

# MOZAMBIQUE

## WHY SHOOT THE TEACHER ?

### EDUCATION



### IF YOU CAN'T KILL FREEDOM TRY BURNING BOOKS

**I**N 1986 A CONVOY SET OUT FROM THE SMALL REGIONAL CAPITAL of Malema in the northeast province of Nampula, Mozambique. Packed into the little line of trucks was a precious cargo of books, pencils and paper for the schools of Malema district. Before the convoy reached its destination it was attacked and destroyed.

By the end of the year, the people of Malema had lost 40 per cent of their schools, and more than 4,000 school children had been deprived of their education. Teachers had been murdered, education offices had been sacked and schools ruined.

Education, flourishing since the liberation of Mozambique from Portuguese rule in 1975, had only recently come to the Malema people. And now it was systematically being destroyed.

Who would want to blow up boxes of pencils, murder primary school teachers and smash up offices and classrooms? Who would want to keep children from learning to read?

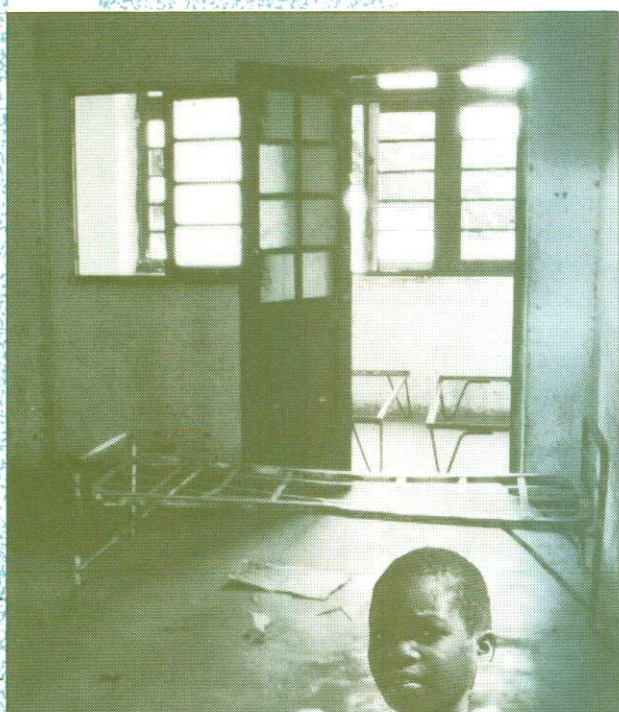


### EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY: TWO NATURAL ALLIES UNDER ATTACK

**W**HEN THE MOZAMBIQUE LIBERATION FRONT (FRELIMO) TOOK power in 1975, it worked hard to create a new, democratic school system. Instead of continuing elite structures for a chosen few, Frelimo committed itself to universal public education and an end to adult illiteracy.

In communities across the country schools became centres of activity and democracy. By 1980 the number of children attending primary school had risen from 600,000 to a million and a half. Night schools overflowed with adults; thousands of peasants, market women and factory workers attended literacy classes.

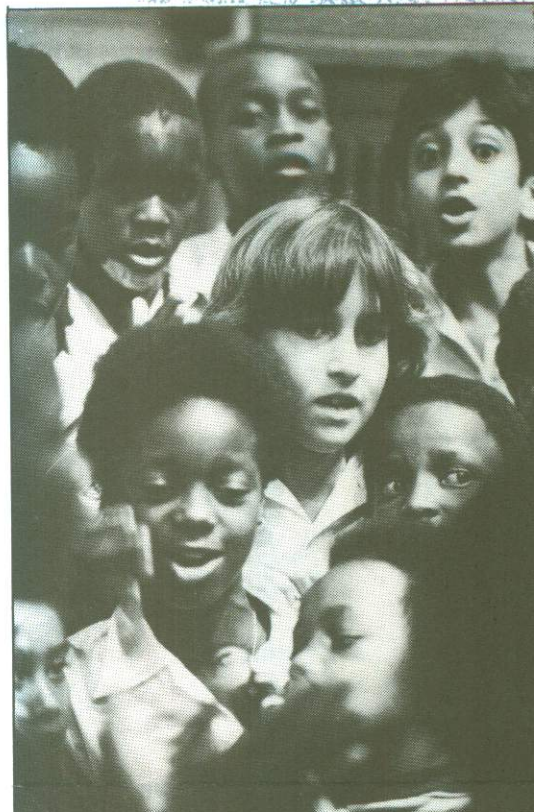
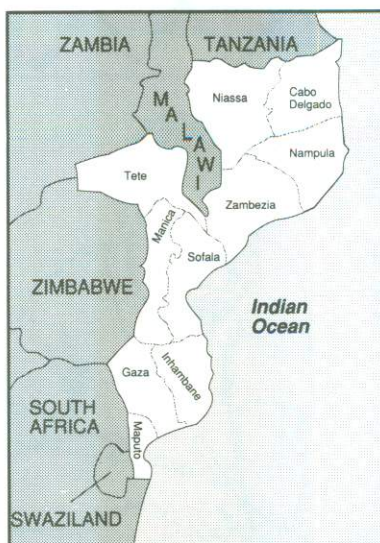
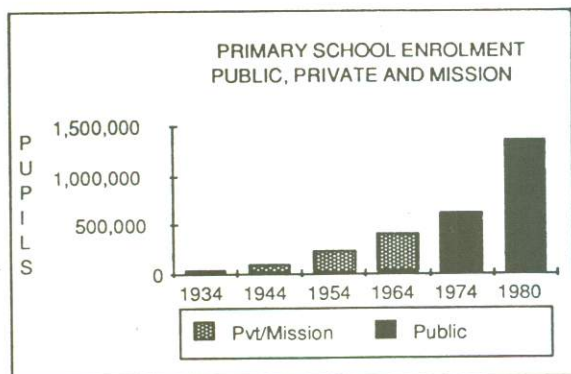
To transform a small, weak collection of private and mission schools to a universal, multi-level public education system was a daunting task for an impoverished nation. But Frelimo pushed ahead with its education programmes, despite enormous problems which still exist today: few teachers, authoritarian teaching patterns which had to be unlearned, and an outdated curriculum which had to be rewritten.



