

WRITING & RESEARCH ON MOZAMBIQUE 1975-1980

by
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Research in the social sciences on Mozambique is still in an underdeveloped state, as a result of the persistence of Portuguese colonialism until the mid 1970s. Under Portuguese dominance the only work carries on was, in effect, ethnographic research designed to demonstrate the 'inferiority' of African social structures, and a certain amount of largely antiquarian historical investigation. The student of Mozambique does not find a rich ethnography; the work of enduring value is often very old, or produced by foreign protestant missionaries, as for example H.A. Junod's work on the Thonga dating originally from the 1890s and several times republished (1897, 1962). Indeed, only such work as that of Jorge Dias on the Makonde or A. Rita Ferreira on the Ngoni continues to be widely cited from the whole range of Portuguese colonial anthropology in Mozambique: the rest is deservedly forgotten. The history produced in the colonial period is similarly of little value for explanation rather than mere description.

However, this essay is not intended to survey the faults of colonial social science, insofar as it can be said to have existed; rather, it is intended to outline the directions being taken in independent Mozambique during the long struggle of socialist transformation. Work of importance is also being undertaken in institutions and through organisations outside the country; some of it is extremely useful, some of it more or less hostile.

This essay surveys published works on selected topics in the social sciences, with the emphasis firmly on books and articles produced within the problematic generally employed inside Mozambique today. Features of that problematic, broadly speaking, share a Frelimo perspective on socialist transformation. More specifically they encompass a concern with how to change society; how to reproduce new systems and new consciousness; how to explain, in terms of economics and of class, various specific social phenomena; and a determination to locate particular problems and their explanation within general theories of imperialism, underdevelopment and class formation.

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1982]. - p. 103-112.

A later instalment will discuss documents produced by the Party Frelimo which explain policies, and interpret courses of action with considerable authority.

A number of popular works on such subjects as the history of Africa in general (Frelimo 1978a), on the history of Mozambique (Frelimo, 1978b) and on the geography of Mozambique (Araújo 1979) have appeared and have sold out rapidly. Their popularity is a clear indicator of people's thirst for information on, and analysis of, the world around them, a thirst that was unsatisfied for so many years under the Portuguese.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Unfortunately there is no satisfactory up-to-date general bibliography of Mozambique, although a groundwork was laid during colonial times by Costa, Eça and Rita Ferreira. The alphabetical author list of *Mozambicana* produced by CEDIMO (1978) is marred by the absence of subject access and by being limited to material actually held in CEDIMO's collections. Although a further volume containing additional citations and a subject index was promised for publication, it now seems unlikely to appear.

In the interim, while we await the production of an authoritative retrospective listing and the setting up of a system of current national bibliography, a number of less ambitious surveys have been published. Chris Allen's contribution to the Mozambique Seminar (1978) was a bibliography of material in languages other than Portuguese, intended for readers with a 'general interest in colonial and revolutionary Mozambique', and is presumably largely based on the Mozambican section of his useful general history published in each issue of 'Review of African Political Economy'. The work was also published separately (Allen 1978).

Another very useful work, including some Portuguese-language material and less well-known items in Scandinavian languages, was compiled by Enevoldsen and Johnsen (1978). It includes annotated citations, for instance, of many articles from 'Tempo'. Both of these works are general social-science bibliographies: narrower in scope and much more extended in treatment is the study by Chonchol (1979) on environmental development and village organisation. Now published in book form, and cast in the style of an extended bibliographic essay, the work is spoiled by the absence of a subject index, and is also riddled with typographical errors, ranging from misspelled author's names to a consistent misuse of accents in Portuguese titles.

Also writing in the form of an extended essay, Bender and Isaacman

(1976) cover much ground at a rapid pace; although now four years out-of-date, and with many judgements needing revision, it remains the only accessible survey article on modern Mozambican (and Angolan) historiography.

The Centro de Estudos Africanos plan a series of interlinked bibliographic projects on Mozambique and on the southern African sub-system. An outline of these plans is given below in the section of CURRENT RESEARCH.

ECONOMIC STUDIES

The Centro de Estudos Africanos has produced a number of reports on aspects of the Mozambican economy, most of them authored collectively by the Centre's permanent staff members. Taken together these works present a distinctive view of the problems facing Mozambique's economists and planners.

Certainly the best-known of the CEA's reports is that on the export of labour power to the mines of South Africa from the southern provinces of Mozambique (Centro de Estudos Africanos 1979 reprint), which will appear in English from Harvester Press in due course under the new title of 'Black Gold'. CEA has also published editions in both Portuguese and English of the summary text of this work, presented by the Mozambican delegation to the ECA/MULPOC Conference on Migratory labour in Southern Africa, held in Lusaka in April 1978 (Centro de Estudos Africanos 1979a, 1979b).

Closely connected to the question of migrant labour and its effects on the rural economy is the problem of unemployment and underemployment (for an overview of the relationships between the various sectors of the Mozambican economy, see Wuyts 1978). The CEA undertook a two-part investigation of unemployment in 1978, of which only the first report was published (Centro de Estudos Africanos 1978). The focus of the study was the source of unemployment problems, and a number of conclusions about stabilization of the work force and the effects of colonial patterns of production were put forward.

