

In a case brought before the Inhambane provincial court later in the month, two security men were each fined the equivalent of about US\$100 and jailed for five months for assaulting two women. The court was told that the two men were drunk and beat up two women who were on their way to market. As the Mozambique News Agency (AIM) commented at the time: 'In the past, the two women would probably have felt too intimidated to push an official complaint,

and the local police, in any case, would not have rushed to deal with such a complaint.'

That was the first of many such cases reported in the local press. The speech did not, of course, put an end to abuses by army and security men but it did make it much easier for the press to go after rogues in uniform without fear of reprisal. This was particularly important in 1984 and 1985 in clamping down on an outbreak of robberies by soldiers and militiamen in the area round Maputo. One of the most curious effects of the affair, however, was the defection of a senior security official to South Africa. Jorge Costa, one of several whites in senior positions in the security services, was on an official business visit to Johannesburg in June 1982 when he announced his decision to stay in the enemy camp.

Costa was the classic example of the white security man Machel had been talking about in his speech five months earlier. As one writer later put it: 'The son of a small time Lourenço Marques transport owner, Costa developed a very large chip on his shoulder because of the class discrimination he suffered in his school days at the hands of the sons of the middle class. When he went to Portugal to study law in the early 1970s, he joined Frelimo (and also joined a Maoist party in Portugal after the coup there) and returned to Mozambique to help establish the new police and security services. He got his own back for imagined and real slights by harrasing middle-class whites ... and fomenting persecution of whites. His actions, and those of others like him, made life unpleasant for many settlers.'<sup>3</sup> The Mozambican Security Ministry noted that Costa had opposed Machel's campaign within the defence and security forces and 'presented the offensive for legality as being demobilizing for defence and security cadres'.

There were no such demobilizing factors in South Africa's security services. The South African political police have always been able to

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rest assured that they will not face the fury of a president who demands an explanation and threatens severe punishment. As Costa was handing himself over the South African authorities were throwing up their hands in outraged innocence at suggestions that they might have murdered the anti-apartheid white trade unionist, Neil Aggett. In February, Aggett had died, like so many other anti-apartheid campaigners, in the John Vorster police cells in Johannesburg. On that occasion, immediate cause of death was hanging. Falling out of windows is another common cause of death in South African police stations. Others have received fatal knocks on the head, as Steve Biko did in 1977. The official explanation is usually suicide, accident or 'a scuffle'.

Jorge Costa's flight to a security service which Samora Machel once described as an organization which 'suicides people' is fitting testimony to the Mozambican leader's constant efforts to get rid of what he called 'impure cargo'. He wasn't always successful, but at least he tried.

It is also appropriate that Steve Biko named his last child Samora, in honour of the Mozambican leader.

Notes

1. At the time of the mutiny the government said 400 soldiers had been involved. See

Tempo magazine, Maputo, No. 273. The figure 600 was given in the pardon announcement of 13 December 1980. See Mozambique Information Agency monthly bulletin No. 54.

2. In June 1984 the Ministers of Security and Internal affairs were dismissed amid allegations of continued heavy-handedness.

3. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*, London, Zed Books Ltd, 1984, p. 47. (Dr Hanlon's book is an invaluable source of information and analysis of post-independence Mozambique).

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12. The Samorian touch

The political and military leader Samora Machel stood out as an exceptional man of his times.

There have been many other leaders with the same enthusiasm and sincerity of purpose for the battle against injustice. He was not alone in having led a country from colonial rule to independence through armed struggle. Others were, like him, both revolutionary intellectuals and men of military action, and he was not the only leader of his generation to combine natural, easy charm with the political toughness needed to get things done.

But Machel's greatness was unique. Beyond the usual attributes of statesmanship, that greatness was expressed in very human qualities a great breadth of vision, a compulsive honesty, determination, zest for life and love of human contact. He had a vibrancy, a panache and a self-confidence that broke down barriers of language and ideology.

Machel had an almost insatiable thirst for experience. During the independence struggle he had a compulsion to be away from the security of the rear bases in Tanzania and into the Frelimo zones of Mozambique, so that he could personally experience the triumphs and the tragedies of a nation being built under Portuguese bombing and shelling.

