

"Let us fight peacefully"

ASE Editor-in-Chief Tony Hall interviews Marcellino dos Santos, speaker of the Mozambican People's Assembly and number two in the Frelimo Politburo about the situation in his own country, and beyond...

Since the Rome peace agreement in October, the general situation is improving all the time. People can travel freely. Displaced people have started to return and rural people to cultivate the land and produce. Fortunately we've had rains.

Also, there are many tourists, particularly from South Africa and Swaziland. And step by step, there's the development of the economy. Investors are coming. In the Beira corridor there is traffic the whole time. And I must say, roads everywhere are being used.

As you know, our 1991 constitution has established Mozambique as a multi-party state. Several parties have already registered, and many are in the process. So there is an evolution of political life in Mozambique. I won't say, as many people say, that now there is democracy, as if it didn't exist before. I try to look at the problems in a scientific way, not just to repeat what Western propaganda transmits.

I'm saying there is evolution of political life in our country. Mozambique is no longer a socialist country. It became a capitalist country — we should be very clear about that, not beat around the bush.

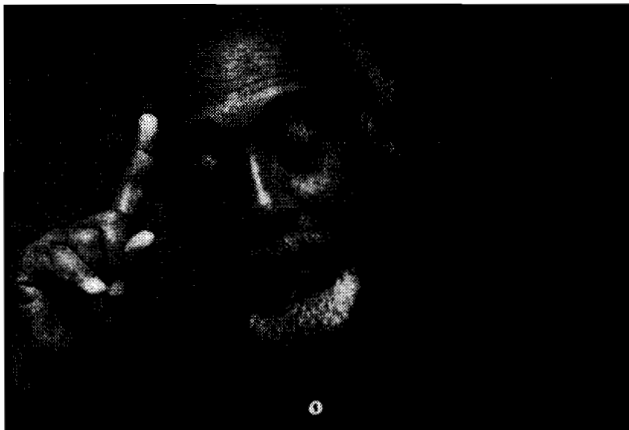
But one must realise that change was not a decision taken by ourselves, by the Mozambicans — oh, no. It was not something that came out of the Mozambican 'genius,' as an internal dynamic of Mozambican development. It was something imposed on us by foreign force.

You know that Renamo is an instrument created by the Rhodesians in 1977-79. When Rhodesia fell, SA assumed the paternity of Renamo, and it became, from then, fully an instrument of the apartheid regime — till now! And I mean *now*, as we sit here.

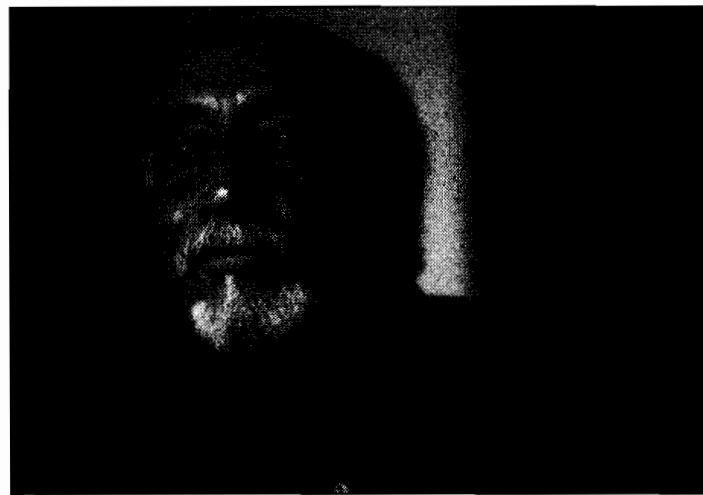
You mean supported by a wing of SA

Military Intelligence, a maverick wing, or the regime as a whole?

You know, sometimes people put the question that way. But I say please, I won't go into it. I will let the government of South Africa show, very clearly, that it is not interested in this. So I include the



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government of SA and the intelligence and military people. We cannot go on saying, week after week, year after year, that it's not the government, it's this and that wing. Even a simple person in the street would say, but if you are the government and can't do anything, perhaps the normal thing to do is to resign, and let others take power...So I'm saying that the SA government till now, is supplying weapons, and naturally everything else that Renamo needs.

