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# MOZAMBIQUE

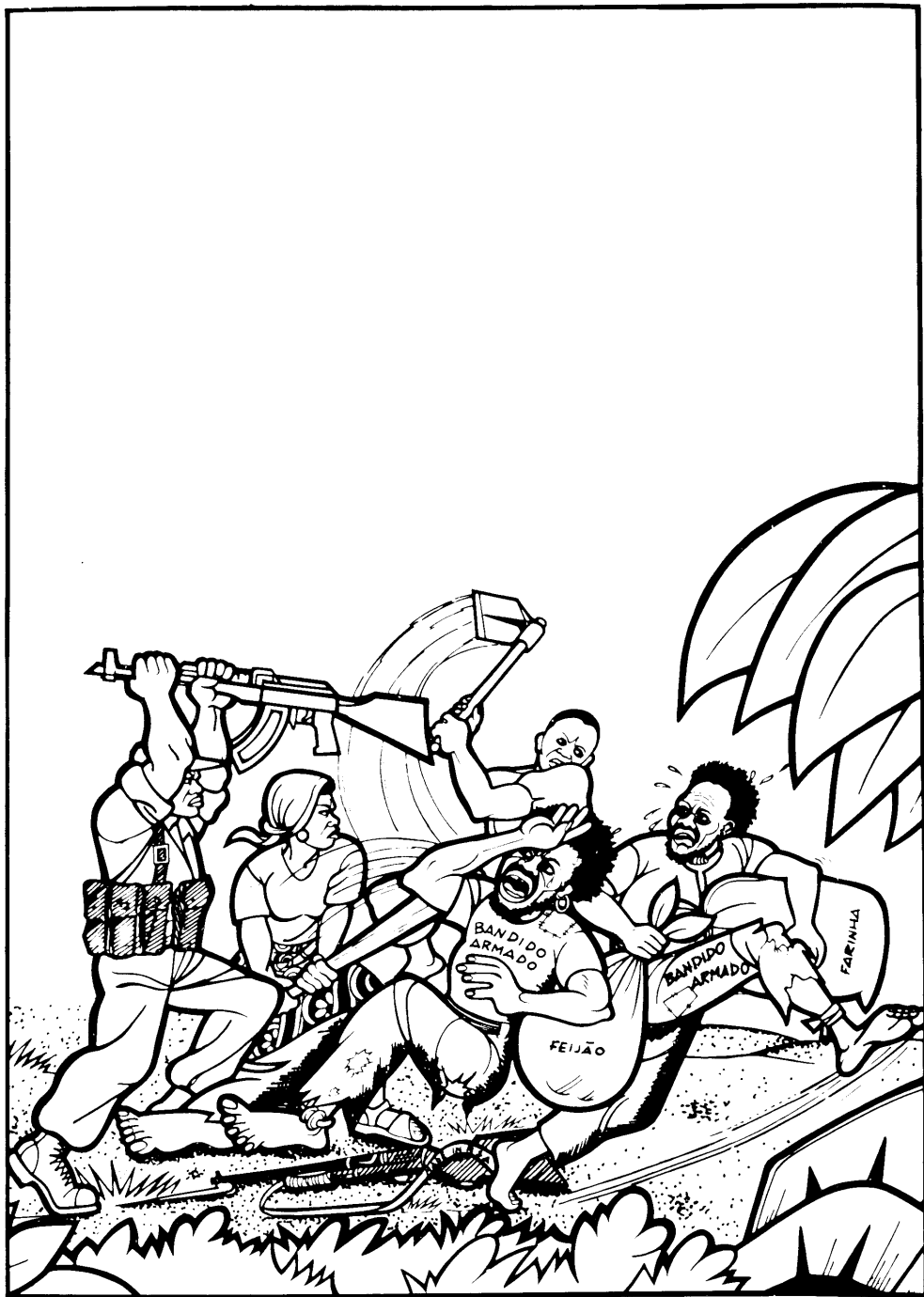
BRIEFING



THE ROOTS OF  
ARMED BANDITRY

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# THE ROOTS OF ARMED BANDITRY

## I. INTRODUCTION

The massacre at the small town of Homoine in Mozambique's Inhambane province on 18 July 1987, where more than 420 civilian lives were taken in a terrorist action of relentless cruelty, is an extreme example of a phenomenon that has scarred the face of Mozambique through much of this decade.

This **Mozambique Briefing** looks behind the tragedy of Homoine to indicate at least some of the roots of the South African policy that foments what has become known in Mozambique as armed banditry.

The surprise attack at dawn on the market town of Homoine was the bloodiest incident so far recorded in seven years of South Africa's undeclared war against Mozambique. A large and heavily armed group of the self-styled "Mozambique National Resistance" stormed into the town, looting shops and homes and killing indiscriminately. Most of the victims died of gunshot wounds, often at point blank range. In one of the most repugnant scenes imaginable, the bandits burst into the small local hospital and using knives or bayonets as well as firearms they systematically murdered the patients as they lay in their beds - the victims included pregnant women in the maternity ward and new born babies.

