

(abridged)

The confessions of a Mozambican spy

Facts Reports
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Bless (MOZ)
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DETAILS of a plan for a major Rhodesian attack on Mozambique were revealed to journalists at a Press conference in Maputo on September 17. The plan was described by a spy who was captured while on a reconnaissance mission aimed at gathering information for the Rhodesian racist forces in connection with the attack.

The spy, Afonso Joao Cotoi, was a Mozambican recruited by the racists while working in South Africa and had infiltrated into Gaza Province in early September. The attack, he said, was planned for the very near future and large quantities of war material, including aircraft and trucks, were being concentrated to strike into Mozambique. A large number of soldiers, Rhodesian and mercenary, were being mustered for the offensive.

One of the objectives, said Cotoi, was the physical elimination of Mozambican leaders.

During the Press conference, Cotoi spoke of his past, how he was recruited and trained — and how he was caught.

Born 21 years ago in Zavala in Inhambane Province, Cotoi went to live in the capital, then called Lourenco Marques, in 1962. He lived in the suburb of Irhagoia and attended the first class of primary school. He left school and drifted into delinquency but finally got a job laying parquet floors in 1970. However he became involved in conflicts and decided to go to South Africa to be a miner.

Collaborated

In South Africa he started work in a coal mine. Some months later there was a strike at the mine in support of demands for better conditions but Cotoi stayed out of it, collaborated with the bosses and tipped off the police on the names of the strike leaders. Having shown himself to be a traitor to his fellow workers and a potential traitor to his country, Cotoi was contacted a few days later by agents recruiting for imperialism.

"The soldiers who trained us were Rhodesians, Portuguese, South Africans and others who spoke various languages. It was very tough training, lasting the whole day with intervals for lessons. In the morning the Rhodesian flag was raised, then we trained with arms — FN and G3 sub-machine guns, and others. As well as the training and the lessons, we could go to the town.

"Around the barracks there were women for us — women from Portugal, from South Africa, Rhodesians and some from Mozambique. Every month we received our money and we could spend it there."

It was through the lessons that Cotoi got to know about the so-called "African Livros", the movement of traitors and saboteurs organized by imperialism to operate against progressive African countries, particularly southern African countries. It was then that they told him the name of his chief: Jorge Jardim, a fascist millionaire businessman who lived in Mozambique until the defeat of Portuguese colonialism when he fled to Malawi.

"They spoke to us a lot about Jorge Jardim, saying that he was our chief and future president, that he was going to lead us to victory", said Cotoi.

Victory over who?

"They told us that just as FRELIMO had kicked out the Portuguese colonialists with weapons, we would be able to kick out FRELIMO if we trained enough. They told us that Jorge Jardim was going to lead us in kicking out FRELIMO and so we would be able to run Mozambique, we could get very rich, occupy the chairs of the ministers and directors, we could be the owners of the factories, the farms and everything else. They told us that when we won power in Mozambique we would have to work any more because the people would do the work for us. So we had to struggle against FRELIMO..."

In daily lectures, the Rhodesian, South African and mercenary military specialists explained to Cotoi and the other recruits the main aspects of the grand plan which they intended to gradually put into practice against Mozambique

— including the physical elimination of FRELIMO and government leaders. Said Cotoi: "They told us that for us to take power it was necessary to attack and kill the main leaders and cadres of FRELIMO. They assured us that this was being set up according to plans worked out by our principal leaders, mainly Jorge Jardim."

After his military training, Cotoi was sent on his first mission, a military action against Mozambique, specifically against the small town of Mapai and Gaza Province. However the swift response of the Mozambique armed forces prevented the helicopter carrying him and the other members of his unit from landing. While the Mozambican forces were shooting down one of the reconnaissance planes which was trying to prepare the landing, Cotoi and other traitors on board the helicopter were dropping incendiary bombs on the villages they flew over, on old people, women and children running away. However they were put to flight by Mozambican fire and returned to Rhodesia.

He was then given specialist training in reconnaissance and espionage by foreign instructors, who prepared him for all eventualities he might face in gathering information needed for the attack under preparation.

"They told us that this was the best time, that everything was ready for a big attack on Mozambique. I, and many others like me, would have to go to the front to study the situation well and to send every bit of information," said Cotoi.

The preparation for this attack had the support of South Africa and other imperialist countries, which supply military training, techniques, mercenaries, money and armaments to the Rhodesian regime.

At the beginning of September, after completing his second period of training, he was infiltrated into Mozambique with others like him. "We left by helicopter," said Cotoi. "There were about 105 of us, reconnaissance agents, 100 of whom were put down in N'Gala. I and four others went to Mapai, where the helicopter

left us."

On the day before departure from Rhodesia the officers in charge of training had called them in to explain the nature of their mission. "They told us we had to make the final reconnaissance and we had to send all possible information for the attack which was being prepared. Everything is ready, according to what they said. The assault units are ready, the weapons and the ammunition are all set. The planes, helicopters and trucks are prepared. They were only short of some information which we had to send."

Civilian clothes

"I arrived at Mapai region with the four other soldiers. They were armed, wearing camouflage uniform and carrying radio transmitters. I was in civilian clothes and brought Mozambican mchey with me. The helicopter was to return in a few days to take us back."

Cotoi's mission was to roam the roads and railways alone, getting close to military units and defence installations, making a note of troop strength and types of weapons used.

On foot, by train and by bus he travelled the regions of Chokwe, Barragem and Maba-Jane. Finally after obtaining a transit pass in Chokwe, he again headed for Mapai, having said his mother was sick there and that he was going to visit her. "People believed me," he said. "Meanwhile I was observing everything, how many soldiers there were on the bridges and in the villages, how they were living, what weapons they had. I was writing everything in my notebook."

However Afonso Cotoi's mission was coming to a premature end. He explained what happened. "The helicopter was coming to pick us up the next day and I was preparing to spend the night. I found a house and asked if I could rest there, saying I had come from Maputo. They welcomed me, put a mat on the floor and told me I could sleep there. I was very tired and fell asleep there, but was woken up some hours later by a group of FRELIMO fighters who had surrounded me. They asked me who I had