Let us ask if the same factors that led the SA regime to support an organisation like Renamo in Mozambique, and others, like Unita in Angola are still there or not?

The regime took over Renamo because they wanted at the time to transform Mozambique into a bantustan, and to prevent any forces in Mozambique that would be in favour of the ANC and other democratic organisations.

Those reasons are still there. We can see some changes, but it is clear to the world that the changes in SA are cosmetic.

"Until the very last moment, all oppressive forces think there is another hope to survive and continue oppression..."

The main pillars of the regime are all still there. From our experience, and what history teaches, it is always the same, the oppressive forces never change by themselves — it's impossible! Until the last moment, all oppressive forces think that there is still another hope to survive, to continue oppression. They only change if internally the people of a given country are strong enough to oppose them, and if the international community is ready to support freedom and democracy in that country. So I

say for these reasons the apartheid regime needs an instrument like Renamo — because they see it as a means of survival.

So, if we come back to Mozambique, we can understand the behaviour of Renamo. After the Rome agreement, for example, in late February, early March, three battalions (of Renamo) came into Mozambique from Malawi. You won't find anything in the Rome agreement that enabled Renamo to import forces in February 1993 from Malawi into Mozam-

bique. This violates the Rome agreement. But why? It was clearly stated that the Assembly would integrate the agreement into the laws — as they did on 15 October. So then, ceasefire. The forces of Renamo, and the government were to be taken to form a new army, trained by the British, French and Portuguese. Nowhere is it said the forces will be trained in Malawi, Kenya or South Africa!...

I'm saying Kenya — I know, naturally, when I speak like that, it always becomes some diplomatic problem because the Kenyans ask where is the proof. — God! In 1993, after several years of war, we still have to prove the involvement of these countries? I'm saying that South Africa is supplying weapons to Renamo in Maringue — now. If you ask me to prove it...please, enough said. We said from 1980 that Renamo was an instrument of SA, which was supporting it in every way. Always the SA government said no, no. But when we took Gorongosa in 1984 we found documentary proof. So I know that a week, a month, a year later, the proof will come of what I'm saying..

No, we must rather ask, why these continual violations? Today Renamo is an instrument of SA — and forces in power in Portugal. I'd like to state it like that without more detail. Many Portuguese in South Africa ran away from Mozambique and Angola and came to SA.

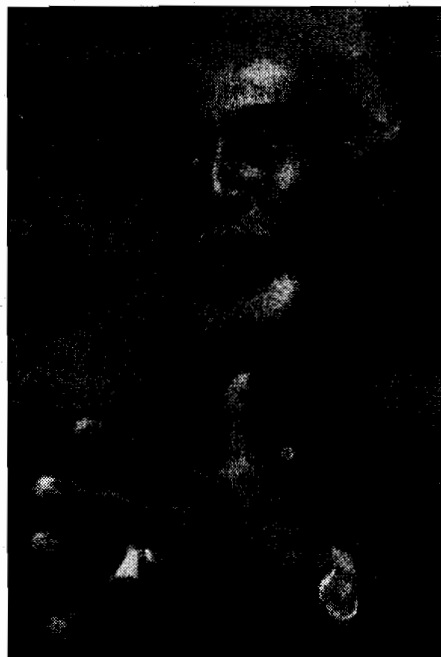
Many of these Portuguese want to go back. This is the situation, the reality. Perhaps it helps us to understand the present behaviour of Renamo — bringing new troops into Mozambique, refusing to come to Maputo and staying in Maringue and other places they control.

So is Maringue a future Huambo?

Maringue today is the headquarters of Renamo. In that sense we could call it the Jamba of Mozambique: Why does Dhlakama not want to come to Maputo? Why does he want to stay in Maringue? Well, why did Savimbi not want to leave Jamba? Why did he try to get Huambo, and why did he not stay in Luanda? We are forced to make such comparisons. I will answer these questions simply, like the people in the street, and say it's because Renamo will do what is in the interest of their masters, so just signing an agreement will not change the nature of Renamo. We are strong, but not strong enough to change the nature of a snake. We came into talks with Renamo because we could not win a military defeat over a

force supported by SA and others. But neither did Renamo defeat us. So with no military victory for either side we succeeded with the international community in forcing Renamo to come into peace talks. But still there were some incidents on the part of Renamo designed to impede talks. When we agreed that talks should be held in Malawi, for example, just two days before the date for those talks, some forces with an interest in the matter flew into Mozambique to propose Munich instead. *Munich!* We were astonished.