The attackers were more than usually well equipped with weaponry and ammunition, after a series of parachute drops of supplies in Inhambane province in May. The parachutes in question (some of which fell into a lake and were recovered by Mozambican divers) are of military pattern and measure 29 metres. Their loads consisted mainly of ammunition for light weapons, and 60mm and 81 mm mortars. The upsurge of South African

attacks on southern Mozambique follows a successful Mozambican Armed Forces operation in the centre of the country against a South African plan of cutting the country in two along the line of the river Zambesi. This strategy and the accompanying violence are woven into a long history of colonial and racist aggression against the interests and aspirations of the Mozambican people, and of the other peoples of southern Africa.

## II. THE END OF RACIST HEGEMONY

### II.1. "White Africa" collapses

At the beginning of the 1960s much of Africa in the northern, central, western and eastern areas, was either independent or becoming so under a process of decolonization by such European powers as Britain and France. Belgium's reluctant and belated adoption of the same strategy was to leave a heritage of violence and upheaval in the mineral-rich former Belgian Congo. Southern Africa, where settler colonialism was powerfully entrenched, was different. In South Africa under the apartheid regime the Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960, in Mozambique the massacre carried out at Mueda on 16 June 1960 by the fascist colonial Portuguese administration, in Angola mass slaughters by the Portuguese colonialists in March 1961, and in minority-ruled Rhodesia the banning of nationalist organizations were just some of the indications of intransigence and extremism of the white regimes in the face of what even a British Prime Minister had called the "wind of change".

The aim of the triple alliance of minority white power in South Africa and Rhodesia and Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique was to retain a swathe of territory where racist and repressive regimes could continue to operate, and where the natural head would be the Republic of South Africa, with its relatively flourishing economy based on exploitation of cheap indigenous and migrant labour, military power and a substantial white community. The backbone would be the Central African Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. The flanks would be the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

This plan was founded on a misunderstanding of the readiness and determination of the African peoples to reject colonialist schemes, and to resist and overthrow oppression. Britain's Federation collapsed: Northern Rhodesia achieved independence as Zambia; Nyasaland became the independent Malawi. Through prolonged armed struggle Mozambique and Angola threw off the Portuguese yoke (and in the process broke fascist control

in Portugal) and in 1975 became independent People's Republics, pledging to sustain the cause of liberation until the whole continent of Africa was free.

The balance of forces was changed in southern Africa. The racist dream of maintaining white domination of the region was fast fading. The policy-makers in Pretoria and Salisbury were faced on their very frontiers with peoples who had won their freedom, and through a political and military process that was to serve as inspiration for those of the region's peoples who were still enduring oppression.

Mozambique's independence was a particular threat and embarrassment to the Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia which had already clung for ten years to a spurious and illegal independence bolstered by support from South Africa and Portugal. Independent Mozambique could and would provide a rear base for Zimbabwean freedom fighters. Mozambique's ports of Beira and Maputo that had traditionally served the economy of land-locked Rhodesia would now be closed as Mozambique (at great cost) implemented internationally decreed sanctions against the illegal settler regime. The political example of the revolutionary process led by FRELIMO was in glaring contradiction with the reactionary ideology practised by Smith and his cronies.

Fear and hatred of independent Mozambique, a desperate search for survival against all the trends of history, a last hope of retaining white minority privilege, all led the Rhodesia regime into a policy of warmongering and aggression against their new neighbour. The Republic of South Africa evinced a more complex response to the new situation on its borders. Afrikanerdom examined two lines of action in regard to its internal policy of apartheid and the regional context. One line led by the then Prime Minister, John Vorster, with the collaboration of the Bureau of State Security under General Hendrick van den Bergh, and some of South Africa's diplomats, favoured coexistence with the emerging states of the region (albeit with subtle control exercised through economic pressure and concealed subversion). Another line, to which military personnel were strongly committed, was argued by the then Defence Minister, P.W. Botha, and the head of the armed forces, General Magnus Malan, and involved direct military intervention against Angola and against Mozambique. The hope appeared to be that of

overthrowing the people's governments, in order to establish compliant regimes and to recreate buffer states on the flanks of beleaguered white power.

Before looking at these aspects in greater detail, it is worth making special reference to the anomalous situation of Malawi, independent but intimately involved in the global strategy of the racist regimes. Even during Mozambique's national liberation struggle, the Malawian Government had shown its sympathies with the Portuguese colonial administration and its hostility to the unified independence movement in Mozambique.

In this context the name of the entrepreneur Jorge Pereira Jardim looms large as the key figure in Portugal's neocolonialist manoeuvres. Jardim was born in Lisbon where he went to school and later qualified in agronomy. He was one of the leaders of Mocidade Portuguesa, a fascist youth organization, and a Secretary of State in the Salazar Government in the 1950s. Later he moved to Mozambique and lived in Beira, working for such major Portuguese capitalists as Krus Abecassis, Manuel Bulhosa and Antonio Champallimaud, with whom he was to have disagreements at various times without reaching a complete break. His constant loyalty was to the dictator Salazar, whose godson he was and whom he served on missions demanding the highest secrecy and discretion.

One such mission at the end of the 1950s took him to Goa where he worked with a Portuguese security agent, Casimiro Monteiro. The two became friends and the latter was also to move to Mozambique. After FRELIMO's foundation in 1962, Jardim, in coordination with the Portuguese political police and military intelligence, worked on schemes to impede progress in the armed struggle that was launched in 1964. He was one of the creators of the special forces formed by the Portuguese colonialists and including African troops recruited to fight against the liberation struggle. Over the years Jardim surrounded himself with such henchmen as Orlando Cristina, Alvaro Récio, Miguel Murrupa, Carlos Ribeiro and Evo Fernandes.

