



President Machel... there are no 'bad racists and good racists'.

## Mozambique's return to arms

After Mozambique shot its way to independence in 1975, it laid down arms to confront another, perhaps even more trying adversary — economic underdevelopment. This month marks the sixth anniversary of freedom, but other than the economy, the country is being increasingly menaced by another old enemy — apartheid South Africa. MARCELINO KOMBA reports:

**T**HE call by the Government-owned *Noticias* was loud and clear. 'Let us prepare for war', the newspaper said in an impassioned article following the South African commando raid on the residences of African National Congress (ANC) militants at Matola, on the outskirts of Maputo, on 30 January. The call echoed the prevailing mood of both the Government and people, and while it was received with the revolutionary fervour that has characterized politics in Mozambique since the country's independence in 1975, no one, it seems, expected it then.

For, the end of the war in Rhodesia

and the birth of Zimbabwe in April last year had created a general feeling that Mozambique, which made great sacrifices in both human and material terms and suffered untold destruction at the hands of Ian Smith's troops for aiding the guerrilla war effort against the rebel regime, was finally entering an era of peace.

In fact, so strong was this feeling that Frelimo felt it could safely revise its list of priorities. Less emphasis was put on the need to tighten defence and security, and more was placed on the urgent need to rebuild the country's shattered economy and the infrastructure necessary to keep it ticking. 'We relaxed.'

said President Samora Machel at a mass rally held in Maputo after the Matola raid.

In typical style, and in anticipation of Rhodesia's independence, Machel signalled the advent of the 'new era' with what appeared to be a thorough house-cleaning exercise. During surprise visits to factories, warehouses, ports, shops and social services centres which began in March last year, the President came across instances of gross inefficiency, corruption and deliberate sabotage. In the event, he let his axe fall on a number of people who were believed to be responsible for the bureaucratic rot. The first casualties included three cabinet ministers, one of whom was a ranking member of Frelimo's Central Committee.

### Enemy

Said the President during a mass rally held on 18 March to explain the campaign: 'On 25 September, 1964, we declared war on the foreign enemy — Portuguese colonialism. Here today we declare war on the internal enemy. We are going to flush them out by the end of this year. It will then be spotless on all sides'.

The campaign, Machel stressed, was part and parcel of the wider struggle to dismantle the state apparatus inherited from the Portuguese and to organise a new one capable of leading the economic reconstruction of the country. This political and organizational offensive, the Central Committee of Frelimo noted during its eighth session at the end of last year, implied the 'clearing out from the state machinery in charge of the economy and from the state apparatus in general, elements who are vacillating, confused, compromised and against the building of socialism'.

With Zimbabwe independent, the national sights were trained on 1990, the year the 'decade of victory over underdevelopment' is scheduled to come to an end, leaving Mozambique 'well on its way to advanced socialism.'

The targets included the production of sufficient food to feed the nation, sufficient export crops, enough clothing, and a developed industry.

Until the commando raid on Matola took place, much of the nation's human and material resources were directed towards realising this dream. The first real step was taken with the publication of the first Central State Plan for 1981 last year. 'The Central State Plan,' said Frelimo's Central Committee, 'must be considered as the principal activity for the whole

nation, especially Party and State structures, the mass democratic organizations and all workers in general. Thus activities for fulfilling it take priority over all others'.

But the raid on the ANC residences in Matola, in which 13 people were killed, and the follow-up attack on Ponta de Ouro involving more than 100 racist South African troops on 17 March have changed all that. They have brought back the spectre of war and the urgent need for Mozambique to rethink its national strategy for the coming decade. While economic reconstruction is still a priority, the country has turned much of its attention to preparing for a possible drawn out war with South Africa. This war fever has replaced the false sense of security which Mozambique slipped into following Zimbabwe's independence.

More important, South Africa's direct attacks on Mozambique have prompted the authorities in Maputo to reappraise the whole question of their country's relations with the apartheid regime. So far, while vehemently attacking Pretoria's policies of racial discrimination, Maputo had tried to follow a policy of peaceful co-existence. Explained Machel just before Zimbabwe's independence. 'There are two things that we cannot choose, unfortunately. These are our neighbour and our brother. Our brother may be a criminal, a murderer, even a madman, yet he is still our brother.'

## Struggle

In fact, the President went so far as to say that Mozambique would not play the same role with the ANC as it did with Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF. Samora maintained that the South African liberation struggle could not be waged from the outside. The people of South Africa, he said, should be seen as 'the fire' of their own struggle. While this line of thinking may have been dictated by the expediency of economic interdependence — the economy of Mozambique is closely interwoven with, and to some degree dependent on, that of South Africa — and caution about Pretoria's military might, many people now wonder whether it is wise or any longer tenable.

The belief that Mozambique could live peacefully with South Africa under the apartheid system has been shattered. Said Machel last February: 'South Africa supplied the oxygen that enabled the rebel (Rhodesian) regime to survive. This is the nature of the

apartheid regime. It is a serious mistake to think that it can change. It is a serious mistake to think there are bad racists and good racists.'