Once, sitting with Samora in an air raid in Cabo Delgado as Fiat G-91 jets showered us with rocket fire, I asked him why on earth he felt it necessary to expose himself to such risk and put the movement in danger of losing its leader. He used one of his many medical analogies to explain, saying something to the effect that the leadership had to know the temperature in these zones and so he was here with his thermometer.

He never really lost that spirit in later years but it became extremely difficult for him to keep his ear to the ground. This is exemplified in the fact that after independence his first visit to Tete Province, always a key area in the war, did not come until a few weeks before his death. He appreciated that fact that the war had never stopped and that his presence as a mobilizing leader on the ground was needed just as much after independence as it was before. But of course the demands on a head of state are enormous, particularly when he is also head of

government, leader of the ruling party and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Working out his official calendar must have been a nightmare. Tours of the provinces had to compete for time with cabinet meetings, Party Politburo and Central Committee meetings, defence staff meetings, audiences for visiting dignitaries and officials visits

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abroad. He was also supposed to sleep from time to time and have a holiday once a year - something he insisted upon for his officials too. As President of the Republic he did not travel in the country nearly as much as he wanted to. That is not to say that he ensconced himself in Maputo and never moved around. He did travel but, instead of the routine nature of his travels in the countryside in the old days, each visit to a province became a media event, instead of something that was part and parcel of a President's work.

Machel was able to keep up with his demanding schedule by keeping himself in excellent physical condition, partly with the help of an exercise bicycle in the presidential residence at Ponta Vernelha in Maputo. To the end of his days he had the physique and the stamina of an athlete.

He did not smoke and objected to people smoking anywhere near him. On one occasion his secretary caught me puffing my pipe in the vestibule of the presidential offices and politely requested me to put it out. The president, she explained, had the habit of coming in to work in the morning, twitching his nose and commenting with a frown: 'Somebody's been smoking in here.'

His concern for healthy living did not extend, as the London Times claimed in its obituary, to abstinence from alcohol. It is true that while on the march in the bush he drank only water or tea made from wild lemon grass, and frowned on tipping. A former Tanzanian journalist, Ferdinand Ruhinda, tells the story of a trip to the liberated areas with Machel when, at the end of a particularly exhausting day's march, the guerrilla leader said: 'Ruhinda, would you like a glass of cold beer?' Ruhinda says he licked his parched lips and gratefully accepted, 'but it was a cruel joke. There was no beer'. In later years, however, Machel was partial to a glass or two of good scotch in the evenings and at official receptions he sipped his champagne from a connoisseurs tulip glass.

His passion for physical fitness was well known, but not always well appreciated, by men under his command. When I travelled with him in the bush during the independence struggle I naively remarked to my interpreter that the guerrillas in our column must have felt very pleased to have been chosen to march with the President. Not exactly, he said, explaining that a march with Samora in charge was a gruelling event. 'That's one reason we're glad to have you here,' he added. 'Samora will have to limit the length and speed of a day's march so that you can keep up.' Not very flattering but absolutely true.

Once, in the early 1970s, he was in an African capital for a summit of the OAU. It was not long after the murder of the Guinea-Bissau nationalist leader, Amilcar Cabral. Machel, as leader of an increasingly

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successful liberation movement, was obviously another potential target for assassination, so the lodge in which he was staying was well guarded.

A journalist covering the conference told me that at about five o'clock one morning, the guards were horrified to hear a fearful thumping and banging coming from Samora's room. They rushed to the scene of what sounded like a particularly brutal political assassination. They wrenched open the door, guns at the ready, only to find Samora jumping up and down with a skipping rope. Skipping is the classic exercise for boxers and Samora never lost his enthusiasm for the noble art. He knew it was de rigeur for black American politicians to take an interest in the sport and never missed a chance to engage them in discussion on the subject. He had Andrew Young, former US Ambassador to the UN, send him videos of major fights. When the Rev. Jesse Jackson called on him in September 1986 Samora immediately noticed the civil rights campaigner's powerful physique and guessed he had found someone to chat to about his favourite sport. The two men had official talks on the situation in southern Africa and what Americans should be doing about it. They then chatted late into the night about American boxing. 1