For these purposes, Jardim, who had won the confidence of Malawi's President Banda (and was appointed Malawi's consul-general in Beira), used Malawi as a springboard for action against FRELIMO. He was also engaged in schemes at regional level and offered support to the former

Tanzanian politician, Oscar Kambona, who had fallen out with Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere. In the course of contacts with Mark Chona, a personal assistant to Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda, he tried to prevent the Zambian leader from supporting the FRELIMO cause.

Jardim left Mozambique even before independence and lived variously in London, Lisbon, Blantyre and Gabon's capital Libreville, where he was a banker and where he died in December 1982. He had links with the organization "Africa Livre" and though far from the Rhodesian scene had some contacts with the group that formed the armed bandits against Mozambique. His close collaborators were to be found in the organization of terrorism against Mozambique and in all the anti-Mozambican plots hatched in Smith's Rhodesia and in apartheid South Africa.

Malawi's interest in the early days lay in a spurious claim to Mozambique's Zambezia and Nampula provinces, hence the establishment of a pseudo-movement purporting to "liberate Rumbezia", a strip of Mozambique lying between the Rovuma (or Ruvuma) and Zambesi rivers.

The roots of armed banditry in Mozambique lie in the history of colonial occupation, and the historical process that saw colonialism and racism in opposition to the legitimate aspirations of the southern African peoples to determine their own destiny.

## II.2. The illegal regime in Rhodesia

Ian Smith's illegal regime began direct intervention in the war in Mozambique in 1972, with an agreement with the Portuguese colonial army to take operational responsibility for some areas of Tete province, and in particular the border area with Rhodesia. FRELIMO guerrillas had been operating in Tete for several years and the Rhodesians were deeply concerned at this development of the armed struggle for its possible impact on the security situation within Rhodesia, particularly when the FRELIMO guerrillas crossed the Zambesi river and began moving towards the Rhodesian border where a corridor might be opened to allow passage for Zimbabwean nationalists. The Rhodesian army negotiated with the



Portuguese military for areas of operation to the south of the Zambesi and in the western part of Tete province.

Simultaneously the head of Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), Ken Flower, who had earlier served in British colonial operations against Mau Mau in Kenya, was canvassing a proposal to the Portuguese dictatorship, now under Marcelo Caetano, for the establishment of a clandestine pseudo-nationalist movement comprising black Mozambicans that would provide Rhodesia with information on Zimbabwean nationalists and hamper their advance. The plan was to form a spurious "resistance" movement in Mozambique along the lines of the Flechas (Arrows) that Portugal's security directorate had created in Angola. Portugal's approval was hesitant and conditional, and Flower did not secure complete agreement until April 1974, on the verge of the military coup in Portugal that was to bring the fall of Portuguese fascism.

The authorities with whom Flower and his Prime Minister, Ian Smith, had been negotiating for more than two years, were no longer in power, but the Rhodesian scheme went ahead and received a boost when a nucleus of Mozambican collaborators with Portuguese colonialism and some of their Portuguese mentors fled from Mozambique to Rhodesia. They included the "Flechas" who had been in the initial stages of training in Mozambique, Portuguese security police and special forces, a handful of FRELIMO deserters and some diehard settlers from Manica province and from the city of Beira.

The CIO saw in this motley crew a useful addition to its puppet movement of "dissidents". The whites and Asians were assigned to the tasks of information, propaganda and psychological warfare. Blacks and some mulattoes were recruited into a military force that began training at Odzi camp, near Umtali (now Mutare), under a CIO command with three Rhodesian instructors. Later on new training centres were established at Bindura and in Salisbury.

The initial task of this Rhodesia-sponsored group was reconnaissance on the movement of Zimbabwean nationalists, and eventually sabotage within Mozambique and destruction of FRELIMO bases. Rhodesia's prime interest was still in combating the Zimbabwean struggle and in dissuading the new

government in Mozambique from supporting that struggle or imposing economic sanctions against Smith.

Alongside the military preparations came a propaganda or psychological warfare campaign designed to provide a cover for the Smith regime's manoeuvres; in July 1976 the Rhodesians opened a broadcasting station under the name "Voz da Africa Livre" (Voice of Free Africa), allegedly operating within Mozambique but in fact broadcasting from Gwelo (now Gweru) in Rhodesia.

The Rhodesian station broadcast propaganda against Mozambique and in favour of the bandit movement and the illegal regime of Ian Smith. In Mozambique the station was quickly nicknamed "A Voz da Quizumba" (Voice of the Hyena) and was heard with derision. The propaganda output was in the hands of the Portuguese and Asians recruited by the CIO, and Orlando Cristina found a niche at the radio station and began to extend his contacts in Rhodesian and South African military circles. Much later at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 the station was transferred to South Africa, where it broadcast on SABC channels until it went off the air at the time of the signing of the Nkomati Agreement in March 1984.

Cristina is another of the recurring names in the shabby tale of creating in Mozambique a pseudo-opposition to FRELIMO. Cristina had been one of Jardim's agents in the 1960s and early 1970s, and had worked in Portuguese military intelligence. He operated against FRELIMO in Tanzania, in collaboration with a black American, Leo Clinton Aldridge, who under the alias of Leo Milas and purporting to be a Mozambican had infiltrated FRELIMO in 1962 (being expelled in August 1964). Cristina also helped create and train the Portuguese special forces in colonial Mozambique.