Having finally come to this conclusion, Maputo now seems to be taking steps to correct the situation and put the country on a war footing. Following the Matola raid, whose success was made possible partly by the infiltration by South African agents of the higher echelons of Mozambique's armed forces, all troops are on a state of alert. The military machine, which had somehow been neglected and allowed to become creaky is now being well oiled and replenished with more sophisticated equipment, mainly from the Soviet Union.

The purge from the armed forces of undesirable and suspected elements which began with the unmasking of eight officers who helped in the raid on Matola, is still continuing. In Maputo, the most likely and vulnerable target in the event of an attack, militia training for the residents is being undertaken at a scale never witnessed before. The aim is to establish the basic mechanisms of an efficient mass defence capability, complete with air shelters.

'The argument that the people of Mozambique cannot withstand another war is yet another myth, an argument that was repeated over and over again when the Mozambican Government give efficacy to sanctions against Rhodesia by closing its borders with the then rebel colony', the Mozambique Information Agency (AIM) said in an editorial recently. Indeed, Mozambique, it is officially and privately argued, can take on the South African armed forces the same way Frelimo took on the Portuguese colonial army or Vietnam engaged probably the mightiest military machine in the world — the American armed forces.

Thus, the Mozambican leader recently warned the South Africans that much as his country preferred peace, it would not sit by and watch itself being turned into 'a firing range' by the agents of apartheid. 'Let the South Africans come, but let them be sure that the war will end in Pretoria and that the majority will take power in Pretoria. Let them come and we shall put an end to war once and for all.'

While sceptics may not have taken this threat seriously, Frelimo insiders understand it to mean Mozambique's unequivocal and firm commitment to the liberation struggle in South Africa. For, Maputo now appears to be convinced, that unless the racial ques-

tion in South Africa is settled and the Black majority get the power which is rightfully theirs, Mozambique will not have the peace it badly needs to develop itself. Unless, of course, it abandons the struggle, an option Mozambique considers as treachery to African aspirations.

It is difficult, all the same, to envisage a scenario whereby Mozambique and South Africa are locked in a conventional war. It is not difficult, though, to imagine the racist troops continuing to make raids into Mozambique and the latter retaliating, guerrilla style. What observers think is likely to happen, however, is that rather than make frequent use of its troops, South Africa will shift its reliance to the rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR).

## Sabotage

The MNR, which operated as a subsidiary of the Rhodesian forces during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, were taken over by South Africa after ZANU-PF came to power in Salisbury last year. Now they have training camps in South Africa's Transvaal Province and act as the operational arm of the South African armed forces, doubling as an underground opposition movement against the Frelimo Government in Maputo.

Although the MNR bases in the Sitatonga mountains and at Gorongosa in central Mozambique were destroyed in separate carefully planned operations by Government troops last year, and nearly 700 of its guerrillas reportedly killed, the movement's sabotage activities have dramatically been stepped up in recent months. For yet another time, the guerrillas cut off the power lines carrying electricity from the giant Cabora Bassa hydroelectric power station in northern Mozambique to South Africa. While it is unlikely that the MNR can bring down Frelimo, they certainly are of more than nuisance value.

But whatever form future South African armed aggression against Mozambique will take, it is sure to be bitterly fought against. And any renewed involvement by Mozambique in a shooting war is bound to disrupt the country's economic development programme and bring about hardship and the inevitable discontent that goes with it. That, Mozambican authorities believe, is the aim of the South African Government.

Nevertheless, President Machel is determined to push ahead with his

economic programme, and there are indications that he is succeeding. According to the United Nations, exports were expected to go up by 53 per cent last year. In 1979 these rose by 40 per cent. For a country whose agricultural sector was left in a shambles following the exodus of Portuguese settlers at independence, this is no mean achievement.

The balance of payments position, at 10,200 million meticaïs deficit in 1979 and an expected 10,300 million meticaïs deficit in 1980, is expected to grow worse before it becomes better. Industry is not expected to do very well either. The major constraint here is lack of sufficient foreign exchange. This has led to a scarcity of raw materials and spare parts, forcing industry to operate well below capacity.

It is in the area of transport and communications, however, that great transformation is expected to take place. Mozambique's transport system — especially the railways and ports — was principally geared to serve the hinterland states of Rhodesia, Swaziland and South Africa. According to the Central State Plan, due emphasis is now to be put on the development of the internal network. New lines are expected to be built to link the south, centre and north of the country.

## **Benefit**

Traffic from neighbouring countries will continue to get high priority, mainly for its importance as a ranking foreign exchange earner. Here Mozambique stands to benefit substantially from its membership of the Southern African Development Conference. Out of the total number of development projects of the 'Southern Nine', totalling about 1.9 billion dollars, those in Mozambique amount to nearly 835 million dollars, or more than 40 per cent.

Much of this money is expected to come from aid and, or foreign investment, mainly from the same countries which, secretly or otherwise, strongly support South Africa — the West. If Mozambique were embroiled in a new war, would this money be forthcoming still? Perhaps, not. If not, would the Soviet Union, which until now has limited its assistance principally to the supply of military equipment and the training of the armed forces also help finance the economic recovery of Mozambique? These, and many other similar ones, are questions which can only be answered with time. ■