

AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

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Mozambique: Havoc in the bush

Throughout the year the *Frelimo* government has come under increasing military pressure from the *Resistência Nacional Mocambicana* (to be called hereafter as the MNR). There is now anti-*Frelimo* action in 7 of Mozambique's 11 provinces. Manica, Sofala and Inhambane provinces are considered unsafe outside the main towns; nearly 1000 km of the main north-south road is subject to attack, and traffic between Malawi and Zimbabwe via Mozambique has virtually stopped. As a measure of the extent of the guerrilla offensive, the MNR has moved into some areas of Inhambane province visited by President Samora Machel during a tour last February. Machel was forced to cancel his planned July visit to Europe in order to take personal command of the battle against the MNR.

The *Frelimo* government itself is in no danger: the present MNR orbit encompasses the least populated areas of Mozambique, affecting less than 3m. of the country's 12m. total population. Much of the area is game reserve, forest and semi-desert, and most MNR actions are carried out by roving and widely dispersed bands of 100 to 200 men. Once attacked or destroyed, positions are rarely held. In general, the guerrillas avoid populated areas and concentrate their attacks on small villages, particularly the newly created "communal villages". (The half dozen small towns successfully attacked during the past two years have all been in remote areas away from main roads). Some areas, however, especially near the River Save, are controlled sufficiently by the MNR to prevent government forces and officials from entering without military escort. However, none of these MNR-held areas can be termed "liberated zones", where alternative administration and commerce has been established. Although the MNR captors of John Burlison, the British zoologist, moved freely, they never showed him villages they controlled. The inability of MNR spokesman, Evo Fernandes, to carry out his written offer to a third party in Maputo "to visit the areas under the control of the MNR" also points to a lack of solid territorial control.

The MNR's military strength appears to be

composed of about 3000 trained fighters, with at least as many youth undergoing "in service" training. (*Frelimo*'s strength was 10,000 at independence; the present Mozambican army is about 25,000). Mozambique's size (783,000 sq. km.) and geography makes it hard to protect lines of communication. Thus the MNR has concentrated on mining roads and railways and attacking road and rail traffic: the two railways from Zimbabwe to the ports of Maputo and Beira have come under repeated attack; the road and rail bridges near Beira were sabotaged last October (the rail bridge reopened in December and the road bridge was due to reopen in early July); in early May this year a train near Chimoio was attacked and at least 40 passengers were killed.

Mozambique Railways (CFM) continues to move all Zimbabwean cargo sent its way, largely because both lines are now used to less than half capacity, so that backlogs can be cleared quickly after any disruption. The opening of the oil pipeline from Beira to Mutare (ex-Umtali) was delayed for six months, not because of attacks (apart from a minor incident on 14 May), but because of a dispute as to who would pay for oil lost in the event of future attacks.

Disruption of internal traffic is nevertheless sometimes serious, most importantly in the marketing of this year's food crops. Road mining and attacks have isolated some development projects, as has the increasing MNR interest in foreign technicians. At least 12 foreigners have been killed or captured in the past 7 months (of whom 7 are Portuguese). As a result, studies of iron and gas reserves have been delayed, and Sweden had to withdraw 50 workers from the showcase Ifloma forest industries project near Chimoio. (Ten Swedes have since returned, and the others are expected to go back shortly). A Chilean engineer is still missing.

The former director of the Rhodesian *Central Intelligence Organisation* (CIO), Ken Flower, fostered and created the MNR as a fifth column inside Mozambique (AC Vol 23 No 9), initially relying largely on Mozambicans who had fled to Zimbabwe in 1974-75. Many were members of opportunist anti-*Frelimo* groups

such as the Portuguese secret police (PIDE), the commandos, and the GE Special Group, most of whom feared retribution if they stayed in Mozambique. CIO first turned to Orlando Cristina, who had brought with him to Rhodesia all the GE files. Cristina used these to identify GE's among the Mozambicans in Zimbabwe. They were then recruited into the MNR. CIO provided a training camp at "Retreat Farm" near Bindura, north of Harare. When Mozambique imposed sanctions on Rhodesia in March 1976, the first MNR bands, including a few Portuguese mercenaries, moved into Manica and Tete provinces and attacked shops and medical posts near the border. In June 1976 CIO opened an anti-Frelimo radio station, *Voz da Africa Livre* (Voice of Free Africa), which broadcast from Gwelo, Fort Victoria, and Umtali.

