

## The aim is to 'destroy the image of socialism'

In an interview with Julie Frederikse, author Joseph Hanlon discusses the views on the failure of Nkomati, the West's agenda for Mozambique and how SA and Western powers seek to destroy the image of socialism in Mozambique.

**Frederikse:** *Has the Nkomati Accord worked?*

**Hanlon:** No, it's been a total failure. South Africa has totally ignored the Nkomati Accord. It is clear that supplies to the MNR are still coming from South Africa; that there's still radio communication with South Africa and that arms and equipment are still being flown in from South Africa.

**Frederikse:** *Why hasn't the Accord worked?*

**Hanlon:** I'm still not sure. I think there are really two possibilities. One is that you can say that the

South Africans were totally cynical; that they went into the Accord saying that — the Americans are putting pressure on us and we have to be seen to be doing something, and so long as we keep the thing under control until the US elections, then we'll be free to do anything and the Reagan government will support us and we'll be fine — I think that's possible, and I wouldn't ever deny that. But I think it's more likely that Nkomati was a compromise for the South Africans themselves.

The other factor is that if the South African military were to abandon support of the MNR, what would happen to the other puppet groups that they support — UNITA in Angola, the LLA in Lesotho and the dissidents in

Zimbabwe? These groups would turn around to the South African military and say you just abandoned the MNR in Mozambique, when are you going to abandon us?

So, obviously the military would be a bit reluctant to abandon the MNR and would want to be assured of some gains from abandoning the MNR.

I think there is really sharp division now because I think a lot of people internationally feel they have extracted enough concessions from Mozambique. But I think there are other elements that feel that there are still further concessions to be extracted from Mozambique. So there is genuine division in South Africa, probably in the United States, definitely in Portugal, about whether to continue to push Frelimo. You're always working with carrot and stick, and the question is when do you switch to less stick and more carrot?

**Frederikse:** *What is the US agenda in Mozambique?*

**Hanlon:** The US says, alright, we want free and fair elections, and if you look at what that meant in Nicaragua, it means the US is

allowed to back the opposition party. So, the MNR is first used as a Trojan Horse to bring in an entirely different opposition, and then the US gives support to build up that opposition.

You can see what the US is doing in some other things, for example, they are restricting their aid only to larger private farmers, so that there may be an attempt to create a set of constituencies that would oppose Frelimo, and then they will move in and say Mozambique must have elections in which the US is allowed to support the opposition.

**Frederikse:** *What concessions are being extracted by the IMF from Mozambique?*

**Hanlon:** Obviously the IMF is going to force Mozambique to cut its budget and to cut its expenditures.

The government is already talking about cutting food subsidies, about dismissing state workers, and reducing the size of the bureaucracy. But I think the biggest attack will obviously be on health and education because Mozambique spends perhaps a larger part of the budget on health and education, and the IMF will come in and say this is excessive.

But this is a very political thing to do because health and education in the rural areas are treated as the victories of independence.

Mass health, mass education are what the people gained from the revolution and so if the IMF forces Frelimo to cut back on health and education, it will basically take back the last thing the people feel they gained from Frelimo.

So, I think this is partly linked to creating opposition. Frelimo's credibility is reduced while at the same time an opposition is created.

**Frederikse:** *How do you think the west feels or responds to the fact that the concessions being extracted will upset the Mozambican people and impair Frelimo's image?*

**Hanlon:** The success of South Africa's destabilization and US support for destabilization has been to destroy the image of socialism; to show that independence in Mozambique has brought hardship, war and so what the west has done, through destabilization, has been to destroy the image of socialism. I think that's the goal. I talked to a friend who had been in Nicaragua, who met a priest who had been in Chile, who said the US government made a mistake in Chile. They overthrew Allende too quickly, so the people still believed in socialism. In Nicaragua they're trying to destroy the image of socialism first, before they overthrow the government. I think this is what's happening in Mozambique — first they have to destroy the image of socialism. □