

## The Social History of FRELIMO: Towards a Class Analysis

Major questions relate to the class characteristics of the movement's leadership group, the class characteristics of the movement's popular base, and the nature of the interaction between the two as reflected in the spheres of political-military organization, ideology and concrete policy formulation.

### I The Leadership Group

To what extent and in what ways can this group be defined, in and of itself, in class terms: as a "petty bourgeoisie" ("traditional" or "new", in-the-making or otherwise), an "intelligentsia" ("organic" or otherwise), "advanced workers", and/or peasants, etc.?

Clearly, this requires some definition of "leadership group". It also implies a discussion of both the class sources of the original recruitment of the leaders on the one hand and of aspects of class formation implicit in their positions in the Mozambican society-in-the-making which is the liberation movement (a state-in-the-making?) and its liberated areas (bureaucratization and elitism, private sector involvements (e.g. Nkavandame), etc.) on the other.

A class characterization of the struggles within the leadership group is also in order ("ideological class struggle"? "petty-bourgeois politics?", etc.)

### II The Mass Base

A. One aspect has to do with the composition of the army: to what extent a peasant army, to what extent recruited more from urban elements (proletarians, petty-bourgeoisie, the "semi-proletarianized")

\* B. A second aspect to do with the role, obviously important, of the peasantry vis-à-vis the movement during the struggle:

-What is "the peasantry"?

-Which peasantry? (as a bloc? some strata more than others? against what targets? regional variation? importance of migratory experience and "semi-proletarianization"?)

-Nature of peasant grievances and reasons for attachment to struggle? Degree of possible attachment?

### III Interaction of Leadership and Mass Action (Movement and Class)

A. Impact of leadership upon base, especially methods of mobilization

-appeals: nationalism? anti-colonialism? racism? socialist future? personal well-being? collective well-being? class definitions?

-strategies: general mobilization? selective mobilization (e.g. against local chief/elite)? using local structures or against local structures? etc.

-consolidation: militia? social services? political institutions? (class content?)

B. Impact of base upon leadership

-in what sense, if any, did the mass base play an active role in creating and arbitrating the struggle of two lines (AVOID RHETORIC): specify the interplay between the struggle within the leadership and the grounding of that struggle in the populace.

-how was the peasantry represented in the organization (through what mediations)

-to what extent was the peasantry strengthened in control over its own future through this process.

### C. Results

- the leadership as an "external" or "internal" vanguard?
- roots of Marxism-Leninism? (international influence? "ideological class struggle" within the leadership? class base (including question of the peasantry as a base for Marxism-Leninism: cf. Littlejohn notes)?
- legacy for present of the type of "class struggle" exemplified by the liberation struggle in Mozambique; depth of the accomplishment for present purposes?

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(Littlejohn Notes)

How could Marxist-Leninist (M-L) party develop on a peasant base?

#### 1. Conception that M-L "came from our practice"

- (a) This implies that somehow it was related to the class struggles going on inside Frelimo - movement away from "bourgeois" nationalism.
- (b) Related to this: social basis of various tendencies within Frelimo e.g. prior to Second Congress i.e. not just that Nkavandame existed but that he was leader of a group that had some support.  
(a and b raise question c)
- (c) What was the class structure of the peasantry, especially but not exclusively in Cabo Delgado and Niassa? (not exclusively because Frelimo got recruits from other parts of the country)

#### 2. Implications

Even if one has a very "class-determined" view of ideology, there is no problem about ideology arising from a peasant base if that base contains strong elements of a rural proletariat. Even if these proletarian elements are not too strong and one still has a "class-determined" view of origins of ideology, there are other possible bases of M-L ideology within a nationalist movement.

- (a) urban proletariat - surely it was reasonably well-developed by 1960s. (see Colonial Statistics, but the work of Marc Wuyts for the Curso de Desenvolvimento suggests this.) Did Frelimo get much support there?
- (b) As Lenin has shown (e.g. in Agrarian Programme of Russian Social Democracy in First Russian Revolution, Collected Works Vol.13, not available in Portuguese) where there are semi-feudal forms of land tenure blocking capitalist development, the radical peasant bourgeoisie can be a revolutionary force in alliance with the proletariat. Why should this only be an urban proletariat? There is no reason that I can see that rural classes experiencing capitalist exploitation should not be willing to support an M-L line under the right conditions. e.g.
  - (i) rural proletariat or semi-proletariat or
  - (ii) rural peasants subjected to feudal exploitation, with feudal farms exporting on a capitalist world market through links with commercial capital, or
  - (iii) middle peasantry increasingly subjected to commercial capital.

In other words, as examples (a) and (b) under heading 2 show, even

with a view of ideology that linked it very closely with the class structure, there are possible answers to the question of how Frelimo became M-L when its social support was largely or almost exclusively peasant. The peasantry is not a class!! Furthermore, even if one wishes to point to the possible ideological influence on Frelimo from abroad, any answer to this question implies an investigation of the class structure of colonial Mozambique, especially from 1945. There is material on this, but no-one would deny (i) that it needs refining (ii) that it probably could be refined on the basis of so far unused colonial statistics plus perhaps the oral history work of the Oficina. The rough division in the CEA Curso between different forms of development of capitalism in South, Centre and North could be refined, but would probably still stand: there was a conscious policy in Colonial times to divide the country in this way.

3. Part of the answer could well be that M-L did not come exclusively from the practice of Frelimo

They did not have to "invent" Marxism, although they do seem to have been able to use it in a flexible and fruitful way by always referring it to current developments (which is connected to the relationship at that time between leadership and masses, it seems). The relation to Zambia, Malawi and elsewhere would need to be examined, in principle, although it may be impossible to get sources of information. However, the main point probably is that the insistence that M-L "came from our practice" is true in the sense that whatever the intellectual and social origins of such ideas Frelimo did not use them in a rigid manner. The capacity to avoid a dogmatic interpretation of M-L concepts must have been vital to the survival of Frelimo as a viable movement/party. This is much more important than answering claims that M-L theory can only develop in a "proletarian" situation.

G. Littlejohn.