For Machel, the boxing memories, the insistence on keeping himself physically fit were not mere fetishes. He knew he had to be on his toes at all times, he had to maintain his health, in order to keep up with what would otherwise have been an impossible schedule. This is why he had two first-rate Cuban doctors on his permanent staff. Their job was to make sure this human dynamo did not break down under the strain. They succeeded, but at the end their skills could not save Machel. Both were on the fatal plane journey and both died. One, seriously injured, tried desperately to free himself from the wreckage to go to the aid of the President, as the South Africans were rummaging among the documents and ignoring the casualties. There was no help for the doctor or for the President. Machel had been a target for years. In July 1972 the Portuguese sent a trained assassin after him. The 'Jackal', whose name was Pedro Alvaro Cabral Lopes de Bettencourt da Camara, was a Mozambican sergeant in the Portuguese armed forces. He was given a warm welcome by Frelimo when he deserted in Tete province, provided a lot of information about Portuguese military and political strategy and said he wanted to become a freedom fighter. He was sent for training to Nachingwea camp in Tanzania, where he lay low for several months. His real reason for crossing over to Frelimo was discovered when he was interrogated after being caught with a sniper's rifle with telescopic sights which he had obtained illegally from the camp's armoury. He

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confessed to having been sent to assassinate Machel.2

In 1983, there was the affair of the South African Peter Benjamin Schoeman, mentioned in chapter eight. Machel himself, in the month of his death, spoke of a September 1985 assassination attempt by the South Africans. This apparently involved a planned bazooka attack on his official car. He was incapable of getting

anxious about this sort of incident. 'You have to be an optimist. I'm always an optimist,' he said.<sup>3</sup> Eight days later he was dead.

He had a seemingly cavalier attitude to his personal security, often appearing to expose himself quite unnecessarily to the assassin's bullet. He would ride through town and village on the back of an open car, standing up and waving to the crowds, as though he didn't have an enemy in the world. During his 11 years as President of the Republic he addressed dozens of open-air rallies, standing and talking for hours on end to tens of thousands of people, any one of whom could have been a South African hit man. Often, at the end of a rally, he would leap from the platform and head straight into the crowd, with his bodyguards desperately trying to keep up with him as he disappeared into the milling throng, hugging and shaking hands.

But it was not really folly. Machel was very conscious of his own popularity and he knew that should some gunman in the crowd make a move the people would pounce on him in a second. He was always safe among his people, on the ground. And when he drove through town in an open car, when the Rhodesians or the South Africans could have had a jackal positioned at a high window, his security men were there in the front, peering upwards, guns in hand. If Machel had been unable to move among the people, o povo, his adrenalin would have dried up. The human contact was like a drug to him.

He was nowhere more at home than at a mass rally. Seeing him for the first time at a rally was an experience never forgotten, and this experience was never better described than by a Canadian journalist, Michael Valpy, in a word-picture of Machel's performance in Harare at a congress of Zanu in 1984.

Machel, when he is introduced, doesn't merely walk to the microphone - he catapults towards it like a famished tiger upon a tethered goat. Then, he beams cherubically and as often as not starts laughing until everyone is laughing with him. He has the rhythm, the inner music to be expected of a master speaker. His hand beats, his foot taps to the symphonic soaring of his oratori-

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cal flights. When he talks, he looks as if he is conducting himself (which of course he is). Once introduced to an audience, he owns it ...

When he was well into his speech, he sensed his audience starting to drift away. He immediately broke from his text and started to hum a Zimbabwean revolutionary song. Machel gestured to the band beside the stage to play along. Zimbabwean cabinet ministers on the stage leaped to their feet and began dancing and singing ... The audience was on its feet, clapping and singing. School children with flower garlands ... rushed in front of the stage and footed it to the music.

Valpy, saying Machel had 'oratorical tricks undreamed of by most politicians', went on to described the finale.

Machel unleashed a long denunciation of imperialism. He then stopped. 'A luta continua!' (The struggle continues) he shouted.

