

Ruth First speaking in Maputo 13 August 1982

"It is exciting working in Mozambique and maybe some of that flavour comes over and makes us sound as though, you know, we ~~just~~^{just} blow our own trumpets all the time. It's because the work's exciting. It's not without struggle, it's not without struggle, there are all kinds of problems. There is a debate in the university that you had echoes of about how you teach, about how the university relates to the politics of the country as a whole, about institutional forms, about methods of teaching, about what you teach and so on. And when one says that in a country like Mozambique you must have organised political forms if you are to intervene with ~~meaningful~~^{meaningful} research, which ~~is~~^{is} what ~~Frank~~ Bridget was saying, although she said it better than that the other day, that you've no choice if you want to be a social scientist in struggle, you've no choice but to work through those institutions which are creating change. That doesn't mean ~~an~~^{an} unproblematic relationship, that doesn't mean its a service role, that doesn't mean that it's thought control or ~~any~~^{any} blind acquiescence. That means ~~given~~^{given} a certain realm ~~and a given~~^{certain} terrain, the struggle goes on on that terrain, and the questions are how to work, how to research, ~~and~~^{and} how to teach. They are continuously questions which you have to confront, they take a different form on different occasions, and contradictions are at play. I agree that I err too and we all work off a notion of a play of contradictions in society. It was said the other day that Frelimo analysed the struggle at a certain time as a struggle between two lines.

(more follows)

(cont of Ruth First speaking in Maputo, ~~10, 12, 13~~ 13 August 1982)

"Well, sometimes it's a struggle between more than two lines, how exactly you identify those lines is not exclusively the role of the researcher. The political movements in this country also work on the identification and interpretation of contradictions. But certainly what we've got to do as researchers is get off, away from those generalised accounts that there's always contradiction. What sort of contradiction? Where is it at play? How ~~can you work~~ with a theory of contradiction can you do a better analysis of these contradictions at play? And instead of having these umbrella, omnibus theories that we cart around saying ~~that~~ the working class does this, the petty bourgeoisie does this, the peasantry is like this, well how? Which? In a particular work place what are the contradictions at play? What's the division of labour? what sort of issues are being argued out in a small or larger environment? What are the arguments about planning; not on an argument level, but if you say that the country must have a policy programme in the interest of the worker-peasant alliance, how, where, in which sense? What does that tell you about pricing? What does that tell you about marketing? What does that tell you about all kinds of questions? the role of the private shopkeeper? who controls the transport system and so on? ^{then} it's a site of struggle, research is ^{also} a site of struggle, and we are not surrendering our right to struggle."

(end this excerpt)