But we took the initiative to propose Rome, and succeeded. During the Rome talks several times documents were approved; then a few weeks later Renamo



"History is in motion. Do people think that now we have reached the stage where history has stopped?"

would come and say we don't like this or demand changes. People in the street, who don't care much for speaking in diplomatic language, explain this all plainly: "Oh, so it means that they went to their masters, and their masters refused what they accepted in Rome. Their masters said no, so now they come back and say no." This is the way in which simple people in the street talk. And I say: most of the time, they are right.

The Rome talks took a long time because of this. And what you can see in the problems that are arising now, is the question of whether peace is to the liking or in the interest of everybody. Peace forces everybody to approach power through elections. Is everybody sure that

they could win elections?

Could we see a situation where a date can be set for elections, but only accepted at a point when Renamo forces feel strong enough to cope — Unita-style — with the problem of losing that election?

Look, it is important that everybody fights for the consolidation of peace. Action for peace in Mozambique is not only the responsibility of the government but requires the participation of the whole population. So it is important for the people to know exactly what is going on. We cannot just see these things happening. We have to interpret the evidence.

We know what is Renamo's nature, being the son of Ian Smith's Rhodesia and apartheid — its nature is the same. A son of a cat is a cat: you cannot change that. So we believe that Renamo is reluctant to go into elections. Everyone is saying that Renamo will never win elections — not only us, Frelimo, but foreigners as well. Organisations that use the terrorist methodology that they use — to kill people, burn houses, cut off ears and noses, to sexually mutilate, to take out hearts and force family members to eat them — can they expect to win elections?

And if they were organised to be destabilizers and to enable the SA regime to transform Mozambique into a Bantustan, perhaps new international precedents suggest Renamo should become a political party in order to fulfill the same mission. They still need to win power. If they don't think they can win, what then should they do? Let us be logical and rational: the tendency will be to refuse elections. So what is the other way to win? Savimbi shows the other way, war. But I won't say that it is fate that war will come back to Mozambique. The Mozambican people and the international community must act to defend and consolidate peace.

Does the international community have any forces which are sufficiently supportive of such an approach?

Not really. I'm not speaking of military intervention for the time being. Naturally there are resources within the international community to do such things — but are they willing to put them at the service of peace and democracy in Mozambique? We have to come up against the SA regime and the forces in power in Portu-

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gal right now; they are the main force that really need Renamo as an instrument. Other forces are more or less satisfied with the new face of Mozambican society — perhaps more than the Mozambican people are. These forces say that Mozambique is a capitalist country and that's all-right; they even concede that some of us in government are quite civilised.

What's needed now is action. People in the street are asking why the Security Council does not condemn those who are trying to bring war back to Mozambique. At least two are clear: the SA government and the Portuguese, and some African countries — everybody knows who, no names need to be repeated. Why are these people not called upon, and asked what they are doing? Why are they trying to bring back war? Perhaps that would be one way for the international community to act ...but that is just one idea.

You use this image, of attempting to turn Mozambique into a Bantustan. Is the new regional pattern one of black-ruled countries beset with rebels supported by conservatives with white support — like Inkatha, Unita and Renamo? Is this idea of bantustanisation one way that minorities think they can survive in the region as the prospect of a majority-ruled SA looms nearer?

