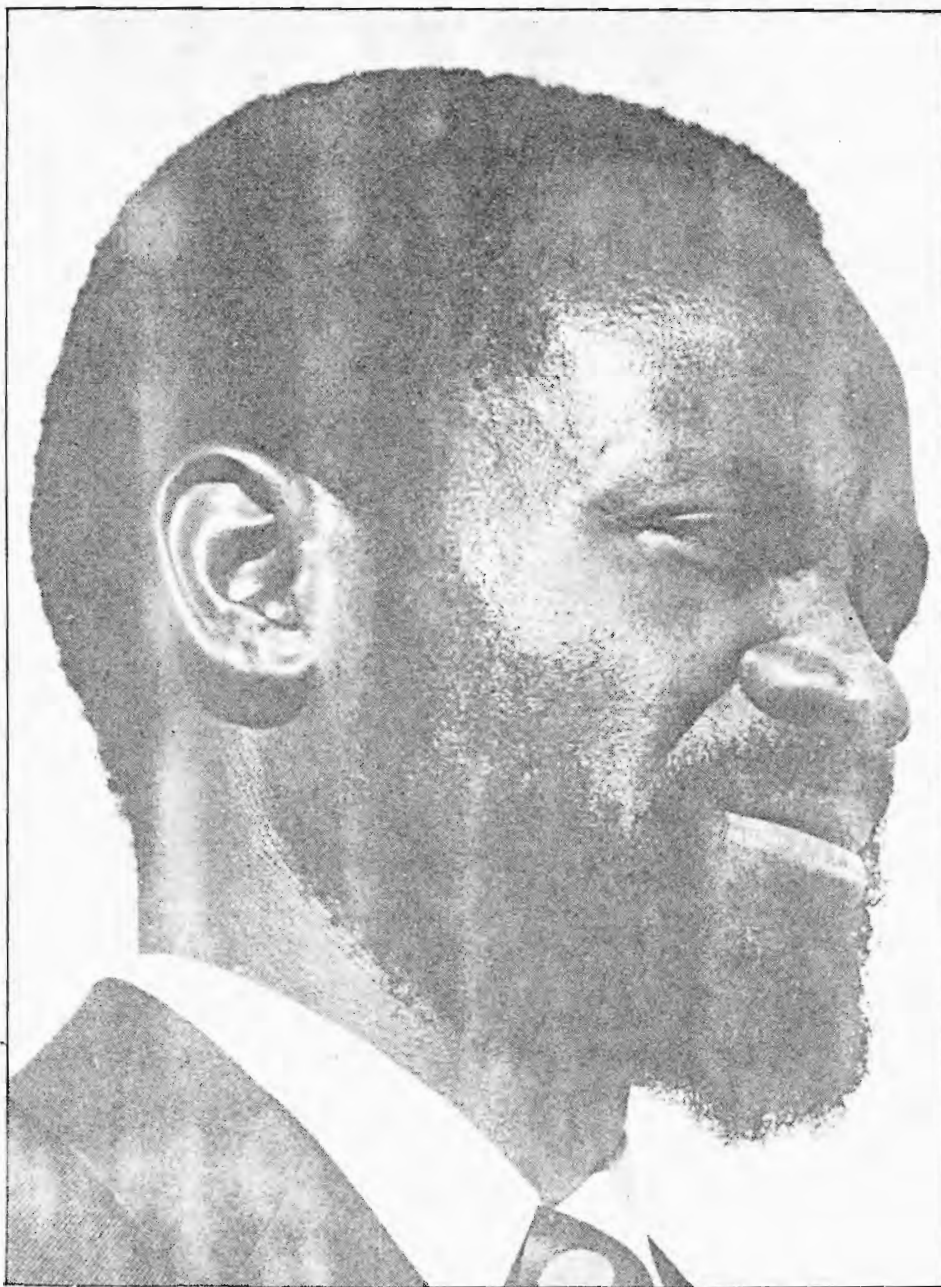


Mozambique takes up arms again

As Mozambique celebrates its third year of independence troubles are looming. The main threat is from the enemies at the door, and now military conscription has begun



President Samora Machel: acting to defend his country

Mozambicans, with vivid memories of the ravages of the war which culminated in the freedom victory under the banner of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo), are now faced with a different war from their enemies at the door, Rhodesia and South Africa. Hence the introduction recently of compulsory military conscription in the country.

Under the law on the military draft, all Mozambicans, including those living abroad, from the age of 18 to 40 (for women) and 45 (for men) will be eligible for military training which will last two years. However, the National Defence Ministry has the powers to extend the period of training for up to 12 months.

Students who have been studying for at least two years before can postpone their service as can men with families dependent on their earnings. Failure to register will be punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. Feigning ill-health, the main ground for exemption from the draft, or falsifying documents to avoid the service will be punishable by jail terms of up to eight years and suspension of political rights for up to 20 years.