After the anti-fascist coup in Portugal of 25 April 1974, he fled to Malawi where at Jardim's request he was briefly arrested, as Cristina had, according to Malawian accounts, stolen the files of the Malawian consulate in Beira to sell them to a French magazine. Later Cristina and Jardim patched up their disagreement and Cristina on his release moved to Rhodesia where he was contracted for the anti-Mozambican propaganda campaign. He worked for the Gwelo radio station and was involved in the establishment of the armed bandits, and later was passed on to South African military intelligence when the

latter took control of the operation at Zimbabwean independence. He lived at the Cullinan reception centre and Walmerstad base near Pretoria, where he was murdered in April 1983 in an internal dispute within the bandit command.

In addition to the CIO clandestine and propaganda operations, the Rhodesian army was also collecting up the dregs of Portuguese colonialism. The Selous Scouts recruited Portuguese and Mozambican collaborators who fled from Mozambique, including former soldiers and policemen. The Scouts under Rhodesian or white mercenary command carried out special operations in the anti-nationalist war and were responsible for many atrocities in Rhodesia. The CIO were also looking to swell their embryo dissident force. One of their early recruits was Andre Matade Matsangaissa who crossed into Rhodesia in 1976, after escaping from detention in the re-education camp at Sacuze in Sofala province. Matsangaissa had been in the ranks of FRELIMO's guerrilla forces from 1972 to 1974, and after independence in June 1975 was posted in the quartermaster's stores at Dondo, near Beira. He was charged before a military court for the theft of a Mercedes Benz car and sent to Sacuze. Matsangaissa, on his arrival in Rhodesia, was sent to the Odzi camp mentioned above, and was chosen by the Rhodesians as nominal leader of the bandits as the body was gradually formalized.

Matsangaissa was to return to Mozambique in the following year to take part in an attack on the lightly garrisoned Sacuze camp, on 10 April 1977, when the five police guards were killed, and some fifty prisoners were kidnapped and taken to Rhodesia where most of them joined the recruits at the Odzi camp. Another delinquent at Odzi was Afonso Dhlakama who had arrived there after running away from Beira where he was being held for theft and embezzlement of military property. About this time when the Portuguese element sensed some advantage could be drawn from capitalizing on the force being created by the CIO, it was dubbed the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), or later on Renamo, a formulation that came into use in the western media after Cristina's death in 1983. Neither designation became current within Mozambique where armed banditry was seen as a more fitting description for criminals and the like who

perpetrated nothing but the grossest of atrocities and had not even a veneer of political ideology.

By 1978 the CIO, to simplify their logistics, had established their surrogates, still numbering only a few hundred in all, at a base in a heavily wooded area on the heights of the Gorongosa mountain close to a well-known game reserve but otherwise remote from human habitation and communications. Matsangaissa was in nominal command but the real bosses were Rhodesian military personnel who continued training and directed operations. On the civilian side the Rhodesians in 1979 appointed a Portuguese lawyer of Goanese parentage, Evo Fernandes, another former underling of Jardim, to mount a public relations exercise in Lisbon in favour of the bandits. Lisbon was to provide the base for showmanship, with the tacit compliance of the Portuguese authorities, who allowed the agents first of Rhodesia and later of the apartheid regime in South Africa to operate unhindered.

On the ground the terrorist attacks were on a restricted scale but now being directed against the rural populations of Manica and Sofala provinces. But in October 1979, in an abortive attack on a military target, a Mozambican army unit at Vila de Gorongosa, Matsangaissa was killed along with a score of his men. According to CIO informants, Dhlakama, a wanted criminal, was flown by Rhodesian helicopter from Odzi to take over at Gorongosa, although even the Rhodesian instructors had little regard for his leadership qualities. Documents captured in December 1981 at a bandit base at Garagua indicate that it had been Cristina along with South African military intelligence, already keenly interested in the Rhodesian project, who picked on Dhlakama as the military front-man (and he was certainly to prove amenable to South African instructions).

The appointment of Dhlakama generated bitter squabbles and rivalries within the bandit clique at their bridgehead within Mozambique and among the various exile factions, marked by murders and executions among the bandits themselves. The CIO's direct interest in its protégé was, however, short-lived as by the end of 1979 agreement had been reached at talks at Lancaster House in London for a programme leading to the independence of Zimbabwe in early 1980. South Africa (where power had shifted in the "Muldergate" information scandal from

Vorster and van den Bergh to the tandem of P.W. Botha and Malan) was already involved with the bandits through its Military Intelligence Directorate (led by General Pieter van der Westhuizen), and took over the armed bandits lock stock and barrel in March 1980 on the threshold of Zimbabwe's independence under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's Zanu government.

### II.3. Contradictions within the Pretoria regime

The apartheid regime in South Africa was to prove a much more formidable enemy to the People's Republic of Mozambique and to the Mozambican people than was the small-scale spoiling operation conducted by Ian Smith's hirelings in the CIO. Angola had been the main target in the late 1970s, when Botha and Malan had pushed through the invasion of Angola before the due independence date of 11 November 1975. The invasion had been repulsed by March 1976 in a joint Angolan and Cuban defensive operation, while Vorster was still hoping to use a regional policy of detente to give him elbow room to sustain internal repression in South Africa.