The South African, Rhodesian, and Portuguese intelligence services had always kept very close contact, and it is clear that BOSS was fully informed about, and approved of, the CIO project. (Gordon Winter, the under-cover BOSS agent, in his book *Inside BOSS*, is wrong in saying that BOSS established the MNR, and that its first actions were carried out by South African commandos. He was, though, accurate in stating that "I was its number one propagandist right from the start." In 1976, articles by him about the MNR began to appear in the South African press. In 1977 he faked a picture supposedly of MNR men training "inside Mozambique").

The MNR did not take on a life of its own until the end of 1976 and the arrival of André Matzangaissa, who had joined *Frelimo* in 1972, becoming a platoon commander in the Gorongosa area. At the end of fighting in 1974, he was put in charge of Dondo, near Beira. In 1974-75 many *Frelimo* guerrillas felt they deserved compensation for the many years fighting in the bush, and that they had a right to take what they wanted. The *Frelimo* leadership cracked down hard, and sent many ex-guerrillas to reeducation centres. André, accused of stealing a Mercedes car, was sent with other ex-guerrillas to a camp at Saenze, near Gorongosa. He escaped in October 1976 and made his way to Rhodesia. By April 1977 CIO had made him head of the MNR. One of his first acts was to attack his old reeducation camp and free a number of other ex-guerrillas, who were promptly recruited to form the core of his army.

By 1979, CIO had an operations headquarters for the MNR in Baker Road in Umtali, and had established new camps at Inyanga and Chisumbanje (both close to the frontier). Supplies were airlifted into Mozambique. By mid-1979 the MNR was strong in Manica and northern Sofala provinces, and was able to attack and hold a few administrative posts. It frequently attacked the railway linking Malawi to Beira.

A temporary demise

On 11 September 1979 the Lancaster House talks opened. In October the Mozambican army began its assaults on the main MNR base on the top of the Gorongosa mountain. With no chance of holding the position, on 18 October Rhodesian helicopters lifted off the mountain all non-Mozambicans. On the same day, André led a diversionary attack on Gorongosa town, at the foot of the mountain. He was fatally wounded, and



died in a helicopter returning to Rhodesia. Gorongosa fell on 22 October.

When Lord Soames arrived in Salisbury, the Rhodesians were asked to stop supporting the MNR. (The delay in the withdrawal of Mozambican troops from Rhodesia was probably linked to this issue). On 18 February 1980, George Mitchell, the CIO's Mozambique section head, called a meeting with Cristina and others to say it was all over. *Voz da Africa Livre* stopped broadcasting on 20 February. Cristina and most of the remaining MNR men went to South Africa. (The alleged flight of 5,000 Muzorewa auxiliaries to South Africa probably included a sizeable number of MNR men). Remaining MNR fighters in northern Manica and Sofala provinces were told to make their way to the Sitatonga mountain, near the Chimanimini mountains in Zimbabwe. One of the last groups crossed the main Beira-Umtali road in May, destroying two turbines in the Mavuze dam.

By 1979 South Africa was airlifting supplies to the MNR to airstrips on white farms near Chipinga. Then South Africa established for the MNR a new base at Sitatonga. In June 1980, *Voz da Africa Livre* began broadcasting from northern Transvaal. (One recent report says that it now also transmits from Transkei).

On 30 June 1980 the Mozambican army captured the Sitatonga base, claiming 272 MNR men dead, 300 captured, and the appropriation of a large quantity of

South African arms. Leaderless and with only a few hundred men left inside Mozambique, the MNR was shattered. With no base and no supplies, the remaining groups dispersed and turned to uncoordinated banditry. They began to attack the main North-South road, and killed several people working on the census in the rural areas in August 1980. Afonso Dhlakama, André's successor, admitted that "when André died, the MNR was on the road to total destruction", and that Sitatonga was a "shameful defeat".

