

Dramatic evidence of a struggling revolution

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THE defection of the MiG pilot this week was dramatic evidence of the failure of the Mozambique revolution to provide a better society for its people since Frelimo took over the country from Portugal six years ago.

There seems no doubt that Lieutenant Adriano Bomba, the 23-year-old pilot, assessed the situation accurately when he said: "The way of life in Mozambique is getting worse and worse."

It has been clear for a long time that Mozambique's Marxist rulers have been struggling to make headway. They have had to cope with many difficulties, including the disruptions of the Rhodesian war, the loss of the South African tourist trade, devastating floods and a growing guerilla war of their own. And on top of everything, Frelimo appears to have been badly let down by its communist mentors, as far as finance and technical expertise are concerned.

While Marxist "re-education programmes" may have some influence with a peasant population still hoping to share in the fruits of freedom, they have cut no ice with the sophisticated Lt Bomba, and the information he can provide on the state of mind of other Mozambicans like him will be of great interest to South African intelligence officers.

The defection has provided South Africa with a useful propaganda windfall at a time when it is under increasing international pressure. Pretoria will be able to advance Wednesday's incident as evidence of the frailty and instability of the young communist-orientated states in an area of such strategic importance to the West.

The pity of it is that Lt Bomba will find no niche in South Africa or its armed forces. In our racial society, a black fighter pilot is an oddity, so there is a lesson for South Africa, too, in the unexpected arrival at Hoedspruit of this articulate young flyer.