

Subtle Mozambican Force Used on Ex-Collaborators

By David Ottaway

MAPUTO, Mozambique (WP) — At entrances to Mozambican government ministries and in the front windows of many state and private businesses these days are bulletin boards covered with photographs of employees, below each of which is a strange alphabet soup of initials.

The photos are of the country's *comprometidos*, men and women identified as former collaborators with the Portuguese colonial power. They are there for all to see, along with information about the groups they served with.

After years of indecisiveness about how to deal with nationals of uncertain loyalty, the ruling Frelimo Party seems finally to have been inspired by the Chinese — having come up with an approach that relies on social pressures and self-criticism, rather than on prisons and sanctions.

It is a novel technique in Africa, and, if successful, one that could lead to a more humane way of treating political opponents than throwing them into prison, as many African governments prefer to do.

Uncertainty

In Mozambique, where Frelimo nationalists fought a decade for independence against Portugal, there has been no mob justice or instant trials for former collaborators. The most notorious of those who did not flee to Portugal or Rhodesia were placed in post-independence "re-education camps," together with Frelimo dissidents and opponents, prostitutes and criminals.

But the treatment of the *comprometidos* was greatly complicated by uncertainty over who had actually helped the Portuguese and how se-

rious their crimes were. Furthermore, if all those who collaborated in some way with the Portuguese were in prison today, the government would probably grind to a halt.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of white and black Mozambicans participated voluntarily or were drafted into such Portuguese Army commando units as the GE (special groups) and GEP (special paratroops) or into the hated secret police, the PIDE. But the Portuguese destroyed their records before leaving.

Since Mozambique gained independence nearly four years ago, many of the ex-collaborators have joined opposition groups like Free Africa and the National Resistance Movement, have become informers for white-ruled Rhodesia or South Africa or have indulged in private economic sabotage.

Many others, however, are law-abiding citizens eager to forget their past, to be forgiven by their compatriots and to be integrated into the new Mozambican society.

The continuing Frelimo problem has been how to determine which are which, and how to devise a policy for dealing with those who are still involved in subversive activities or who might be susceptible to recruitment as enemy agents.

Marxist Guises

Local and national elections held in 1977, and a campaign last year to enlist new Frelimo Party members, led to the discovery and public exposure of a large number of *comprometidos*, many of them in the guises of zealous Marxist patriots.

In one cashew factory here, the party, with the help of employees, last summer uncovered a network

of 12 former collaborators who had been sabotaging machinery and who were in contact with an opposition leader in Portugal.

Even an editor of the weekly magazine *Tempo*, which acts as the voice of the Mozambican revolution, turned out to have been a former collaborator.

The new approach in neutralizing and trying to rehabilitate these past and present enemies of Mozambique's Marxist revolution was spelled out by President Samora Machel in a speech last November, when he called on the public to maintain an "organized and permanent vigilance."

"Their reintegration into society depends on our vigilance over them," Mr. Machel said. "That is why we say these individuals must be known by all, in the home and at work. Their names must be in

public lists, their photographs must appear on billboards in every place of work."

And, since mid-December, that is what has happened. Government departments, factories and many businesses have posted lists of former collaborators along with their pictures and a summary of their activities in the Portuguese Army or secret police.

At work-place meetings, the former agents are obliged to tell their colleagues what they did and why. They must listen to personal accounts from others who suffered at the hands of the Portuguese. Elsewhere, the technique might be called group therapy; here, it is regarded as revolutionary self-criticism and public confession.

Mr. Machel has ruled out anyone's being fired from his job or punished in any other way than remaining under public scrutiny for the next two years. The reason is apparently not altogether humanitarian.

"Many of these former collaborators are highly skilled people, and we need them in their jobs now," said a Mozambican journalist, explaining the practical side of the approach.

Reports on the success and popularity of the technique vary. But most Mozambicans seem to agree that it is far better than sending all suspected or exposed ex-collaborators to re-education camps. Still, some feel that the public humiliation of having people's pictures and pasts on public display for two years is not always equal to the nature and seriousness of their crimes.

"Many of them were just doing their military service or working as secretaries or clerks in PIDE," observed a Mozambican familiar with a number of specific cases.

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