After André's death, three men emerged as candidates for the leadership: Orlando Macomo, Lucas M'lhanga, and Dhlakama. (The MNR sometimes spells his name "Jacama" in internal documents). Macomo was a well-known Maputo criminal released in 1974 in exchange for helping *Frelimo* clean up Maputo. In 1977 he moved to Rhodesia, but was killed at the end of 1979, probably to put him out of the running for the MNR leadership. The two others were former *Frelimo* soldiers. Dhlakama, like André, was thrown out of the army in the 1974 corruption purges. The Rhodesians backed M'lhanga. Cristina backed Dhlakama, had photographs of him published in the South African press as the new MNR commander.

The Rhodesians proposed to divide the MNR into two commands under Dhlakama and M'lhanga, but that was never accepted. The contest resulted in a shootout in June 1980 at the Chisumbanje base. Dhlakama won, and it remains unclear whether M'lhanga was killed or escaped. Some M'lhanga men, including the MNR political commissar and a radio operator, gave themselves up to the Mozambican army. In a report dated 9 November 1980, Dhlakama admitted that "many fighters died this year, including commanders and other heads, and others were maimed and crippled - all because of a 'power struggle'." Maputo claims that Dhlakama has now been made a full colonel in the South African Defence Force. Meanwhile, Domingos Arouca, a wealthy Mozambican exile in Lisbon, has claimed to be MNR president.

South Africa takes complete charge

Cristina then convinced DONS (BOSS) and South African Military Intelligence to take its support role more seriously. Dhlakama went to South Africa for consultations, and by October 1980 the MNR was ensconced in a base at Zoabostad in the Transvaal. A set of apparently genuine MNR documents found stuffed down a latrine when the Mozambican army captured an MNR base at Garagua on 7 December 1981, include reports and minutes of meetings between Dhlakama and the South Africans at Zoabostad in October and November 1980. One somewhat odd report quotes Dhlakama as saying, "you South Africans are like my parents", and that "everything depends on you". He also thanks them "for evacuating my wife from Zimbabwe to South Africa". In one minuted meeting, a "Colonel Charlie" says he will send specialists and instructors to teach the MNR how to use heavy weapons and carry out sabotage. Charlie adds: "The instructors who go to Mozambique will not only teach, but also participate in attacks". (Charlie has been identified as Col. Van Niekerk of South African Military Intelligence).

The still unidentified white man blown up last October trying to mine the Beira-Umtali railway was probably one such "instructor". In his pack was an unfinished novel he was writing about the war in Northern Ireland, and vocabulary lists translating English into Portuguese and Shona. This suggests he may have had a similar history to one of the South African commandos killed in the raid on Matola (a Maputo suburb) in January 1981: British army to Rhodesian SAS to South African Forces.

The minutes of the 9 November 1980 meeting quote Cristina suggesting that the MNR "destroy the power line transporting energy from Cabora Bassa to South Africa to mask the existence of South African support." (Cristina told Dhlakama that as South Africa gained only a little power from Cabora Bassa, it would do no harm. During the unusually cold winter of 1981, the lack of Cabora Bassa power resulted in electricity cuts in the Transvaal). But in a broadcast on 8 March this year, *Voz da Africa Livre* said "we do not refuse help from anyone, including the government of South Africa." In exchange for that help, it promised South Africa "a warmer winter" this year by not cutting the power line.

This more open acknowledgement of South African backing may be due to the failure to gain European support. The minutes of the South African meetings tell of Dhlakama's trip to Portugal, Germany, and France in November 1980. Dhlakama claims to have met with the "chief of security in Portugal" and with the vice-president of the *Social Democratic Party* (PSD). The latter would have been Pinto Balsemao, now prime minister, who visited Mozambique in June 1982. Despite promises of moral support, however, the notes make clear Dhlakama came away empty handed.

