

MOZAMBIQUE

Machel slams indiscipline in schools



On paper, Mozambique has won the three-year-long hard battle to take the austere Marxist-Leninist doctrine to the furthest corners of the land. FRELIMO's dictatorship is supposed to keep an iron-fisted control

over the lives of Mozambicans. They are required to abide by a party-enforced rigid code of Spartan and virtuous conduct. How does this work in practice? President Samora Machel has provided some of the answers at a mass rally in Maputo. TO THE POINT's José Ramalho reports.

"Portuguese monkey go home!" Mozambique's "suruma"-smoking*, pornography-peddling students mercilessly bait the white progressive teachers Portugal has been sending to her former colony at FRELIMO's earnest request.

Machel pulled no punches in laying bare the stark contrast between what had been expected from the students after three years of solid round-the-clock political indoctrination and the rampant indiscipline and moral decay he claims to be the scene in the Mozambique schools. Thousands of students, teachers and parents sat through a three-hour speech at a mass rally in the huge Pavilhão do Sporting stadium in Maputo on February 16 to mark the opening of a new school year. Alternating between fury and light-hearted banter, Machel gave a sometimes clownish vision of the goings-on in the schools, mimicking the mannerisms and speech of rakish boys and schoolgirl prostitutes.

"Many more teachers will be arriving from Portugal and the reactionaries will make them their main target", warned Machel.

But when the newly arrived teachers find themselves at the receiving end of "attacks, threats and violence", predicted by the president, they will be able to bear their ordeal with equanimity, remembering Machel's consoling words: "Foreign teachers must not take these attitudes as reflecting the feelings of the Mozambique people as a whole". Indeed, "the will of the Mozambique people is to promote, develop and consolidate solidarity relations with all peoples, especially those who wish to help in this difficult struggle", he claims.

His deep displeasure at the conduct of the scholars will not stop at words alone. "No one will go unpunished who shows discriminatory

attitudes to foreign teachers, most especially the Portuguese", he vowed. But whatever harsh punishment he has in store for them, he did not seem convinced that baiting would stop as he rumbled on mimicking the students: "You Portuguese, you so and so..."

He unwittingly paid a compliment to the broadcasts of the clandestine radio station "Voice of Free Africa", which he called "A Voz da Quizumba" (Voice of the Hyena), when he claimed that it is widely quoted in the



Machel: sinners will be expelled

schools. He screamed: "You know who speaks in Voz da Quizumba, don't you? So, why do you listen to it, hey?" Machel's graphic description of "camouflaged prostitution" in all schools, particularly in secondary schools, kept his audience roaring with laughter. "Flashy BMWs and expensive white and red Volvos cruise near the schools awaiting for the girls to come out of the classes. And they (the cars) have air conditioning inside, hey?" he teased. He then gave a highly entertaining impersonation of schoolgirls telling their mothers they were going away for the weekend: "Mama, see you on Monday", and he mimicked the girl sauntering out whistling softly.

He claimed that the girls turned up for classes on Monday "with dandruff and dust" in their hair after day-and-night "farras" (wild parties). "No more hiding their dirty and dishevelled hair under scarves from now on," he said. With the audience applauding wildly, he launched into a spirited solo of the song "Kanimambo FRELIMO" (Thank you FRELIMO).

In a sober vein, he conceded that the 1976 and 1977 school years had been an unmitigated disaster marked by "chronic absenteeism and dismally low marks". He disclosed that the reason Standard IX students fail their exams, year after year, stems from the fact that they are trying to dodge "party tasks".

He was referring to a law passed last year which makes it compulsory for students reaching Standard X to leave school and be drafted into any kind of service allocated to them by the party, irrespective of their wishes or vocations. Screamed Machel: "Who else provides employment where peasants and workers hold all the power? It is the People's Republic of Mozambique which gives you jobs. If you run away from school to dodge the draft, who is going to give you a job?"

Machel complained bitterly: "Friends, how can we build a country with people like this, with this type of conduct?"

The climax of Machel's three-hour theatricals came when he unashamedly told his audience of senior high school students, many in Standard IX, their teachers and parents: "In colonial times, no black was ever allowed near a school. You had never even been near the door of Liceu Salazar or knew the colour of the bus taking pupils to commercial school."

"How else could there be now so many thousands of Standard X students if one thinks that FRELIMO has been running the country for only three years?", commented an astonished listener.

Indeed, according to official statistics, more than 700 000 students were enrolled in 1972 in Mozambique schools, a figure quoted in the publication *Jeune Afrique* as representing a ratio far higher than in most other African states and regarded by UNESCO as "praiseworthy". There were at that time in Mozambique some 200 secondary schools with a staff of 3 000, teaching 50 000 students. Among Machel's listeners were cabinet ministers who had not only attended multiracial and co-educational schools during the colonial era but had held senior ranks in Mocidade Portuguesa (the para-military Salazar Youth Movement).

Machel went on to praise the excellence of the schools "in the liberated areas of Mozambique" during the war. Being more specific, he could remember only Bagamoyo and Tunduru, both deep inside Tanzanian territory.

Mozambique's notorious "re-education" camps can expect a fresh influx of inmates. Machel vowed that sinful senior boys and girls are to be expelled forthwith and dispatched to the camps to be "re-educated". Their academic careers will be finished for good. After a suitable period of punishment, they will be put to the service of the community "in productive activities", Machel pledged.

They will find themselves in good company, indeed. The schools' pogrom follows two sweeping purges of the army and the civil service and the continuing cleansing of the party ranks. The figure often quoted of 60 000 detainees shows a tendency to keep climbing.

*Marijuana