The divergences within the apartheid regime are well documented and became public knowledge through such disclosures as those of the former information secretary, Eschel Rhoodie, in the wake of the "Muldergate" information scandal. Rather than rehearse all the details it is worth noting here that Vorster was apparently kept in the dark as to the lines of policy being pursued by key military commanders and even by some Ministers within his own government. Rhoodie's argument is that Botha, Malan and the generals found Vorster too cautious and vacillating and simply went ahead with their destabilization tactics without his knowledge and consent.

South Africa's aggression against Mozambique was initially less dramatic than the invasion of Angola but it began at about the same time and in the long run was to be just as damaging to a country with a fragile economic base, whose difficulties were compounded by long periods of severe drought and resultant famine. It is arguable that the very failure of South Africa's full-scale invasions of Angola made it more imperative that the attacks on Mozambique should take a more disguised form.

As early as 1975 South Africa was preparing special commando groups for economic sabotage and urban terrorism against Mozambique. Such groups incorporated former Portuguese soldiers and Mozambican collaborators who would act as interpreters and guides. These devices were backed by a propaganda campaign that drew on the services of Portuguese journalists who had fled from Mozambique where they had cooperated with the political police and military intelligence of Portuguese colonialism. They included associates of Jardim such as Ricardo Saavedra and José da Silva Ramalho. The apartheid military intelligence, in order to mask its activities, also established a series of commercial and services companies, nominally under the ownership of former Portuguese businessmen from Angola and Mozambique but with South African military advisers in the background - for the purposes of operations that could be officially disclaimed and "denied". The companies were active in import and export, air and ground transport, travel, tourism, safaris and catering, all potentially useful for supporting armed banditry and destabilization without allowing the hand of the South African Defence Forces to be too conspicuous.

Here again we find a Jardim associate: Alvaro Récio, who was one of the many Portuguese who left Mozambique at the prospect of independence and moved to South Africa where minority white rule would shelter them. Récio, born and bred in Mozambique, was the son of a journalist known for his monarchist and fascist opinions. Immediately after the April 1974 coup in Portugal, Récio was identified with one of the mushroom political parties associated with the Champallimaud group, but broke with it publicly, and possibly on instructions from Jardim. Jardim's strategy in the post-coup period was part of the line of thinking of the Portuguese President Antonio Spínola (which aimed at provoking settler backlash risings in Angola and Mozambique at the end of September 1974, with a complementary rightist action in Portugal). The Mozambican part of the plan was forestalled by an even more reactionary settler group who rose in the then Lourenço Marques and attacked the radio station on 7 September just as FRELIMO and the Portuguese Government were meeting in Lusaka to sign an agreement leading to a handover of power to FRELIMO.

On the eve of this rising, its leaders had invited Récio to a meeting at a downtown hotel to ask for Jardim's support and Récio had unsuccessfully tried to dissuade them from moving on the argument that "more serious events" were in the offing. Récio went to South Africa and began working with the Directorate of Military Intelligence, but later with intelligence subsidies moved very profitably into the meat trade. The South Africans, as well as ensuring the logistics of the destabilization operation and undeclared war, expanded certain military bases (Phalaborwa and Hoedspruit) along their common border with Mozambique.

The militarization of South Africa increased exponentially after P.W. Botha, who had been Defence Minister for twelve years, became Prime Minister in September 1978 (and later President). Illegal immigrants from Mozambique were channelled to Phalaborwa, where they were trained in the specialities of reconnaissance, sabotage, communications, and parachuting. The bulk of the bandit force transited through Phalaborwa when it was transferred from Rhodesia in 1980, to be established in a new base on the banks of the Lutabo river close to the Kruger National Park. To Mozambique, whose armed forces had taken the Gorongosa base in October 1979 and were to capture the Sitatonga base in June 1980 shortly after Zimbabwean independence, it appeared that the advent of Zimbabwe would usher in a period of peace.

### **III. DESTABILIZATION: APARTHEID'S REGIONAL POLICY**

#### **III.1. The 1980s: New phase of destabilization**

Contingency plans had been made in Pretoria and Salisbury for the event of a collapse of "white Rhodesia". South Africa would harbour the most compromised units of Smith's repression and brutality, to protect them from possible Zimbabwean reprisals and to serve as an instrument of South Africa's own policy.

When the pre-independence elections held in Rhodesia under the Lancaster House arrangements showed that Zimbabwe was about to become independent under a government sympathetic to neighbouring Mozambique, it was time for the officials of the passing era to put their contingency plans into effect. Rhodesian security officials had offered the armed bandits three options: to be dumped in the Mozambican bush, to be disbanded and left to their own resources, or to be handed over to direct South African tutelage of the operation. According to the CIO's Ken Flower, the bandits and their Portuguese mentors requested the handover to the South Africans. The latter, who already had some of their intelligence officers in liaison with the bandits, readily accepted the takeover and in collaboration with Rhodesian security transferred the personnel and equipment, some to the Cullinan centre near Pretoria, and others to the eastern Transvaal.