The handover of the MNR to South Africa obviously did not preclude links on MNR matters between Pretoria and Salisbury, nor the willingness of both to use the MNR for other purposes - as shown by the case of Amaro Silva, who was sentenced to death in June 1982. A well-paid Maputo secondary school teacher, he crossed to South Africa in 1978 and turned himself in to the police and was sent to police headquarters in Pretoria, which passed him to the MNR training camp in Bindura, Rhodesia. Eventually he became an MNR officer, and under CIO instructions assigned other Mozambicans to attempt (unsuccessfully) to bomb the Maputo house of Robert Mugabe. He returned to Mozambique and was arrested. In 1981 he escaped and went again to South Africa. This time the South Africans used him for the kidnapping of ANC member Joe Pillay from Swaziland. Next he was sent on an anti-Swapo mission to Namibia. Finally, he returned to Mozambique with the MNR, and was caught again.

"Rhodesian"-South African links continued through the MNR well after independence in Zimbabwe. On 29 October 1981 the rail and road bridges linking Beira to Umtali were sabotaged. The attacks were probably timed to coincide with the movement of four trainloads of arms for the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade of the Zimbabwe army then being trained in Umtali. (The Umtali CIO station chief had not changed

since the late 1970s. He left Zimbabwe shortly after the attacks).

The kidnapping of Pillay and the sabotage of the bridge were one-off events which have not been repeated, and there seem to be few South Africans inside Mozambique (although a South African army veteran was among those sentenced to death in Mozambique in June). The main South African involvement remains command, training, and supply.

In the October 1980 meetings, South African military intelligence promised to step up supplies, although it said that air drops were too expensive and some shipments would have to go by sea. Supplies have been landed on beaches north and south of Beira. But some air drops continued. In convicting a man in June 1982, the Mozambique Military Tribunal said that this year his MNR group in northern Inhambane had received night drops from South African Dakota aircraft, which provided uniforms, sacks of rice and sugar, crates of ammunition and weapons, including mines and mortars.

In addition to increasing ordinary supplies, South Africa is also providing more sophisticated weapons and communications equipment. Burlison's captors, for example, were in radio contact with a central base three times a day. And Mozambican officials allege that South African reconnaissance planes are flying inside Mozambique to locate Mozambican troops for the MNR.

By late 1981 the MNR had expanded substantially. It moved back into northern Manica and Sofala provinces, and opened a new front in northern Inhambane (as well as the semi-desert area of northern Gaza). A new base was established in an isolated hunting reserve in the northwest of Inhambane province. At the same time, however, the Mozambican army was sweeping through southern Manica, and captured the main MNR base at Garagua on 8 December. Many guerrillas pushed out of that base moved to Inhambane, and by March the MNR was moving throughout the province.

Increased South African backing brought with it a radically changed strategy. Rhodesia wanted the MNR primarily for intelligence, such as the location of ZANU bases. Only a secondary purpose was to attack economic targets. Thus the MNR under the Rhodesians made some effort to win over the population. They often distributed food and clothes brought from Rhodesia, which made the MNR quite popular in northern Sofala during the 1979 drought there. Indeed, the MNR was probably on the way to creating "semi-liberated" zones. Initially, after the hand-over by the CIO to the South Africans, the CIO remained most influential. In the minutes of a 9 November 1980 meeting in South Africa, Dhlakama complained: "we were oppressed by the Rhodesians . . . The English Rhodesians (sic) determined where to attack and where to recruit."

As the 1980 documents make clear, the South Africans also wanted to call the tune. But they wanted the MNR to attack transport links: railways, roads, and the oil pipeline. A prime overall objective is to disrupt the *Southern African Development Cooperation Conference* (SADCC), which was formed to reduce dependence on South Africa. It set transport as the priority. The two rail lines from Zimbabwe to Maputo and Beira are

Africa Livre

There has also been anti-Frelimo military activity in Zambezia province in the mountainous area bordering Malawi. Much less is known and reported about events here, but there have been attacks on tea estates, shops, and villages; the main road to the border town of Milange is considered unsafe. Mozambican authorities describe it as extended MNR activity. In fact most of this northern guerrilla action is the work of a separate group, *Africa Livre*.

