

Mozambique

From the Reverend Paul Oestreicher

Sir, If in my article ("Blood on whose hands in Mozambique? ", July 14) I have inadvertently appeared to call in question either the courage or the integrity of the White Fathers, I offer them my unqualified apology. In citing facts which Father Burrige had released to the press I merely wished to raise the question whether, in withholding from publication for several years their detailed documentation of Portuguese repression, the White Fathers had not given too much weight to considerations of Vatican diplomacy. My admiration for the work of the White Fathers in Mozambique and for the manner of their withdrawal could not be higher.

The main burden of my article remains unaffected. Pope Paul's latest vague generalizations about inhumanity, "thought to apply to the Mozambique atrocities" and reported on your front page yesterday (July 16), strengthen my conviction that this is a tragically inadequate response to a manifestly unjust war.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL OESTREICHER,
40 Dartmouth Row, SE10.
July 17.

From Mr David Tereshchuk

Sir, One piece of news to come out of Mozambique in the past few days is significant but it has not been given its due prominence here. General Kaulza de Arriaga, Portuguese C-in-C, admitted that "combat operations" took place in the general area of the reported massacres last December.

The usual pattern for these operations, as was followed in this case according to the General, is first to leaflet the chosen region from the air to warn the population of impending military activity. Villagers are advised to move to the official *aldeamentos*, or fortified villages. The normal follow-up procedure was spelt out to me by ordinary soldiers in the garrison town of Tete earlier this year (although their rough terms were not echoed by their officers who stuck to Arriaga's much vaunted "hearts and minds" approach to the native population.

Any Africans found still living in their home villages after the army's warnings, said the soldiers, are considered fair game. "They must be Frelimo if they do not come to our protection."

Of course this does not prove that the Wiriyamu did happen. But since the accepted counter-insurgency practice of the Portuguese involves such arbitrary, brutal methods, it could have happened so easily.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID TERESHCHUK,
Thames Television,
366 Euston Road, NW1.
July 16.

From Miss Hannah Stanton

Sir, May I please make a comment on the reports of the massacres in Mozambique?

I was a member of the staff of the Department of Religious Studies at Makerere University College, Uganda, from 1962-70, and Father Adrian Hastings as our external examiner was a regular visitor. He is an academic of integrity, and also has a vast knowledge of Africa.

Reports for which he is responsible can be relied on absolutely. A fellow colleague and I would go farther and say that he has a degree of scepticism in him, and that he would need to be completely and entirely convinced of a course of action before committing himself to it.

Yours faithfully,
HANNAH STANTON,
63 Park Road,
Hampton Hill,
Middlesex.

From Mr D. Keating

Sir, Much has been written and said relative to Mr Heath's recent mention of a certain affair as an "unacceptable face of capitalism".

Reading your report of remarks passed in the House of Lords relative to the alleged massacre by Portuguese troops in Mozambique leaves me with the thought that many will think there is an unacceptable face to much of party politics.

Yours faithfully,
D. KEATING,
Green Park Hotel,
Half Moon Street, W1.