Remains of a school dormitory after an MNR attack



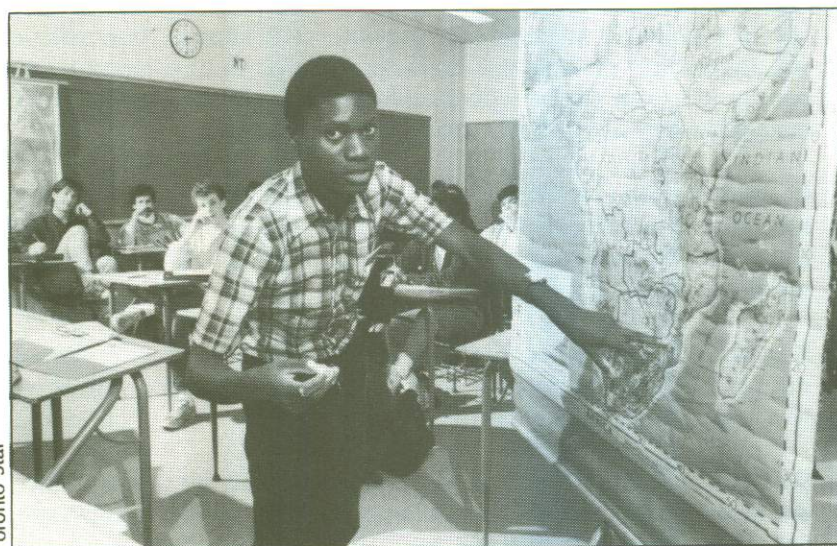




Antonio Muchate / AIM

The gains made in the first five years after independence in Mozambique were impressive, despite the problems. By 1980 the nation had begun to break the back of illiteracy, reducing it from 90 per cent to 72 per cent.

Unfortunately, the future of education and literacy in Mozambique is grim. Today survival is the issue, and schools are on the firing line throughout the country.



Adelino Julio telling students in Canada about the war in Mozambique

## ADELINO: Going to School Shouldn't be so Hard

We don't usually think of going to school as an act of courage. For Adelino, 17 years old and 500 kilometres from home, it is just that. Several years ago, he left his village to attend secondary school. Shortly after he left, the MNR attacked his village and then cut transport and communications lines.

Now Adelino is cut off from all contact with his parents. He does not know if they have been murdered or are in a refugee settlement somewhere. He has not heard a word about them.

Meanwhile, like all young people, he worries about geometry marks, history papers and soccer games. But he also thinks of his family, whom he may never see again.



## EDUCATION THREATENS APARTHEID

**S**INCE 1980, THE GAINS IN EDUCATION HAVE BEEN UNDER constant attack from a South African-backed terrorist group, the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR, also known as Renamo). The MNR is funded, trained and supported by South Africa, which uses it to destabilize and destroy Mozambique's social and economic structures.

The MNR has done enormous damage. It has destroyed over 2,000 schools, and killed, kidnapped and tortured hundreds of teachers. Nearly half a million children are now without schooling.

Targeting education is part of the strategy of the government of South Africa, which cannot tolerate a free Mozambique on its border — a people who can read, write and plan for the future is a threat to apartheid.

This is from the resource kit **Mozambique: Apartheid's Second Front** available from Cooperation Canada Mozambique (COCAMO), c/o CCIC, 1 Nicholas St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7. COCAMO members include Anglican Church of Canada, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, CODE, CARE Canada, CIDMAA, GLSO, Inter Pares, OCCDP/CCODP, OXFAM Canada, OXFAM Quebec, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Save the Children Fund of B.C., SUCO, TCLSAC, United Church of Canada, USC Canada, World Relief Canada, World Vision Canada, WUSC.