In 1965 a group split from *Frelimo* in Dar-es-Salaam and formed *Coremo* (Revolutionary Mozambican Current). Its vice-president was Amos Sumane, a former member of the *Frelimo* central committee. In 1967, a new group, the *African National Union of Rombezia*, was established under the leadership of Sumane. It called for an independent state in the northern half of Mozambique — from the Rovuma River to the Zambezi River (hence, Rombezia). The movement was created by PIDE and Jorge Jardim. As President Banda's representative in Mozambique, Jardim envisaged Rombezia eventually being merged into a greater Malawi.

Nothing was heard of it, however, until just after independence. By then it had been transformed into *Africa Livre* (still headed by Sumane), and had begun attacks in Milange district from bases in Malawi. Some *Africa Livre* men are thought to have been trained at the MNR base at Bindura, near Salisbury. Otherwise there were no apparent links with MNR.

Africa Livre was partly broken in late 1980 when its main base and some of its top leaders were captured. In June this year, Samora Machel said that Sumane himself is being held. Another founder, the nurse, Matias Tenda, who left *Frelimo* in 1967 to join *Coremo*, was sentenced to death in June 1982. Other leaders were executed in February 1981, including Capt. Waquiri (Vasco da Silva) who headed one of the bases; Antonio Araujo, head of recruitment in Mozambique; and Myriasse Mpasso, who led attacks on administrative posts.

The movement has some local support, and has recently attracted a number of *Frelimo* defectors, including Joaquim Veleia, former Gurue district political commissar for *Frelimo* and later a member of the district council. In 1979 he joined *Africa Livre*, and was immediately made Gurue district head, where he used his prestige to recruit other members. Veleia was sentenced to death last month. One of those executed in 1981 was a local farmer who was in contact with the group's leaders in Malawi and used his tractor to take supplies to bases in Mozambique. Others given prison sentences in 1981 include a Mozambican army defector and a woman who infiltrated the *Mozambican Women's Organisation* to recruit women to supply food to *Africa Livre*.

Africa Livre was given a temporary blow by an apparent agreement last year between President Banda and Samora Machel under which Banda agreed to stop supporting *Africa Livre*. The agreement had broken down by the end of the year — if it was ever put into effect. *Africa Livre* has since stepped up its activity, spreading recently into southern Niassa province. It is not clear if it retains its independent leadership, or if after the capture of Sumane and other top figures it has now been taken over by South Africa and merged with the MNR.

crucial to reducing this dependence. Hence they have come in for the heaviest MNR attacks. The other broad change in tactics has been the complete jettisoning of attempts to win popular support and create "liberated" zones. The MNR's prime objective now appears the terrorising of the population. Passenger trains and buses have been attacked. In addition to the tradition of cutting the ears off *Frelimo* supporters, the MNR also now cuts off lips and breasts.

The MNR seems intent to drive peasants out of the countryside into the towns if necessary, presumably to stymie the harvest and cause food shortages. (Reports from Gorongosa confirm reports that the MNR is now harassing people out of their homes). And in Inhambane, it is killing people and stuffing the bodies into wells to

poison what little water there is in that particularly dry area. Perhaps equally important, as we note below, the MNR has moved into areas where it has no tribal base, and thus cannot recruit effectively.

Mozambican authorities still dismiss the MNR as "armed bandits", but it is clearly much more than that. All the fighters are Mozambicans, and some peasants feed and at least tacitly support them. There has been a steady stream of disaffected people switching to the MNR. The first group was obvious: PIDEs, GEs, commandos, etc. who had consistently opposed *Frelimo*. The second set, such as commanders André and Dhlakama, were guerrillas, soldiers, policemen and the like who could not accept the rigid *Frelimo* morality or the lack of rewards after the war. A third set of people are those who tried unsuccessfully to rise in the *Frelimo* hierarchy. Notably in Inhambane a number of candidates defeated in local elections in 1978 have since joined the MNR. Attacks on reeducation camps were a

favourite way for the MNR to recruit those dissatisfied with *Frelimo*.