The change of control signified a huge expansion in the financial and material allocation to the armed bandits, and a growth in the rate of recruitment. Illegal immigrants working on South African farms in the border areas were vulnerable to the pressures of forcible recruitment and the offer of what looked like high wages. The more apt recruits were sent to the commando centre in Durban, where South Africa had for several years been training special reconnaissance units of Angolans, Mozambicans, Zambians and Zimbabweans and mercenaries for sabotage operations, mounted from land or sea.

South Africa's destabilization operations targeted all the independent countries of the region. These operations



were under the overall command of General van der Westhuizen, of military intelligence, whose subordinates included Brigadier van Tonder and Colonel Charles van Niekerk, the officers who for several years directed bandit operations and acted as liaison between the bandits and the South African military leadership. The propaganda projection of the bandits as a Mozambican "opposition" was also stepped up with South African sponsored visits to western Europe by spokespersons of the "resistance", and with a particular effort to win the political sympathy of right-wing circles within Portugal, France, Federal Germany and the United States.

The Pretoria regime was playing for high stakes: its survival within South Africa and its role in the southern African region. Botha's formulation was that of a "constellation of states", where South Africa would be master of the region's economic fortunes based on capitalist principles and opposing the spread of socialism. The creation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) on 1 April 1980 had shown the preference of the independent states in the region for an entirely different approach. These states in an association based on common and mutually reinforcing interests would build machinery for cooperation in their social and economic development and would pursue Africa's liberation from dependence - on South Africa or any other power. Singly the nine member states - Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe - were vulnerable, but as a group they could bring together significant resources and they represented a worthwhile economic force and potential trading partner, especially as South Africa was increasingly isolated by the world's abhorrence of the apartheid system. The crux was the denial of freedoms implicit in apartheid, not a supposed spectre of Communism in southern Africa.

South Africa could not fail to see that SADCC was a viable project that could count on sympathy and support from the international community and become highly attractive to outside investors. SADCC's success would be damaging to the interests of the minority regime in South Africa. Conspicuous economic growth in the region's independent states would be a defeat for Pretoria's propaganda line that couples African independence with

conditions of social anarchy, economic disaster and political chaos.

The early successes of independent Mozambique were among the most galling of lessons to the apartheid regime. In South Africa's black townships FRELIMO's watchwords were blazoned on walls along with slogans of support for Mozambique and for the heroic figure of Samora Machel. FRELIMO's publications were among the materials circulating clandestinely among South African patriots, and were an inspiration especially to the students and the young. The national reconstruction plan taking shape, especially after the Third Congress in 1977 had transformed FRELIMO into the Frelimo Party, was succeeding despite Rhodesian aggression, despite the costs to Mozambique of implementing sanctions against the illegal Smith regime, despite South Africa's sanctions against the Mozambican economy, and despite the natural disasters affecting Mozambique.

Mozambique, along with most developing countries was affected by the sudden rise in oil prices in the mid 1970s and by a general worsening in the terms of trade for producers of raw materials, but still managed significant growth. In the period from 1977 to 1981, Mozambique was achieving record exports of cashew, cotton and coal, cutting the illiteracy rate, expanding the health network with a totally new emphasis on preventive medicine for the whole community, and developing new elective and judicial structures. The country was building political and social stability, with a high level of racial and ethnic integration, under a leadership that was manifestly clean of corruption and pursuing an honourable policy of political independence.

Mozambique's progress and social and racial harmony offered renewed encouragement to South Africa's black majority in their demand and struggle for democracy. More and more South Africans (black and white) saw that there was a way out of the pit into which they had been thrust by the apartheid policy. The South African regime struck out at Mozambique, under the Vorster administration and with increasing venom under his successor Botha. Even before the military aggression, South Africa imposed its own form of economic sanctions. Jobs for Mozambican migrants in the mines were slashed; the use of Mozambique's ports and railways

for South African freight was drastically reduced; the gold agreement whereby South Africa paid part of mine labourers' wages to Mozambique in gold at the official rate was unilaterally abrogated by South Africa. These measures, with military sabotage of economic targets in Mozambique, took billions of dollars out of the Mozambican economy.

Mozambique was just one of the South African regime's targets in the region. South Africa feared that peaceful economic development, with racial harmony, for the independent states of the area would bring an atmosphere of stability and security in which it would be increasingly obvious that there was no place for a minority regime as an ostensible defender of western interests. Western interests would lie with the region as a whole. Pretoria's hegemonic plans depended on making SADCC unworkable. This could only be done by denying the region access to the sea - except by grace and favour of South Africa's own transport routes - and by preventing the use of Angola's Lobito port and Mozambique's ports of Nacala, Beira and Maputo. Tanzania would be relatively immune, but with this exception all the SADCC states, plus Zaire to the north, would be dependent on South African ports for the traffic of their imports and exports.

It was in this context that South Africa (encouraged by a rightward shift in policies in the United States and much of Western Europe) determined to intensify its aggression against Mozambique and Angola, and to spread its policy of regional destabilization even further. The South African military, who by now were even more influential than the civilian Ministers in determining policy, encouraged subversion in Lesotho and instability in southern Zimbabwe.

### III.2. The diplomatic offensive of 1982-83

South African military intelligence spent much of 1980 reshaping the armed bandits they had inherited from the defunct Smith regime, and had marshalled the bulk of this enlarged force at the Zoabostad training camp. By late that year Colonel van Niekerk advised that it was time to resume operations in Mozambique, to target the southern part of the country and to block the transport routes being used by Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe (this would entail

actions against the Beira and Nacala corridors and the Limpopo railway line).