The Mozambicans have had to watch Rhodesian soldiers raid their country with impunity and defiance. The Rhodesians claim they are trying to ferret out guerillas from their Mozambican bases. One of the Rhodesian liberation movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) wing of the Patriotic Front alliance of Robert Mugabe (the ZANU leader) and Joshua Nkomo (leader of the other wing the Zimbabwe African People's Union ZAPU), operates from Mozambique.

According to the Mozambicans between March, 1977 and March this year there were over 340 raids into Mozambique by the Rhodesians, the biggest in November last year when more than 300 civilians were killed at Chimoio and Tembue. Among the property destroyed were shops, schools, hospitals, Frelimo offices, homes and bridges. Also destroyed were water tanks.

flour-mills, vehicles, boats, and over 3,000 bags of maize. Of the raids 194 were in Gaza Province, 96 in Tete and 59 in Manica.

Meanwhile the drawing up of enlistment registers which started in May this year goes on until end of July and will initially include those aged between 17 and 30. Afterwards registration will be conducted from January to March each year for those who will have attained the age of 17 at that time.

With the exclusion of the Patriotic Front from the internal deal in which three Black nationalist leaders (Sithole, Muzorewa and Chirau) and Premier Ian Smith shared out political power, the externally-based Black nationalist leaders (Mugabe and Nkomo) are now intensifying their guerilla fight against Smith and his new "kirsmen and foremen". This will undoubtedly lead to more raids into Mozambique by the Rhodesians under the pretext that they are trying to drive out the guerillas and demolish their bases.

For Mozambique the cost of the war is tremendously high, both in terms of money and men. With a total armed force of 19,000 in 1975, Mozambique spent \$18m. on defence alone. And this year, defence expenditure was 29% of the total expenditure (about \$113m.), the biggest single item on the national budget.

According to the London based Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), by the end of 1977 Mozambique's armed forces had gone up to 20,000, with one tank battalion, nine infantry battalions and three artillery battalions.

But Mozambique has no heavy tanks and its heaviest gun is 122mm – the South Africans have 155mm guns – and much of its weaponry is of a defensive nature – anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons and surface-to-air missiles. Its airforce with 16 fighter planes hardly compares with South Africa's 362 combat aircraft. Nor are all of Mozambique's aircraft necessarily airworthy.

Mozambique has 35 medium T-34-54-55 and some PT-76 light tanks, BTR-40 BRDM armoured cars, BTR-60 and 152 armoured personnel carriers, 76mm, 85mm, 100mm, 122mm, guns BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, 60mm, 82mm, 120mm mortars, 82mm, 107mm anti-tank guns, Sagger anti-tank weapons, 23mm, 37mm and 57mm anti-aircraft guns, and 24 SA-6 and SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. The airforce has eight combat aircraft, eight MiG-21 fighters, eight Noratlas, 5 C-47 and An-24 transports, and light aircraft including seven Zlin, 15 Harvard trainers, two Alouette II/III and some Mi-8 helicopters.

Mozambique has received surface-to-air missiles and two infantry battalions from Tanzania, the fraternal African country

which supported Frelimo from its inception, and lately a considerable amount of military assistance has come from the Soviet Union, the GDR (East Germany) and the People's Republic of China.

Facing Mozambique is Rhodesia, backed by the military might of South Africa, undoubtedly the most powerful country, militarily, in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to ISS Rhodesia's military strength lies in its army of 8,250 (including 3,250 conscripts) with three infantry battalions, three special air services squadrons, the notorious Selous Scouts (a unit specialising in masquerading as guerillas and sowing dissension), Grey's Scouts, mounted infantry (250), one artillery, and one engineering squadron and armoured cars and personnel carriers.

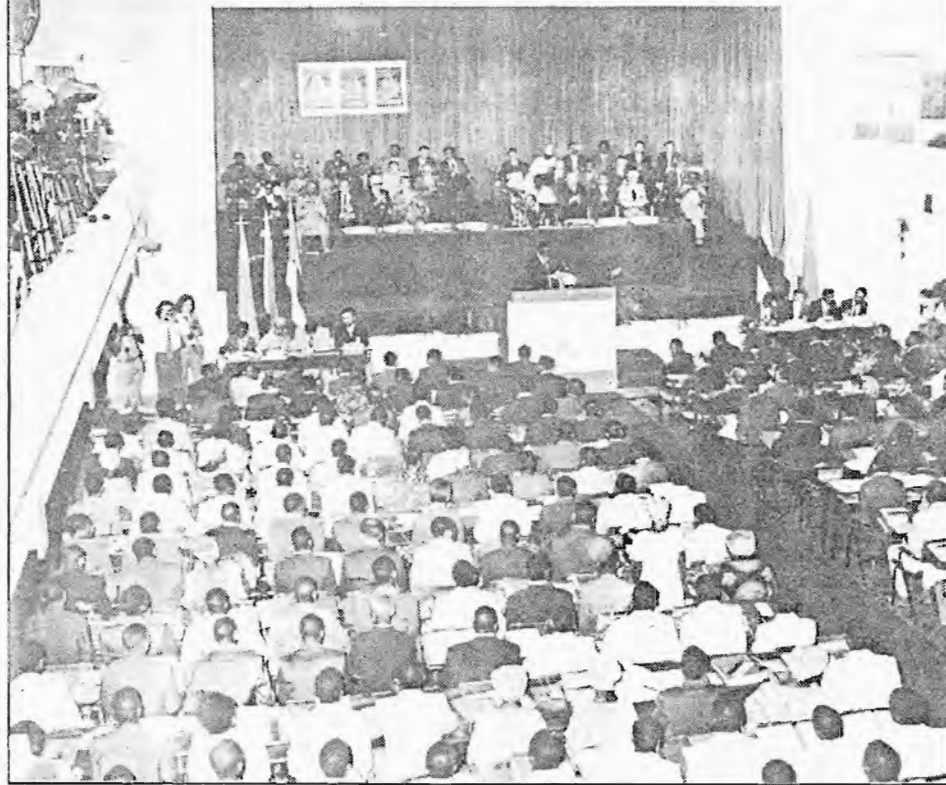
The airforce has 48 combat aircraft, with one light bomber squadron with five Canberra B2 and two T4, two fighter squadrons, and various training and helicopter squadrons.

