

Note: This editorial led to a break in relations between Malley and Moz. journalists, with latter refusing to bring tw AA in Fr. or English.

EDITORIAL

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By Simon Malley

MOZAMBIQUE: AN EASY PREY FOR PRETORIA

If the majority of African peoples are clearly opposed, as we are, to the Nkomati Accord and, *a fortiori*, to the negotiations taking place between representatives of Frelimo and those of the MNR mercenaries (trained, armed, financed and commanded by South African officers), it is for reasons that stem both from a reasoned analysis of the strategy and tactics of the expansionist, hegemonistic and racist Botha regime and its allies in the Reagan administration, and from an assessment of the grave consequences that these accords have already had and continue to have, in southern Africa first and foremost, but for the Third World as a whole in the longer term.

Were a conservative or moderate African regime to hint at a rapprochement or even negotiate with the South African racists, African opinion could, in the last resort, place the responsibility for such a decision with its leaders—although several of the latter have been forced to retreat under pressure from African opinion or because of popular internal criticism. But when it is a question of a progressive regime that gained freedom and independence after a war of liberation in which the heroism of the combatants and the population won worldwide admiration, we have the right to ask, now that the initial astonishment has passed: What is going on? Was it not Samora Machel himself who said: "If we are attacked, if we are threatened with foreign occupation, we will fight in every town, every village, every street, every building and every house. But we shall never give in, we shall never break faith, and we shall never abandon the liberating struggle . . . ?"

How, after such statements—whatever the blows delivered by the adversary (whether directly or through its puppets)—can we avoid being confounded by the road which the Maputo government has taken? How could all those who respected and admired Frelimo not be concerned, as concerned as the regimes most directly threatened by South African aggression, its policy of destabilization, interference and subversion? Many observers are now wondering what can prevent Pretoria from setting up mercenary groups similar to the MNR in other neighbouring countries, which it would arm and finance, in order to pressure the existing administrations and force them to give way to its diktat.

This would be all the easier now that the Maputo regime, which prided itself on being 'the source of inspiration' to all peoples in southern Africa, has accepted the unacceptable: the idea of reaching a compromise with the bandits of the MNR. It has even gone so far as to suggest that Frelimo could "redeem" a number of them and—who knows?—even offer them a place in the party and in the government. General Veloso, following the orders of his president, has promised South African Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha that this prospect would not be ruled out if the cease-fire negotiated with the MNR were applied and respected.

However, that is only one of the baneful aspects of the Mozambican decision. In fact, there are several others:

1. In accepting the very idea of negotiating with the surrogates of Pretoria, Maputo has fostered the view that the achievement of peace in southern Africa depends—exclusively—not only on meetings with

the executors of American imperialism in the region, but also, and above all, on the abandonment of the principles sacred to every independent and sovereign state, which preclude negotiations and understandings with counter-revolutionaries such as the MNR, created, infiltrated and manipulated from outside the country. For, although it may be denied by the information services in Maputo, it is clear that what is *really* happening in Pretoria between the Mozambicans, the South Africans and the MNR constitutes a precedent that the heralds of American strategy are ready to take up and encourage.

How can it otherwise be explained that Mario Soares (who is behaving in every way like a dedicated CIA agent and a personal friend of Jonas Savimbi besides) could return from a long meeting in Mozambique with Samora Machel and his colleagues and tell a group of businessmen, as he did on October 10, that "the example set by the Mozambican government could persuade Angola to be more realistic and not retreat into ideology." It scarcely needs to be added that when the "socialist" head of state in Lisbon uses a word like "realism", it means the same thing as "collaborating" with imperialism and its go-betweens—Soares's own policy towards the popular regimes in Africa being a tissue of betrayals and ideological swindling. What does he want Luanda to do? To forget that part



of its territory is occupied by South African invaders? To give up its sovereignty, "reconcile" itself with UNITA, and eventually—as he suggested to us in 1975—let Savimbi and his hirelings share power with the MPLA? In their numerous discussions with the Angolan leaders during the past two or three years, neither U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker nor his close colleagues, such as Frank Wisner, ever allowed themselves to go as far as their agent in Lisbon. But is there any more need to prove that the Americans always arrange to have others say what they cannot say directly themselves!

How can the Mozambican revolutionary fighters fail to realize the harm they are doing to their comrades in Angola, to whom some Westerners have started to suggest, less than innocently: "You have but to do the same as Maputo!"