'Continua!' the crowd shouted back. Machel then yelled, in translation: 'What does the struggle continue against?' He stood silently, waiting. A hundred or so scattered voices said hesitantly: 'Imperialism'. Machel asked again: 'What does the struggle continue against?' This time a hundred or so voices said with greater assurance: 'Capitalism.' Machel let silence drift just to the point where people felt uncomfortable. Then he erupted: 'The struggle continues against tribalism! The struggle continues against regionalism! The struggle continues against racialism! Against ignorance! Against illiteracy! Against superstition! Against misery! Against famine!...'

As Valpy so correctly observed, Machel was a master of luring his audience 'into some pap chants about capitalism and imperialism and then he brings in his own devastating list of targets for the African struggle.'

It could be said that Machel raised political speech-making to the level of art. He was almost incapable of making a speech without bursting into revolutionary song, bringing the whole crowd into it in two-part harmony. There is a fairly wide repertoire of Frelimo revolutionary songs, composed in the years of the independence war and with lyrics in Mozambique's African languages or in Portuguese. Because of the diversity of language in Mozambique people from the south often don't

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know exactly what it is they are singing if the lyrics are in a northern language, and vice versa. But they know the general thrust of each song and, since the tunes are usually very catchy, everybody loves joining in.

The music and other Samorian histrionics served a variety of purposes. It was a way of stopping people from becoming bored, for one thing. But it was also a method of bringing unruly crowds under control

- a useful talent in a country whose police seem never to have heard of crowd control. One person who was very impressed by this talent was the Great Orator himself - Fidel Castro. In March 1977, when the Cuban leader and Machel arrived to address a rally in Beira, the crowd was excited, noisy and unruly. Machel bounded to the microphone and within seconds turned the chaotic mob into a well-drilled choir, leading the people into the tranquilizing lyrics of a number called 'O Povo Organizado' (The Organized People). Then came the customary revolutionary slogans.

'Viva o povo organizado!' Machel shouted.

'Viva!' the crowd roared back at him, flinging clenched right fists in the air.

'Abaixo indisciplina!' (Down with indiscipline!)

'Abaixo!'

Castro told the crowd later. 'He's the first leader I've ever seen who can bring order to the masses through revolutionary songs. This was something entirely new for us.'

The Cuban leader went on to give some advice to the Mozambicans. Ten years later his words have a poignant ring:

You have to take care of Comrade Samora Machel. You have to wish long life and the best of health to Comrade Samora Machel.

It's true that men pass on and revolutions last. But when a revolution is at the stage the Mozambican revolution is at, the role of the leader takes on an extraordinary character. It's very important to have that clear head, that revolutionary head, which leads the party and which leads the people.<sup>4</sup>

It was at the mass rallies, especially in Maputo and Beira, that Machel's magic made its mark on a generation of Mozambicans. His style at these rallies drew different reactions. Some people would argue that there was a touch of the demagogue about him, and, in fact, he did have the disconcerting habit of shouting out: 'Is that right or not?' after making a point in a speech. People gave the answer they were expected to give, whether they really believed it or not. Who

wants to be an odd

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person out in a crowd of 50 000?

But Machel managed to be shamelessly manipulative without being intimidating in the manner of a dictator. His relationship with a crowd was good humoured and full of give and take. Audience participation was part of the show. But the entertainment was a vehicle for politics. Machel took the trouble to stay well-informed about the everyday problems of his people and his insight into their preoccupations was evident at most of the rallies he addressed. He was able to use these rallies as consciousness-raising sessions, using simple language and examples drawn from day-to-day Mozambican life. John Saul has observed that: there has probably been more genuine Marxist analysis of Mozambican society in some of Samora Machel's most informal speeches than in most of the syllabi on 'dialectical and historical materialism' produced by 'advisors on ideology' to the Mozambican government. It is fortunate that many Mozambicans seem well aware of that fact.<sup>5</sup>

His instinct for communication also came across strongly at formal state and party gatherings: the opening and closing of parliament, the Frelimo congresses.

The fourth congress of Frelimo in 1983 was perhaps the classic of the genre.

Machel read out the report of the Central Committee to the 677 delegates and many foreign guests, including the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. Machel did not, of course, write the speech himself. It was a collective report, very important in terms of its content but not written with scintillating style or grace. A massive document, it took him 10 hours, spread over two days, to deliver. Holding an audience's attention for 10 hours with a speech about politics and economics is a daunting task. Indeed, one of the favourite shots of TV camera operators at political congresses is the close-up of snoozing delegates, oblivious to the soporific meanderings of the speaker. Machel was different, dramatically different.