The Centre is not concerned, of course, with Mozambican problems in isolation from the rest of the southern African sub-system, and the analysis of the political economy of the region as a whole is regarded as part of the CEA's natural focus of investigation. Indeed, the first report ever produced by a CEA collective, on Zimbabwe, appeared in book form in Portuguese for the second time, with the analysis updated, and new prefatory matter shortly after ZANU's election victory (Centro de Estudos Africanos 1979c). This work has also been translated into Italian in 'Politica Internazionale' (81) 1980: 42-56, French ('Revue Tiers Monde' (77) 1979) and German (Zürich: SKAAL, 1978).

One of the very few individual works produced in the Centre in the last few years was a study of the role of mechanisation in agriculture and the way in which errors in the deployment of tractors can prevent the stabilization of the rural work-force and lower the level of production (Wuyts 1981).

Relatively little work has been published on Mozambican industry, although a number of unpublished survey papers have been circulated in the years since independence. Jens Erik Torp's study of industrial planning was originally produced as a discussion paper in Copenhagen, and has now been issued as a pamphlet by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies in Uppsala (Torp 1979). Among unpublished articles on industrial questions are M.R. Bhagavan on 'Some aspects of industrial development in Mozambique' (1977); J.M. Brum on 'Manufacturing industries in Mozambique: some aspects' (1976), of which a summary version was published in 'Wissenschaftliche Beiträge' (Berlin) (Sondernummer 2) 1976: 69-81; and Dave Wield's preliminary periodization 'Some characteristics of the Mozambican economy particularly relating to industrialization' (n.d.). Also of some interest is a Banco de Moçambique document 'Capitais dominantes nas principais empresas de Moçambique' (1977). Together, these studies represent the beginnings of serious study of Mozambican industry. The CEA's industrial project is outlined in the section CURRENT RESEARCH.

HISTORICAL STUDIES

In the field of history more has been published than in economics, and within a much wider range of problematics, ranging from liberal to materialist. Some historians have announced their intentions of producing general synthetic histories of Mozambique (Alpers, Isaacman and Smith), an enterprise almost certainly premature in the absence of a wide range of adequate micro-studies in either English or Portuguese. In fact, the first past the post has turned out to be Henrikson (1978) whose swift gallop around the main features of colonial and immediately post-independence Mozambican history is both thin in data and inadequately theorised. A much more useful general survey of Moçambique's history (and economy, ethnic composition and social structure) is the third edition of the US Army-sponsored area handbook (American University 1976). Unusually, the new edition is slimmer than its predecessors, admits that there is no data available for synthesis on many topics, and is not especially hostile to Mozambican independence. The bibliography and maps are excellent.

There is no question that the best-known of the English-speaking writers working on Mozambique is the energetic historian and journalist Allen Isaacman: indeed it has not been considered necessary to list his major works here, because they are already so well-referenced. Nevertheless, the Portuguese edition for his study of resistance in the Zambezi Valley is of interest, if only for the preface in which Isaacman acknowledges that 'o problema principal da nossa análise era a tendência para tratar as sociedades africanas resistentes como se fossem sociedades homogêneas'. He attributes this defect, a common one amongst Western historians, to the implicit belief that there were no classes in pre-colonial Africa; the written and oral sources, he continues, do not provide evidence which can be used in class analysis (Isaacman 1979). But the problems of 'resistance historiography' cannot be shrugged off so lightly.

Articles on various aspects of nineteenth century economic history have begun to appear in much greater numbers since 1975. Vail's article on the enfeebled Mozambique Chartered Company has now been supplemented by a similar study of the Nyassa Company from 1891 to 1929 (Neil-Tomlinson 1977). Vail himself has continued his series of collaborative articles with Landeg White, some of which were circulated widely in preliminary mimeographed form before print publication (Vail and White 1978a, 1978b).

José Capela's new volume on the abolition of the slave trade (1979) is based on archival work in both Portugal and Moçambique, and includes a substantial section in the chapter 'As classes exclavagistas de Angola e Moçambique' on the slave class in Moçambique. The work is a continuation of his earlier 'Escravidão — Empresa de Saque — o abolicionismo' (Porto, 1974).

These books and articles represent, of course, only a small sample of what has been produced in the last five years on Mozambican history; for more comprehensive listings of modern historiography, readers should consult Bender and Isaacman (1976) and the appropriate section of Allen (1978). It is clear, however, that certain topics and geographical areas are currently receiving close attention: recent southern African labour history is beginning to be intensively studied, and several scholars are working on Zambesian history. This kind of concentration on specific areas is a feature of the early stage of development of a scientific Mozambican historiography; as new theses emerge an adequate explanatory history of Mozambique's colonial and post-colonial experience will gradually be constructed.

For an account of some historical research projects currently under way, see the next section, CURRENT RESEARCH.

