

Mozambique Is Viewed as Africa's Best Hope for the Flowering of Socialism's 'New Man'

By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

MAPUTO, Mozambique—The idealistic left, in Africa, Europe and America is now looking to this country as it once looked to Ghana, Algeria and more recently Tanzania as fertile ground for the nurturing of socialism's "new man."

At universities around the continent, African students talk increasingly and admiringly of Mozambique and of the country's leader, Samora Machel, a 44-year-old former hospital orderly who, like the Government he directs, was shaped during a 10-year guerrilla war against Portuguese colonial forces.

At the same time, scores of mostly young, mostly Marxist men and women from the developed world are arriving here as they once did in Accra, Algiers, and Dar es Salaam to participate in the social innovations through which Mozambique's Government is seeking to transform this country of 10 million people into a nonracist, nontribal, nonexploitative and self-reliant society.

Swedes, Americans and Chinese

There are Swedish doctors, Scottish journalists and American teachers among the hundreds who have come more or less as individuals. There are also, of course, many Cuban, North Korean, Chinese, Russian and Eastern European technicians who have come here under government agreements.

But it is largely the influx of Westerners that serves to underscore Mozambique's particular role in testing the idea that the seeds of scientific socialism can flower in Africa without repression or economic chaos.

The Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah, which once symbolized that hope, founded as ambitious schemes outpaced meager resources and civilian corruption gave way to military coups. Then Algeria had its unity shattered by political skirmishing and economic production levels fell. More recently in Tanzania, despite the moral exhortations of President Julius K. Nyerere, income-redistribution plans and rural collectives have failed to advance the modest dream of having the nation feed itself.

But if enthusiasm has waned in other places, it is palpable here. The experience of Mozambique is only two years old and any instantaneous readings of revolutionary change are subject to revision. 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.

'Absence of Repression'

"I write these letters home," said Barbara Baker, a 34-year-old New Yorker who left her job at Bronx Community College to teach in an adult education program here. "The letters are all about the grass roots organization going on, the process of ongoing education in offices and factories, the lack of any racial hostility, the politeness, the absence of repression and I know that back home it must sound like a fairy tale. Sometimes I think it is a fairy tale, but it is true."

Certainly the cohesion witnessed during a two-week visit to Mozambique was remarkable in terms of black Africa. Although most of the Portuguese have left, the degree to which whites, blacks and Asians live together was striking.

In much of Africa whites and blacks often use the same restaurants but they do not always share the same tables. Here they do. Throughout the continent the sight of black nannies holding white infants is common, but only here has this reporter seen white women holding the black children of their friends.

It is clear that President Machel's Government enjoys popularity and support. Since independence there have been no open splits within the leadership of the country's only party, called Frelimo, which is an acronym for Front for the Liberation of Mozambique.

Lessons Learned in War

The Frelimo leaders are proud of what they feel is Mozambique's singular experience in Africa and they attribute it to lessons learned in the armed struggle against the Portuguese.

Mr. Machel himself has said that the "thing history will remember us for is not defeating colonialism but learning how to use the armed struggle as a mechanism for changing the mentality of the people."

In the course of the war, Frelimo established schools, hospitals and conducted political education in concrete ways to encourage those who have skills to pass them on to those that do not.

They also evolved the concept of the "dynamizing" group, which today is the basic structure of social mobilization.

Serve as Cheerleaders

Each factory, each hospital, each school and each state farm or collective has such groups of workers or students, who are elected and who serve roughly as cheerleaders or counselors.

For example, in Maputo's central hospital, there are weekly meetings of patients and staff at which problems are discussed.

Maria Salghetti, the chief of nursing, explained that patients may, and have, raised complaints about food or cleanliness. The problems are discussed and analyzed. It is then up to the dynamizing groups to encourage their colleagues to work more efficiently to solve them.

The groups are also concerned with the personal problems of their colleagues. If a man is drinking excessively or is often absent from work, the group looks into the problem.