He began with a 'call and response' approach. 'Khanimambo, Khanimambo,' he intoned in a luxurious baritone that boomed through the hall. 'FRAY-LEE-MOW',

came the adagio response from the massed choir of Marxist sopranos, tenors and baritones on the floor. The song went on. The tone was set. Every hour or so there would be another song or a clutch of Vivas and Abaixos, keeping the revolutionary fervour aflame and the less

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sprightly delegates and guests awake. I was sitting in the gallery alongside a Zimbabwean cabinet minister who sat through the whole congress spellbound. As we filed out he said 'Extraordinary performance ... extraordinary ... never seen anything like it in my life.'

In May 1982 Machel gave an even more extraordinary performance at a series of meetings in a Maputo school hall. He confronted about a thousand Mozambicans who, before independence, had been voluntary members of organizations which implemented the political, military and security policies of the colonial-fascist state. They included former agents of the PIDE-DGS, members of the most brutal military and para-military groups and a handful of men who had joined the Portuguese fascist party, Popular National Action (ANP).

They were the type of people who, in Europe, were tarred and feathered or shorn of their hair or even executed after the Second World War. Machel, to his credit, had banned such reprisals after his country's independence.

The process that led up to the 1982 meetings began in 1978, when Machel ordered that meetings should be held in workplaces, where excollaborators would be invited to identify themselves and describe what they had done. Photographs of the ex-collaborators would be put on the notice boards at their workplaces and would remain there for a few years.

There were two objectives. One was simply to try to make the collaborators understand that they had betrayed their own people and that the savage repression in which they had taken part could not be justified. The second objective, which was to avoid blackmail, was more important. There were tens of thousands of these ex-collaborators in the country as a whole, but nobody could say exactly how many or who they were, because the outgoing colonial regime had given no lists of names. The best information about this was in the hands of men like Orlando Cristina, who had been a Portuguese intelligence officer and was now Secretary General of the MNR, and Evo Fernandes, who had worked for the Portuguese police in Mozambique and was also now a member of the MNR leadership.

In the first three years of independence, Frelimo had made no organized effort to identify ex-collaborators and it is impossible to establish how many were blackmailed by Cristina into joining the MNR. It would have been easy to recruit hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people who feared that exposure as former collaborators might cost them their jobs, or worse.

The appeal for people to step forward and own up had good results, at least in Maputo where I was able to witness some of the proceedings. This is perhaps not surprising since there was no threat of punishment

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other than having one's picture, name and colonialist organization stuck on the wall.

In 1982, it was decided that the pictures had been on the notice boards long enough, and that the process could be wound up. Former collaborators working in Maputo were summoned to the May meetings with Machel. Press and television were present.

Former collaborators - or comprometidos as they were called were summoned to the platform by the President to talk about their past. Machel told them that he knew nobody was perfect and that everybody made mistakes. But, he said, they had to talk frankly about their past. He did not want simple admissions that they had been members of this or that organization. He wanted details of what they had done. The idea was that if the details were not revealed, the threat of blackmail remained.

The President marched up and down the platform, speaking nonstop, agitated by old memories of friends who had been reduced to human wreckage before being butchered by the colonialists and their hirelings. It became intensely personal. The nurses at the hospital who had disappeared after being taken to the secret police dungeons. The Frelimo guerrillas who were captured wounded and refused to reveal secrets under excruciating torture. Machel had personal knowledge of many cases. He named names.

Then memories emerged from the other side of the hall. Grim confessions of betrayal. Free from any threat of jail or hanging, men admitted to having being paid by the secret police to infiltrate students' groups, discussion associations, even conversations on railway trains, to get the names of African nationalists. These nationalists were then arrested and many were tortured to death in prison. A driver for the PIDE-DGS admitted taking the bodies to be thrown into the sea. Two ex-commandos admitted having been present at the 1972 massacre of Wirihamu in Tete province, when hand grenades were thrown into a crowd of villagers. It took three days to bury the bodies. In general, the sessions were a classic example of how to deal in a humanitarian way with the aftermath of a horrific and traumatic era. As long as people spoke openly and honestly about what they had done they were pardoned: and, indeed, a ban on them becoming executives at work was lifted.