Part of the South African plan was to "destroy the Mozambican economy in the rural areas" - a pungently bald phrase (taken from a captured bandit document) to indicate a process whereby death, terror and mutilation are sown among men and women and their children who seek a precarious living from village plots of land, whereby none of the human decencies are observed, whereby no quarter is given to the tiniest infant, a woman in pregnancy, a nurse on an errand of healing, or a sick patient in a hospital bed. This grisly tribute in blood is collected by the riffraff accumulated by Smith's and Botha's agents from prisons and the underworld, and by forced levies of young men in the countryside who are kidnapped from home and family and brutalized.

The South African Defence Forces themselves provide the sabotage teams for sophisticated operations against the oil pipeline, a port installation, a power line or a railway. South African commandos mount the operations to infiltrate by night and kill in warning raids such as they have conducted against Mozambique's capital city, Maputo (and the capitals of other Front Line states). South Africa supplies the aircraft and the submarines, and the parachute drops of supplies of arms, rations and equipment.

South Africa's escalation of violence and destabilization from 1981 was unleashed on a Mozambique whose people were intent on the tasks of economic and social reconstruction and whose thoughts were attuned to peace. Intelligence reports in Mozambique showed that bandits were being infiltrated across the South African and Malawian borders, and increasing disruption was noted in the provinces that yielded the raw materials vital for Mozambique's economy as exports or as sources for the country's own processing industries. Mozambique's suffering was felt by its people but little known and understood in the wider world.

The Frelimo Party's Central Committee met in August 1982 under President Machel's chairmanship to consider Mozambique's situation. A clear understanding was reached as to the motives for South African aggression against Mozambique and deployment of terrorist bands, and how South Africa was shielding itself by attempting

to isolate Mozambique from the international community. The Central Committee decided that a diplomatic offensive was needed to enlighten the world, and the west in particular, as to the essence of the Mozambican revolution, the policy of peace in the region, and the characteristics of the southern African conflict.

This offensive was conducted and provided western governments with a deeper understanding of what was really happening in southern Africa and of the degree to which the South African regime represented a threat to peace. As western diplomats accredited to Mozambique and other states suffering South African attacks reported on the escalation of this aggression by the Pretoria regime, the home governments indicated their concern and condemnation. The African continent was already in solidarity with the Front Line states and with the peoples of South Africa and occupied Namibia, as indeed were the socialist countries who had long backed the cause of liberation and self-determination. Much of Western Europe and enlightened opinion in the United States acknowledged that regional instability and apartheid were two sides of one coin, and that the tension in southern Africa required that both issues be addressed jointly. The apartheid regime in South Africa was now facing estrangement from its traditional allies and discreet, diplomatic pressures to change its tactics. The policy towards South Africa pursued by the United States administration of President Ronald Reagan under the banner of so-called "constructive engagement" would not go so far as seeing the entire region transformed into a wasteland.

### III.3. The Nkomati Agreement

The apartheid regime put out feelers to the Mozambican Government and ministerial contacts were held without fanfare in December 1982 and May 1983, albeit inconclusively. The South African military could point to some spectacular sabotage ventures, to disruption of parts of Inhambane and Gaza provinces, plus infiltration into Zambezia province, but to no weakening on the part of Mozambique's armed forces or civilian population in their determination to defend the independence Mozambique had won at high cost against Portuguese

colonialism through a decade of armed struggle. By the end of 1983, the South African Government evinced its apparent acceptance of the reality of Mozambican sovereignty and Mozambique's right to pursue its own path of development.

After further discussions that eventually reached the highest levels, Mozambique's President Machel and South Africa's Prime Minister Botha signed the "Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness" on 16 March 1984 at Nkomati on the border between their two countries. The two parties pledged to respect each other's sovereignty and independence, and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other. They further undertook not to resort to the threat or use of force against each other.

On Mozambique's side it was a pledge made in good faith, to be scrupulously respected. Mozambique was making a strategic commitment, in line with its established and constitutional principles of foreign policy. The apartheid regime was to turn out to have made a tactical agreement that was never to be observed by the military powers who had the last say on policy, and were in the final analysis following Botha's own designs, as Prime Minister and later as State President.

At the time of the signing the apartheid regime appeared to be making concessions in its total national strategy, in response to its demonstrable weakness in the face of growing international isolation. However in the days before the Nkomati ceremonies the bandits received massive supplies intended to last for several months and clear assurances of continued support on the military side, despite the declarations of the politicians (although this conclusive evidence was not to come to light until the following year when the bandit base at Gorongosa, reestablished by South Africa, was captured). South African military preparations for the "post-Nkomati" phase included sending bandit groups to operate close to Maputo.

In the ensuing months South African violation of the letter and spirit/ of the agreement was increasingly apparent, and though Mozambique went out of its way to give the benefit of the doubt to the supposed goodwill of the politicians, it became glaringly obvious that South African involvement in armed banditry had been

intensified. This was explicable as minority power in South Africa had become concentrated in the State Security Council where warmongering was high on the agenda of a military and police state. A similar attitude was revealed within South Africa in the greater severity of repressive and security measures, press control and censorship, and limitations on the effective powers of the courts.