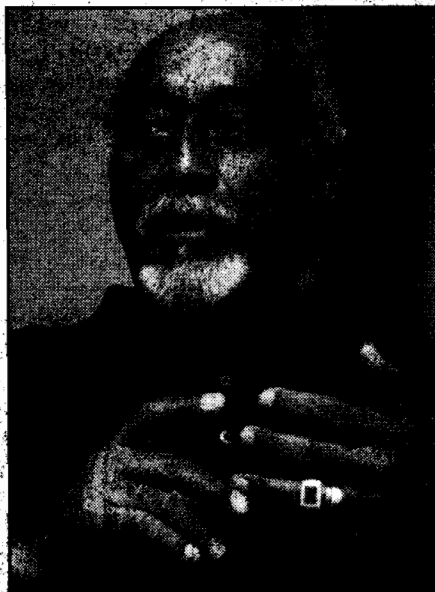
Not really. They want to do this — to divide. They will do what they can to maintain the defence of their oppressive interests. Bantustanisation is their best dream. But we are not reactionary, oppressive forces. We fought for the freedom for all, not just Frelimo, or black Mozambicans.

Yesterday I met a white Portuguese here who was born and raised in Mozambique. He had run away. He told me it was only recently that he started to understand that the ANC and Frelimo are not so bad... he said that now that Frelimo has changed it is OK. I told him that people like him used to look at us with the wrong eyes. It was the product of the propaganda here in SA: ANC is bad, Frelimo is bad... But now they realise this is not so. There is a way to enable white reactionaries to see the reality.

I say this because last year at the Portuguese association of Johannesburg there was a meeting to create a similar organisation to Terreblanche's AWB, for the Portuguese here in Joburg. I was quite astonished that the SA government was

allowing the Portuguese to create a racist terrorist organisation like that in SA. But then someone told me not to be so astonished because they have Renamo here too.

When we won the struggle against Portuguese colonialism an important part of it was the coup d'etat in Portugal in April 1974, made by military forces who had learned about democracy and freedom during the struggle against our movements in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. It was our struggles which gave them a clear mind about the meaning of freedom. This moved them to change the Portuguese government. Our struggles in Africa brought freedom not only for ourselves, but also for the Portuguese people. The logic of popular struggle is to bring freedom. So also in



"I voted for capitalism...that does not mean I wanted it."

South Africa today.

When people talk from positions of strength and with clarity, they often become the target of assassination because sometimes they make too much sense. In Africa those who tried to bring people together peacefully have often been killed — Chris Hanu is the latest example. Are we in a dangerous situation here in SA... is there a continuity which we should be wary of?

You are right. These oppressive forces dream of remaining forever oppressive. They try everything they can, even assassination, to reach their aims. This is the logic of their system. What we must do is organise to defend ourselves against their forms of aggression. We will not always

be successful. But our experience shows that history forces some of us to die in order that others may become free. That is the price of liberty and freedom, but we should not be frightened to die. We must fight to *live*. During the struggle for Mozambique we asked people whether they would prefer to live as slaves, or fight for life as free people. Later on we broadened the concept, and we said we had to choose between being killed without doing anything, or living with a gun in the hand.

Most observers would agree that socialism is in retreat as an international force, so that even those who hope for non-aligned politics, particularly in our region, are in a difficult position...

The destruction of the socialist states in eastern Europe was a defeat for the socialist movement — and the fact that Mozambique is no longer a socialist country; and that Angola has also moved away from state socialism. But it doesn't mean that future generations will not take to socialism... *patience!* Now it seems a fatal situation... but humanity is always in revolution... slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism — history is in motion. Do people think that now we have reached the stage where history has stopped? Be patient, I say.

These reactionary forces are just delaying the process: they are not stopping it. They killed Samora Machel, but those who worked with him like myself are still alive. I also participated in bringing capitalism to Mozambique. I voted for it. But it doesn't mean that after all the destruction, the degradation of the economic, social and moral fabric, I wanted capitalism. To stop the degradation we had to call upon a society that globally speaking must be called capitalist. But not to keep forever. Capitalism came back to Mozambique as a consequence of the military aggression of forces who refuse to admit that every country, every people must have the right to their own image. These aggressive forces wish to remake all societies in their own image.

In my own life, I will continue to fight to build socialism in my country, peacefully. Others will fight to consolidate capitalism there. They may do so. What I am saying is, let us fight peacefully. One thing is very important to tell all the reactionary forces in all of our countries: let us sit together, discuss, debate, and let us accept the conclusions of our people. ■