Recruiting tactics for ordinary soldiers are relatively simple: young men (and sometimes women) are kidnapped from buses or villages. In the army newspaper, *Combat*, one young man told how during a 250 km recruiting trip 500 people were collected this way. As Burlison reported, those caught escaping are shot. After basic training, each new "recruit" is sent out with a more experienced fighter and forced to shoot a villager. Then he is told that because of the killing, he will be executed by *Frelimo* if he is caught. So he becomes part of the group. But it also seems clear that the excitement and promises of money, compared to the dull, poor life in the countryside, is enough to make many quite happy to stay with the MNR.

In the following issue we will examine the response of *Frelimo* to the MNR campaign.

Angola: Political discord

Recent political developments strongly suggest an intensification of the struggle between "Africanist" nationalists and pro-Soviet Marxists. The following points are noted:-

1) Henrique ("Iko") Carreira (a *mestico*) has returned to Angola with the rank of general after three years in Moscow, where he completed a training course for generals under the aegis of the Soviet Military Academy. In the late 1970s Iko (then minister of defence and Politburo member) was mentioned in a case involving, among other matters, dollars from Nigeria and diamonds. A Portuguese government official, Victor Manuel dos Santos Soares, was charged in 1978 with corruption and misappropriation of funds. In his trial he said that he acted on Iko's orders, and that Iko had used at least some of the funds in question. Dos Santos Soares was sentenced to eight or more years in jail. Iko was not charged. However his removal from the defence ministry in December 1979, and the central committee decision (AC Vol 21 No 4) to send him "abroad" for military training, made it clear that the MPLA wanted him out of the limelight for a while. Dos Santos Soares remains in jail. We understand that at least until recently he was willing to restate this evidence implicating Iko.

The above saga was seen at the time in the context of the late president Agostinho Neto's anti-corruption drive, and the weakening of the largely white/*mestico* pro-Soviet strand of the MPLA (AC Vol 20 No 2 and No 20). Iko's return to Luanda is significant because a) he has been appointed general - the first such senior rank in the Angolan army (FAPLA) - thus making him *de facto* FAPLA's military chief b) he is highly likely to be reappointed minister of defence (he may also in due course be appointed to fill one of the three new posts of vice-president), and c) his exalted return has not eradicated the events of the late 1970s. He is thus vulnerable, above all if the numerically overwhelmingly dominant anti-Soviet, nationalist groups, including the majority of FAPLA officers, effectively organise themselves. The fact that Iko's supporters now apparently

discount such possible moves by the nationalists suggest that either the pro-Soviet Marxist faction is unrealistically confident of its own supremacy, or that the Soviets directly engineered Iko's return.

2) Two weeks ago the MPLA secretary for production, Manuel Pedro Pacavira was dismissed, allegedly for misdemeanours during his previous post as minister of agriculture. Pacavira, who falls into the nationalist faction, was best known as secretary for information and propaganda, a politically important post which he held until 1980, when he was replaced by a diehard pro-Soviet black politburo member, Ambrosio Lukoki. Prominent members of the Catete Group (AC Vol 20 No 20) are also now threatened with being pushed aside. Several senior officials, including ministers, deputy ministers and provincial party potentates, have been sacked during the past three months.

Conventional analysis has for some time placed MPLA secretary-general Lucio Lara as leader of the pro-Soviet Marxists, and in a less clear-cut way, President Eduardo dos Santos as leader of the nationalists. But Dos Santos never had the authority of Neto, who was anyhow more forcibly nationalist, and Lara, appreciating the extent of nationalist support in Angola, now more often keeps on good terms with leading black nationalists.

In this indeterminate political atmosphere there has been a marked rise of the opportunist, and usually simple-minded pro-Soviet, "Marxist" bureaucrat. Notable among them is Lukoki, who has now placed similarly pro-Soviet people in key positions in the media: in February José Abrantes became director-general of ANGOP, and José Luis Cardoso director-general of *O Jornal de Angola*. Another notable is Politburo member Evaristo Domingos ("Kimba"), minister of provincial coordination and peoples' commissar (governor) of Luanda province. Kimba's career has not been smooth. In July 1979 he was removed as governor of Cabinda province and made governor of the less important Kwanza Norte province.