But early in the proceedings, Machel harangued a man who refused to admit the gravity of what he had done. Machel clearly either knew of the case from personal experience or had a very good file on the man. He went at him relentlessly. But the man, a black Mozambican artist, continued to try to minimize the effects of his collaboration. Machel eventually lost his temper and called the police to take him away. I

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cannot remember Machel's exact words. But the sense was: 'Take him to a labour reform camp and leave him there forever.' I remember thinking at the time that this was unworthy of Machel. It seemed to reveal a cruel streak which I had never seen before. He was using presidential power to send someone away for life

without the due process of law. Whatever the man had done, he deserved a better trial than that. And what did reform mean if the prisoner was in for life? But of course the whole episode was a trick by Machel to get the others to come clean. It worked. Most of them talked openly about their past activities and Machel called some of them to the platform to shake hands. The air was cleared, there was a general pardon and the event ended with former colonial commandos volunteering to join the fight against the MNR.

And the artist who was sentenced to life? Today he goes round Maputo, smiling happily as usual, selling his paintings. He's doing better these days and has even organized exhibitions of his work.

The word 'Samorian' in the title of this chapter is not my own invention. It was coined by Aquino de Bragança, a scholar and journalist who was a personal and political friend of Machel for many years. Aquino intended it as a description of a body of political theory which grew out of Frelimo's struggle for the independence of Mozambique, rather than the sense in which I have used it in this chapter. When Aquino mentioned to Machel that he wanted to launch this new word, the President rejected the idea outright. Why? Possibly because Machel thought there were quite enough individuals' names organically attached to socialist theory already without adding to the clutter. Would he have objected to the same word being used to describe his style of leadership? I think not, for neither he nor anyone who knew him would deny his uniqueness in that respect. He disliked comparisons and once gave a Tanzanian journalist a lecture for describing him in an article as 'Africa's Che Guevara'. He had learned from the experiences of revolutionaries in many lands who went before him but modelled himself on no one and wanted to be considered Mozambique's Samora Machel, nothing else.

Epitaph

The agonies of colonialism and the experience of the independence struggle produced a great deal of moving Mozambican poetry. Jose

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Craveirinha, Marcelino dos Santos, Armando Guebuza, Rui Nogar, Jorge Rebelo and many others tell this epic story eloquently in verse. Samora Machel loved to argue about the relative merits of this or that poet but he himself never turned his hand to poetry in any consistent way and showed little talent as a bard. Only one of his own poems was published. It was a eulogy for Josina, his wife and companheira, who died in 1971. Let this little extract from that poem be an epitaph for Samora as well as Josina, and for all those who have fallen in the struggle against racism and colonialism in southern Africa.

How can we mourn a comrade but by holding the fallen gun and continuing the combat?

My tears flow from the same source that gave birth to our love,  
our will and our revolutionary life.

Thus these tears are both a token and a vow of combat.

The flowers which fall from the tree are to prepare the land for

new and more beautiful flowers to bloom in the next season.  
Your life continues in those who continue the Revolution.

#### Notes

1. Kraft, Scott, Lo, Angeles Times, September 14 1986.
  2. This attempt to kill Machel, described to the author by veterans of Frelimo's independence struggle, took place sometime in 1973 but has not until now been made public, to the best of my knowledge. When da Camara penetrated Frelimo he ingratiated himself by presenting what sounded like good intelligence. He said the Portuguese commander in Mozambique, Kaulza de Arriaga, was involved in a plot to make a unilateral declaration of independence from Portugal and to appoint a black puppet president, the Frelimo deserter Miguel Murupa. Details of this alleged plot appeared in the Times of Zambia, 18 December 1972. (The Puppet President, by Iain Christie).
  3. Conversation with the author and other journalists in Maputo at Casa Lichinga on October 11 1986, op. cit.
  4. Tempo, Maputo, No. 339.
  5. Saul, John, A Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1985, p. 147.
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