The Territorial Force has been expanded to 55,000 men and contains eight battalions, each with 1,000 men and support units. There is also a Reserve

Frelimo's congress (right)
Below: guerilla column before
independence, and
Frelimo soldiers today.



VAMOS CONSTRUIR O PARTIDO DE VANGUARDA PARA CONSTRUÇÃO DO SOCIALISMO



Holding Unit of 3,000 men. The paramilitary forces, the British South African Police (BSAP) has 43,000 men – 8,000 active and 35,000 reservists. And the Guard Force establishment is 1,000 men. Rhodesia's military expenditure this year stood at US\$159m.

On the other hand, says ISS, South Africa relies on its force of 55,000 with 38,400 conscripts. Its expenditure on arms is now US\$1.9bn. and this is to go up in the coming years.

In recent years South Africa has bought most of its armaments from France, the one major Western country prepared openly to sell weapons to the apartheid regime. This year, surprisingly, South Africa's defence budget was cut from R1.78bn. to R1.53bn. – but the drop was largely accounted for by France's decision to follow the UN embargo on arms supplies and to cancel its contract to supply corvettes and submarines. But according to the South African Minister of Defence, the defence budget will top R2bn. in the near future.

Yet in spite of its formidable appearance, South Africa's army of 41,000 is by no means invincible – the South African invasion of Angola in 1975 was defeated and turned back. Nor is the morale of the troops high; not all who fight are willing to die for the creed of apartheid.



The South Africans also have a strong navy, including - submarines and destroyers and frigates - and six corvettes, which can fire the Israeli Gabriel II missiles. Exocet missiles are on order. The corvettes have a long range and can range right up the coast of Mozambique, to threaten it with these missiles. The airforce has 362 combat aircraft, as well as bomber and helicopter squadrons. The total reserve force (army, navy and airforce combined) is 165,500.

In addition South Africa is now self-sufficient in small and light arms production. It has also supplied Rhodesia with some of these although no real statistics are available. The Rhodesians, too, manufacture a certain type of small and light arms.

Last year the South Africans decided to build a major air base very near the border with Mozambique in the northern Transvaal at Hoedspruit, along the edge of the Kruger National Park. The first phase of this project will be finished this year. Now Pretoria has announced that it is to

build a major army base at Phalaborwa a mere 50km from the Mozambique border and 150km from Rhodesia. This will be ready next year. The move will be viewed in Maputo as very provocative.

A top Soviet official, Serge Solokov, First Deputy Defence Minister, was recently in Mozambique, which has signed a 20-year Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union covering defence and other matters. He and the Mozambicans talked on various topics including military aid. A number of Soviet and East German ships are reported to have been seen in Mozambique unloading various types of arms including MiG-21s, T-34 tanks, personnel carriers, anti-aircraft guns, SAM-7s, and various light arms.

At the moment Mozambique is still tied to South Africa by the numerous economic threads spun in the days of Portuguese colonialism. Maputo is still a major outlet for South Africa's congested ports, and the migrant mine workers still ensure there is a flow of foreign currency and gold into

Maputo's coffers - though South Africa's recent decision to revalue its gold reserves in terms of the market price will undoubtedly lessen the importance of this tie.

At the same time Samora Machel's government is unequivocal in its support for the guerillas of the African National Congress, who are making more and deeper incursions into the heartland and the cities of South Africa. Many are infiltrating from the safety of Mozambique.

As guerilla warfare increases so will South Africa's threatening posture towards Mozambique. And as the internal deal in Rhodesia begins to look sicker, and the war in that country intensifies, there is no doubt that defence strategists in Maputo are anticipating the clouds spreading over their country too ●

South Africa's French-supplied Mirage fighter-bombers: now an airbase has been built on Mozambique's border.