2. In signing first the Nkomati Accord and then that of Pretoria, and in allowing the South Africans the considerable asset of appearing to be loyal partners who have honoured the agreements made last March with Samora Machel, Maputo has boosted the image of the apartheid regime which oppresses the patriots of the ANC and many other liberation movements, as well as paving and suggesting the same path to other African, Arab and Asian capitals. "Tomorrow, maybe we shall see Pretoria asking for membership of the OAU!" cried an angry African foreign minister at the United Nations a few days ago. "What do they want of us? Do they expect us to welcome Botha to Addis Ababa with applause and hugs, Nkomati-style?"

While the principle of negotiation with tiny counter-revolutionary groups has prevailed in Mozambique, the consequences for many other Third World countries could be incalculable. What could prevent the hegemonic powers from setting up such counter-revolutionary movements elsewhere, particularly where their vital economic, strategic or political interests are threatened? Given the fragility of most Third World regimes, such action could easily lead to situations where the approach adopted by Samora Machel's regime would seem to be an acceptable solution.

South African Foreign Minister
"Pik" Botha meeting Mozambican
President Samora Machel in Maputo
in February 1984.



Moreover, it should be remembered that, even in economic matters, the harvest often fails to live up to its promises. When Sadat signed his peace treaty with Israel, the Americans promised Egypt an end to misery, a new prosperity, and even good fortune. The mirage has long since faded away. Now Mozambique is being told a fairy tale about an end to misery, a new prosperity, and good fortune too . . .

3. In refusing to admit that the problem of southern Africa concerns not only Mozambique but the whole of the continent—above all its neighbours—and that it should therefore have consulted them, listened to their advice and obtained, if need be, their approval of its strategy, the Maputo regime has deliberately defied the spirit, if not the letter, of the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement. It has greatly upset all those for whom Frelimo was one of the beacons of patriotism, militancy and internationalism. Of course, neither the UN nor the OAU could have prevented Maputo from taking the path it chose. Their charters are quite clear in that respect. But South Africa is nonetheless the enemy of the African peoples, whose dignity, the sense of honour, independence and freedom it has violated, just as Israel has done to the Arabs. If Anwar al-Sadat has ended up on the rubbish heap of history, is this not on account of his defiance of the aspirations of the Arab peoples? If every separate agreement between Tel Aviv and an Arab capital arouses the indignation and hostility of the Arab world, why—one has the right to ask—should it be different for African patriots confronted with the criminal racists of Pretoria?

4. The Mozambican leaders' analysis of South Africa's real aims is flawed from the start. When certain people in Mozambique, those who doubtless have the strongest influence over Samora Machel and his policy—for we are convinced that it does not have the approval of all the Frelimo leaders—proclaim or insinuate that the South African government is "sincere and loyal" in its respect for the Nkomati accords and that the real instigators of continued MNR terrorism are a number of elements in the armed forces and the South African secret service, whom are they trying to deceive? South African policy is indivisible. If Pretoria really wanted to neutralize the MNR, it could do it in a few days. The South Africans know exactly where the MNR forces are, where their arms dumps are, and how they are supplied with food, money and ammunition. The MNR continues to perpetrate its atrocities because the Nkomati accord is not being respected by Pretoria, which *never* had the slightest intention of respecting it.

Nkomati was the bait by means of which, once caught, the Mozambican leaders would be led into the real trap set by Pretoria—negotiations with the MNR that would bring about an eventual arrangement to the benefit of the counter-revolutionaries, and, in the end, a power-sharing system.

For Washington, as for Pretoria, any regime that calls itself "revolutionary" or "Marxist," or has privileged ties with the progressive and Socialist countries, must be brought to its knees and tamed, or be replaced by another, puppet regime. Whether it is a matter of Angola or of Mozambique, of Namibia or any other neighbour of South Africa, the goal is the same. None of the conjuring tricks we are witnessing in Maputo can sweeten the pill: the United States and South Africa want to establish a *pax pretoriana* in the region by way of a neo-colonial strategy which is no less real for not being declared.

Will the architects of the most barbaric system in modern Africa win the day, and will that system perpetuate itself as a result of the single fact that the opposition presented to it by the progressive forces of the world is fissuring after a loss of historic vision on the part of a "people's" regime? In Mozambique, as everywhere else on the continent, the vitality of the human spirit will not permit centuries of oppression and repression, of massacres and nameless crimes, to go by the board in the name of a fistful of dollars.