#### III.4. The Gorongosa Diaries and Malawi's involvement

When Mozambican armed forces, in joint operations of late August 1985 with Zimbabwean forces and their significant air power and logistical resources, took the terrorist band's main forward encampment within Mozambique at Gorongosa, Mozambique was able to present to the world documentary evidence of what the Mozambican authorities and people already knew. South Africa had broken its word, and the fact was plain to see from the bandits' own records captured at their base.

Extracts from the Gorongosa documents were published in facsimile, the original Portuguese text and English translation, within a few days, and aroused a widespread international interest that was hugely embarrassing to the apartheid regime. The record was clear both as to the deceptions perpetrated against Mozambique, and the degree of duplicity that had been practised within South Africa's ruling circles. The documents revealed the places and dates of South African arms and equipment supplies before and after Nkomati, and the names of the South African officers and politicians who on a constant basis were advising and instructing the bandits. They included high-ranking serving officers, some of whom had links with the bandits dating back to the formative period under Rhodesian CIO control.

South Africa could not pretend that General Constand Viljoen, the defence chief, Lieutenant-General André Liebenberg, head of special forces, General Westhuizen, and the liaison officers, Brigadier van Tonder and Colonel van Niekerk, were fringe figures. They were centrally placed in the South African system and even after the Gorongosa disclosures they were backed by Botha and retained in sensitive posts - Westhuizen was promoted to become secretary of the State Security Council, the body

that as we have indicated lies at the core of apartheid power. South Africa's Foreign Minister made a superficial attempt to play down the Nkomati violations, but his declarations carried no weight inside or outside South Africa.

The capture of the Gorongosa materials came just before an official visit by President Machel to the United States, whose President Reagan expressed his shock at the faithlessness shown by the South African regime and his sympathy with Mozambique, sentiments echoed by Britain's Prime Minister, Mr Margaret Thatcher, when President Machel visited Britain later in the tour. President Machel indicated that despite South Africa's breaches of the agreement, Mozambique would stand by its commitment, because it had acted in good faith throughout and would continue to work for peace within the region.

With South Africa's military stratagems ever more under scrutiny, the mentors of banditry turned increasingly to their infiltration routes through Malawi, independent but in a client relationship to South Africa. They drew on their contacts in Malawian military, police and political circles to make that country a more active springboard for destabilization, in the hope that this would disguise the direct involvement of the Republic of South Africa. After the bandits lost Gorongosa, they made a new thrust from Malawi into Mozambique's Zambezia province, in which South Africa sought to occupy the banks of the Zambesi river and open supply routes from the Indian Ocean. A large-scale invasion of the province was planned. Malawi's equivocations with Portuguese colonialism have already been described, and the South African policy makers thought that the conflict in Mozambique could be presented as an inter-African dispute.

They had failed to make the world accept that southern Africa was a focus of East-West conflict, and they failed likewise to make the world accept that the events in Mozambique were part of a quarrel within the Organization of African Unity. President Machel made this point very strongly when he spoke at the Non-Aligned Summit in Harare in September 1986, one of his last major appearances in an international forum.



After the Harare meeting, President Machel, with full backing from other Front Line leaders, went personally to Malawi to point out to President Banda that the Malawian people's true interests lay with the independent African states and not with the apartheid regime's oppression in South Africa and Namibia, and to warn that Malawi's trade and economy were vulnerable to Front Line retaliation in the denial of access routes. The Malawian Government was to heed this advice and later join Mozambique in defending the Nacala corridor through which Malawi could be supplied from the Mozambican coast.

Indications of a possible change of attitude on President Banda's part obliged South Africa to hasten its operations against Zambezia which was the scene of extensive operations in late September that were to cause widespread destruction of crops and property and dislocation of the population. The manoeuvres on the ground had been preceded by political machinations on the part of South Africa that suggested a plan to take the provincial capital of Quelimane, or even to divide Mozambique. Whatever the actual intentions they were frustrated by a joint counter-offensive from the Mozambican and Zimbabwean armed forces.

The early days of October were marked by a series of propaganda attacks by apartheid figures, such as the Defence Minister, General Malan, directed personally at President Machel. Against this fraught background, President Machel travelled to Zambia in the third week of October for a Front Line states consultation with Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, as one more step in President Machel's constant search for peace in the region. The presidential aircraft, returning at night to Maputo, was diverted by a pirate radio beacon in circumstances that have not yet been fully explained, and crashed at Mbuzini in South African territory. President Machel died along with members of the Mozambican government and key members of his staff.

The apartheid authorities, whose behaviour before and after the crash has been highly equivocal, may well have expected that the loss of President Machel would lead to a power struggle in Mozambique and a weakening of direction in Maputo. If so, they were disappointed. The Mozambican people were stricken by the tragedy but the

Party and Government institutions followed the statutory and constitutional procedures in electing Joaquim Alberto Chissano as President of the Party and the Republic. The people and the armed forces rallied in defence of Samora Machel's heritage and forestalled further aggression from the enemy. South Africa is stepping up its aggression through its surrogates on the ground, and through large scale infiltration of bandits through the common border with Mozambique's Gaza province. They brought a bitter reminder of their presence in their grisly assault in July of this year on the gentle people of Homoine.

What *YOU* can do to help!

As well as your existing political and humanitarian support for Mozambique's people, you can assist us in bringing you this and other current information on our country's situation in the face of external aggression threatening *OUR* efforts to build a new society.

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