"Most often all that is necessary is for the group to talk with the man or woman but sometimes when attitudes do not change it is necessary for people to go for re-education," said the nurse, a white who served with Frelimo during the war.

Such groups have succeeded in imposing an appearance of movement and orderliness in the country. A second factor that contributes to the so far unusual development of Mozambique stems from the country's geography.

The land is bordered in the south by South Africa, and to the west by Rhodesia. During the later years of Portuguese control the economy was closely tied to those of its white-ruled neighbors.

Mozambique's leaders now express total commitment to the cause of majority rule in Rhodesia.

Trade Ties To South Africa

Despite frequent private comments from Mozambicans deploring the inability of the Rhodesian nationalists to settle their differences or to plans for a new society, the Government has provided training camps for Rhodesian guerrillas, which has prompted raids by Rhodesian forces. Mozambique also closed its border with Rhodesia, stopping the rail links between Salisbury, the Rhodesian capital, and the Mozambican ports of Beira and Maputo. This has cost the country almost \$200 million a year in transit fees and duties.

However, Mozambique's relationship to South Africa is different, with trade and commercial links very much intact. The Government regularly expresses its indignation at apartheid, but South African technicians help staff its ports and most spare parts come from South Africa.

There is a widespread recognition not only among the leadership but among the population that while the South African Government may be hateful, it is a necessary trading partner and, perhaps more importantly, a powerful technological force with far greater military muscle than Rhodesia.

This contradiction has forced a certain pragmatism both in programs and polemics.

"South Africa is real, its power is real, no one here expects us to precipitate suicidal confrontations," said an official in the planning ministry. "On the other hand we are striving to develop a society that, in time, will not be dependent on any foreign sources for either our technology or skills."

Reach Colonial Production Level

The official said Mozambique's goal was to increase production by the end of the decade to the highest levels reached during the colonial period. He added by the end of the century Mozambique would be manufacturing its own tractors.

This pragmatism extends as well to the country's foreign relations, particularly with Communist countries. During the guerrilla war, Mr. Machel went to Peking and, like many leaders of liberation groups, was offered military assistance if he renounced Soviet support. Alone among African liberation groups, Mozambique's guerrillas were able to obtain Chinese help while retaining Soviet support.

The Soviet Union is supplying and training the army. The East Germans are active in the Information Ministry. The Cubans have the most visible presence with agricultural and technical teams. There are North Koreans as well and the Swedes have given the most aid to the country.

Relations with the United States are cool but improving. President Machel's talk with President Carter at the United Nations was given less press coverage than his meetings with Cuba's Leader, Fidel Castro, and Jamaica's Prime Minister, Michael Manley. Some resentment still remains over United States support for Portugal during the guerrilla conflict and diplomatic ties were slow to be established after independence.

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U.S. Supplied Food Assistance

The United States supplied Mozambique with \$20 million in food assistance last year. More recently, a Mozambican delegation went to the United States to discuss various projects with bankers.

According to a diplomatic source outside Mozambique, the bankers were impressed by the limits the Mozambicans placed on foreign involvement.

"They said here are sectors where we are interested in your technology and in partnership, and here are others where we do not want your technology, where we will exploit our resources on our own," the source said.

There are those who insist that the Government is intent on guarding the national identity of its revolution. When Mr. Machel recently saw off 1,200 secondary school pupils to Cuba, where they would be studying, he thanked Mr. Castro but then pointed out that Mozambican teachers would be going with the students to help them "preserve their Mozambican personality."

Some observers say that Mozambique appears to be developing strong ideological alliances with many of the newer, smaller and non-European Communist states, such as Vietnam and Cuba, whose experiences are closer to those of Mozambique.

"It is 60 years that we have been waiting for the new man to be born in Moscow," said one young Mozambican. "It is a long pregnancy and perhaps a miscarriage, but maybe in Cuba, in Vietnam or here, he will still come."