CURRENT RESEARCH

A number of individual researchers from outside Mozambique have conducted fieldwork within the country in the past two or three years, and have produced discussion papers and research reports.

Judith Head (University of Durham) worked on the Sena Sugar Estates and migrant labour in 1976 and 1977. Her paper in this topic is included in the Moçambique Seminar (1978), and a revised version appears in the pages of this issue of 'Mozambican Studies'. Both articles are derived from her doctoral thesis, 'State, capital and migrant labour in Zambézia, Mozambique: a study of the labour force of Sena Sugar Estanted Limited' (University of Durham, 1980). It is very much to be hoped that a publisher will be found for a book based on this dissertation.

Jeanne Penvenne (Boston University) did research on the working class in Lourenço Marques in the first part of the twentieth century, for an as yet uncompleted doctoral dissertation. She has produced three papers for the series published by Boston University's African Studies Center, on informal channels of communication among Lourentino workers, on race and work, and on forced labour (Penvenne 1979a, 1979b, 1980); she is also working on an annotated bibliography on 19th and 20th century Mozambican history, which is awaited with interest.

Sherilynn Young's (University of California) paper on women's agricultural history in the south of Mozambique (1977) was written before she began her field research in the countryside. More recently, her paper on changes in diet and their relation to pattern of production in the south has been translated into Portuguese by the CEA for use as a teaching text (Young 1979).

Patrick Harries (University of London) has continued to produce conference papers and reports on his research into the role of southern Mozambican labour in the emerging southern African sub-system: a number of these unpublished texts are available in the collections of the CEA. His most recent published article on free and unfree labour south of the Zambezi appeared in the 'Journal of African History' 22 (3) 1981.

Among historians, **Shubi Ishemo** (University of Manchester) spent several months working in the Arquivo Histórico in Maputo before returning to Britain to finish writing his thesis. CEA possesses several of his unpublished papers on the economy and society of the Zambezi basin in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and he also contributed a paper on this subject to the Mozambique Seminar (1978). **Joseph Mbwiliza** (Columbia University) also visited Mozambique to continue his research into the impact of trans-oceanic trade on Macua society in Northern Mozambique. Mbwiliza's thesis 'Towards a political economy

of Northern Mozambique: the Makua Hinterland 1600-1900' was accepted at Columbia University in 1980. **Leroy Vail** (University of Ohio) and **Landeg White** (University of York) have completed their investigations of colonialism and capitalism in the Quelimane hinterland, and a book length study was published in 1980. Among their many papers, their overly subtle study of the history of an abusive plantation song which is still sung even in post-independence times, attempts to identify the true nature and role of such ritualised protest (Vail and White 1978b).

The Centro de Estudos Africanos has continued to pursue a number of specific research projects related to problems of production in Mozambique, since the completion of its reports on migrant mining labour and on unemployment in the south. (For a discussion of published CEA reports, see under ECONOMIC STUDIES.) The two year investigation of cotton production has already reported on cotton ginning in the Province of Nampula, on the Texmoque factory, on the state farms, and on the transformation of family agriculture; these reports are presently in a preliminary form for internal distribution among Mozambican structures. A number of other projects were followed through in 1980, including the investigation of under-utilization of productive capacity and related problems in a Maputo factory, and a field trip to Zambezia to look at problems of relations of the state to the family and cooperative sectors, in an area traditionally used as a plantation contract-labour reserve. For a detailed and up-to-date discussion of CEA reports, see Michel Cahen's short article in 'Politique Africaine' 5 (1981).

CEA bibliographical projects include an index of Party and Government texts in the CEA collections, with detailed subject access; a critical annotated bibliography of a small number of selected documents, important for reasons of analysis or of policy; and more ambitiously, a general critical bibliography of writing on the social sciences in Mozambique to be published in book form in Britain. Work on the first of these is well under way, and preliminary notes are being collected for the last.

Other departments in the University are also tackling important projects. The History Department of the UEM has begun research on various aspects of labour history in Mozambique. The research is concerned with two major problems of historical interpretation of Mozambique's recent past within the southern African capitalist sub-system: the beginning of migrant labour; and the perpetuation of Xibalo (forced labour) until the last years of colonialism. The initial objective is to produce a report for general diffusion within the country rather than for the specialised academic community. In the process however, subjects for more detailed research will emerge.

Individual historians both from the History Department and on secondment to the CEA continue to pursue their research interests. **Carlos Serra** and **Gerhard Liesegang** have produced papers on Zambezia and on the pre-colonial south respectively, copies of which are available within the CEA's collections. **David Hedges** doctoral dissertation on 'Trade and politics in southern Mozambique and Zululand in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' is being revised by the author with a view to publication. A paper by **Luís de Brito** was produced in the Centre's *Texto de Apoio* series for a wider diffusion and subsequently revised for publication in this issue of this journal. It attempts to identify certain aspects of modern Mozambican history which have been neglected by recent investigators (Brito 1978).

NOTE ON THE REFERENCES

The list of the references that follows has no pretensions to completeness. Party and Government publications will be discussed in the next issue.

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