

'Blacks in South Africa are free'

BOMBA SPEAKS

BLACKS in South Africa are free, but they refrain from putting themselves on the same level as whites and are less keen to accept integration than whites.

This is what Lieutenant Adriano Bomba, the Mozambican air force pilot who defected from his country said he has gathered during his two weeks in South Africa.

In an exclusive interview with the SOWETAN at the weekend, the handsome Soviet-trained officer said he has not seen any difference between blacks and whites.

"Blacks in South Africa are free,

By SAM MABE

something that doesn't happen in Mozambique at all," Lt Bomba said.

He told me he made this assessment after he had gone out of the air force camp to make contact with the civilian population.

'FREE'

When it was pointed out to him that blacks could be keeping to themselves not because they had anything against whites but because of an inferiority complex infused by denial of certain privileges, two air force officials intervened.

The interview came to a halt after they accused a SOWETAN reporter of trying to influence Lt Bomba by making statements rather than asking questions.

Lt Bomba earlier addressed a Press conference at Hoedspruit Air Base in the Eastern Transvaal and told about 40 local and foreign journalists that he wanted to live in a "free" country.

Lt Bomba, who said he fled Mozambique because he was "sick and tired" of Frelimo's unfulfilled promises after independence, said he would not have fled to any country other than South Africa.

"It had to be South Africa or I might just as well have stayed in Mozambique. I decided to come here because the policies are different and this is where I thought I might be safe," he said.

It was also revealed for the first time during the conference that Lt

Bomba's elder brother, Bonaventure Bomba, had also defected from Mozambique and had been staying in Swaziland.

A day after Lt Bomba's arrival in South Africa, his brother came to Hoedspruit with his wife and two-year-old son. Bonaventura is said to have also applied for permanent residence.

The pilot said he left school in Standard nine and his academic aspirations were frustrated when President Samora Machel said he and his classmates should quit their studies and join the armed forces. Lt Bomba's main aim in South Africa is to improve his knowledge in science, he said.

SURPRISED

He said all intellectuals in Mozambique were either in jail or their development was suppressed.

Asked how he felt on finding there were no black pilots in South Africa, Lt Bomba said he is not surprised, just as he is not surprised that there are no white pilots in Mozambique.

"The social problems of South Africa are not my concern. I have not come here to oppose the Government."

He said there was nothing he knew about South Africa except for the anti-South African propaganda he was fed with by Frelimo. But on his arrival, he found things different from what he had believed they were.

OUSTED

It is the black people who are reluctant to integrate with whites, and preferred to keep to themselves. He said during his training in Russia, he was brainwashed for a year so that when he left, he would think like a Russian.

What he did not like about Russians, he said, was that they regarded him and his colleagues as inferior and

adopted a paternalistic attitude towards them. But he said the standard of training was high.

Frelimo, he said, had taken over control of Mozambique so as to hand it over to the communist Russians and Cubans. Lt Bomba said he would never return to Mozambique until Frelimo and its communist masters had been ousted.

The Mozambican people's basic diet has become Machel's speeches — because there is hardly any food there," Lt Bomba said.

He also said the Soviets were supplying Mozambique with weapons but not food.

He added that although the Mozambican government had not admitted its support for the African National Congress, it was "feeding" the organisation.

Since the South African Defence Force's (SADF) attack on ANC homes in Matola near Maputo in January, the military and the civilian population has been prepared and are kept on the alert to defend themselves in the event of an anticipated attack.

Lt Bomba stressed that the average man in Mozambique did not see South Africa as posing a threat to Mozambique as their politicians wanted them to believe.