



Vehicles destroyed in an attack on a convoy in Maputo Province

Armed banditry in Mozambique—a brief chronology

1960 — Mueda Massacre. About the time of the Sharpeville killings in South Africa, Portuguese security forces react to a peaceful demonstration by Mozambicans in favour of independence, by killing 600 demonstrators.

1964 — Frelimo, the multiracial movement for independence led by Eduardo Mondlane, begins the armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial regime.

1965 — Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain by Ian Smith's white minority regime in Rhodesia.

1969 — Eduardo Mondlane killed by a letter bomb. He was replaced by Samora Machel. This era was dominated by the geopolitical concept of a "White Africa" whose heartland was to be South Africa, whose flanks were to be Angola and Mozambique, and whose spearhead was Rhodesia. The Portuguese Revolution of 1974, and

the liberation of Angola and Mozambique brought this dream to an end. From 1972, however, the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation and the Rhodesian Army had been involved in Mozambican affairs. The latter, fearing that Frelimo zones could be used by Zanu and Zapu guerrillas, took control of the eastern part of Tete Province from the Portuguese Army, while the CIO collaborated with Portuguese security services to create a black Mozambican pseudo-nationalist movement.

1974 — Portuguese Revolution. The Lusaka Agreement guarantees independence for Angola and Mozambique. Right-wingers and prosperous settlers prepare to leave Mozambique, some going to Rhodesia and South Africa.

1975 — Independence. Portuguese ex-settlers are given subsidies to create companies in South Africa, many of which could be used as cover

for guerrilla activities, safari companies, export-import and transport concerns.

1976 — The Rhodesian CIO organises Mozambican blacks and mesticoes into a commando unit, based at Odzi Camp, near Umtali. The original aim of this unit was to infiltrate border areas and obtain information on Zanu/Zapu guerrilla units there. It was at this time that Orlando Cristina emerged as "Secretary General" of the rebel movement and that the radio station "Voice of Free Africa" was established, based in Gwelo.

1975-80 — During this period, South Africa underwent, in its political and military establishment, a profound series of changes and a sort of schism. In effect, Prime Minister Vorster, General van den Bergh and the diplomatic and business community all opted for a policy of peaceful coexistence accompanied by economic domination in southern Africa.

P.W. Botha, at that time Defence Minister, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Malan, and the Nationalist political establishment opted for open warfare. The split surfaced on a number of occasions, and the militarist faction finally triumphed after the "Muldergate" scandal of 1978, Vorster being replaced by Botha as Prime Minister. This period saw the establishment of a Portuguese-speaking battalion, the Buffalo Battalion, at the base of Phalaborwa. This unit was the basis of early attacks by South Africa on Mozambique, as well as Angola and Namibia.

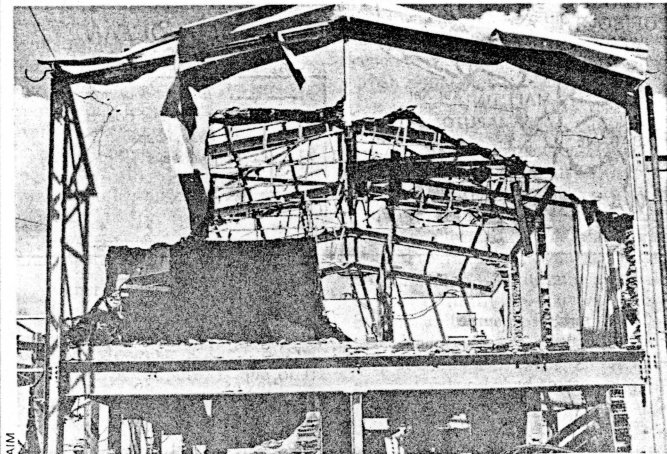
1980 — Independence of Zimbabwe, and creation of SADCC. The crumbling of the "White Africa" spearhead, and the creation of a regional bloc to create an economic infrastructure independent of South Africa forced the South Africans into a flurry of activity designed to prove to investors that no alternative to dependence on South Africa was viable. Just before Zimbabwe's independence, the Rhodesian CIO-backed terrorist organisation was transferred to the South African Directorate of Military Intelligence. The existing "rebel" bases at Phalaborwa and Cullinan Farm were expanded. Armed terrorists were transferred to No 1 Commando base at Durban. Mozambican armed forces, which had captured the main rebel bases inside the country, at Gorongosa in October 1979 and at Sitatonga in June 1980, were deceived into think-

ing that with the eclipse of Rhodesia their troubles were almost over.

1981-84 — South African strategy to deny viability to SADCC's main aims—creation of alternative transport routes for southern Africa, took the form of a "high-intensity" war against Angola, and a "low-intensity" war against Mozambique. South African naval and airborne units assisted terrorists in attacks on Maputo and Beira, targeting oil pipelines, railways, port installations and power lines. Rebel units sowed indiscriminate terror in Inhambane, Gaza and Zambezia provinces. President Machel responded to this by a diplomatic offensive aimed at the international community, particularly the Western nations. This proved sufficiently successful that by 1982/3 tentative diplomatic feelers were out between South Africa and Mozambique, which resulted in the signature of the Nkomati Accord (*) in March 1984. In August 1985, Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces recaptured the rebel base at Gorongosa and released documents which they captured proving that South Africa was still the guiding spirit of the rebels in direct violation of the Nkomati Accord.

1984-86 — Using Malawi as a base, to divert suspicion from themselves and to involve an independent Afri-

(*) The Accord of Peace and Good Neighbourliness included provisions for the cessation of South African support for the bandits.



can country (thus seeming to convert a struggle between apartheid South Africa and an independent Mozambique into an "inter-African" problem) the South Africans prepared a major offensive along the Zambezi River, aimed at cutting Mozambique in two and creating a sort of distant bastion, to be called Rumblezia. SADCC pressure on Malawi's President to associate himself more closely with the Front Line States brought forward the date for the planned offensive. In August 1986 SADCC member countries succeeded in bringing Malawi to play a constructive and cooperative role with regard to Mozambique. In September, the South African-backed rebel offensive began, and, only one month later, when the bandits were only a few dozen kilometres from Quelimane, the aircraft carrying President Machel crashed in circumstances still to be explained, killing the President and a number of senior officers. However, the Mozambican armed forces, assisted by units from Zimbabwe and Tanzania drove back the rebels from Zambezia province and from parts of Sofala, Manica and Tete provinces.

1986-88 — The rebels changed their tactics. Following their conventional defeat, and the thwarting of their plan to dismember Mozambique, they concentrated on a campaign to spread terror in the rural areas. Military targets were avoided in favour of civilian ones, as witness the Homoine, Teninga, Manjacaze, Guija and Moamba massacres. During this period, international military assistance to Mozambique was stepped up, with numerous hitherto-reluctant donors providing non-lethal military supplies, hardware and training. In September, 1988 President Chissano and President Botha met at Cahora Bassa and signed a reaffirmation of the Nkomati Accord, under which South Africa would undertake to restore the power lines from Cahora Bassa and provide non-lethal military assistance to the Mozambican armed forces. In addition, President Botha promised to make strenuous efforts to sever links between the bandits and the South African military and intelligence communities.

1989 — It is to be hoped that these pages remain blank. T.G.