



INTERVIEW

SAMORA MOISES MACHEL

President of the
Mozambique Liberation Front
(FRELIMO)
speaks to AFRICA

78 SPOTLIGHT



Samora Machel and Eduardo Mondlane: "When we started the war we had absolutely nothing, but in ten years we have deeply transformed our country. We have uprooted colonialism, transformed men and made Mozambique known to the world."
— Camerapix

■ AFRICA: Since the formation of Frelimo in 1962 it has been a liberation front. What changes do you believe will be necessary after independence to change Frelimo from a front into a party?

● MACHEL: Frelimo has won great prestige because it is an organisation with clear structures and a clear and well defined line. It is an organisation which has its work in the midst of the masses; it derives its consciousness from the masses. It is a front, to the extent that it includes all tendencies, including religious, such as Catholics, Moslems, Protestants, atheists—Frelimo is open to them all.

The formation of a party has different demands to those of a front; a party cannot be just the result of a proclamation. It presupposes a certain level of political consciousness; the existence of cadres; high consciousness of the masses; because the party is not a handful of persons. We would say, as a first step, it is necessary to know the feelings of the people, the internal political situation and the political level which the people have already attained for it to be possible to define the ideology that is going to be followed for the definition of a sole ideology is one of the main characteristics of a party.

We in Frelimo cannot pretend that our ideology has been embraced by the entire people. But there is an ideological line, a basic ideological thought which is formulated and subscribed to by all members of the Central Committee. The central point, let us say, the strangulation knot, which determines the meeting point between us all, is that we are anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, we are against the exploitation of man by man and against capitalism. In Mozambique we want people's power. This is the aim which we must achieve: it must be solid and it must be understood and embraced by the people. When that happens, we shall be in a position to create a party.

We realise that a party is necessary because one cannot lead a country without a party. But its formation will depend on the work which Frelimo and its cadres are going to carry out. It will also be the product of not only this but the extent to which the level of mass consciousness has been raised. It is necessary to be constantly in contact with practice to win the masses to that ideology. In other words, it is through a permanent struggle that new ideas are attained and only a constant struggle can determine the transformation.

Thus, when a major part of our cadres and our people has reached such consciousness that it places them as being the transforming elements of society, then we can have a party, a vanguard party to orientate the country, to orientate the government to promote development, establish priorities and define the tasks for the people.

■ AFRICA: That is the theory of what you need and how you form your party, but what are the practical steps you must now take to bring about this formation?

● MACHEL: First we need cadres; at the moment it



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cannot be said that we have many cadres. We will only say that we have cadres when we have already transformed a great part of the mentality which always lived intoxicated by capitalism and by individualist, selfish, ambitious, subjective spirit.

We are still transforming that mentality, it is a necessary effort, a constant activity in the work for the cadre to be born. The cadre does not come from academic chairs, that is not the cadre; it is necessary that they should be tempered and forged by the struggle. And the struggle is not just the armed struggle; it is the struggle for the transformation of minds.

Consequently, it is necessary that there should be a policy in the schools, in the health services, in the university, in the factories, in the rural areas, because the cadres will come from all those places. Those are the cadres formed by the struggle. They will have the new mentality and a new conception of the world. It will be those cadres who will be able to know what we lack and on that basis what is demanded of us. They will know what we lack. Then we will say: we have cadres. We in Frelimo call cadres those who assume the national policy; have a complete vision of the world: both in a national and international context; have new conceptions about the world and those who know how to combine and integrate the particular with the general. We want cadres who are free, with confidence in their own strength as agents of transforming nature.

■ AFRICA: You have inherited from the Portuguese colonial system many problems. In the short term, what are Mozambique's economic problems and how serious are they?

● MACHEL: After 500 years of colonisation and ten years of war, the situation which exists in Mozambique is not alarming; on the contrary it is very normal. It is a situation which permits us to start and advance more rapidly to develop Mozambique. When we started the war we had absolutely nothing, but in 10 years we have deeply transformed our country. We have uprooted colonialism, transformed men, made Mozambique known to the world. And that was in wartime.

Now we are going to rebuild Mozambique in peace. Our line defines how to rebuild Mozambique. The priorities are given, we know very well the real situation in Mozambique. Therefore we can state with certainty that we will get through this crisis rapidly. The crisis for us is an excellent situation. If colonialism left Mozambique in a comfortable situation, in an organised situation, it would have lost its nature as colonialism. If it left everything organised, left a lot of money in Mozambique, we would be suspicious this would mean that it would have left us many agents, that it would have left its representatives. It would have left the highest state of development of corruption in Mozambique.

This way we are able to distinguish who served colonialism, who benefited from colonialism and, for the development of our economy, we will know better where to

start. So we are not alarmed because first, we have the deciding force: the people of Mozambique. Secondly, we have a correct line which defines our objectives, which shows us how we are going to rebuild Mozambique. Thirdly, we have the territory with enough potential to develop the country.

■ AFRICA: At Frelimo's 1968 Congress the Front came out very strongly against supplying contract labour to the South African mines. Will the contract in force at present be terminated on June 25 or will it be re-negotiated?

● MACHEL: Until June 25 we respect the agreements which the Portuguese made with the South Africans. And June 25 will allow Mozambique with South Africa to discuss and review the content of the agreements. Besides that, we have many priority problems to solve in our country. We have to create conditions to better the life of our people. We have that great responsibility. South Africa receives 150,000 workers per year. The Portuguese did not create the structures for those people to work in Mozambique. Therefore, Frelimo must before anything else create structures for those people. We are not hysterical revolutionaries, the ten year war tempered us.

■ AFRICA: And realism demands a certain amount of gradualism then in cases like this mining contract; that you do not just terminate the contract and put 150,000 people out of work?

● MACHEL: We respect the priorities of the people and our policy is drawn with the basis being the aspirations of our people. Frelimo's policy comes from the bottom to the top, and goes from the top to the bottom. We will discuss with our people and ask: if we cut that contract, what are you going to do? The people will answer.

Our external policy is dictated by the internal situation. It is not the international situation, the external, which dictates Frelimo's internal policy. This is our orientation. Frelimo's policy comes from the people, it is dictated by the internal situation. We do what the people say is correct. That was how we led the struggle for ten years. We would ask the people, "are we correct, can we proceed?" The people said, "Yes". It was the people who decided, for example, the clemency policy to war prisoners.

■ AFRICA: What is your policy with regard to Zimbabwe?

● MACHEL: We support Zimbabwe, everywhere we say that and declare it. It is our ally, it has a part of our people, and we are also part of the people of Zimbabwe. With all its consequences, we support their just struggle.

■ AFRICA: Are you going to apply UN sanctions against Rhodesia after June 25?

● MACHEL: Let practice answer. Ask me after the 25th of June.

■ AFRICA: At present both Rhodesia and South Africa have diplomatic representation in Lourenco Marques. Will this continue after independence?

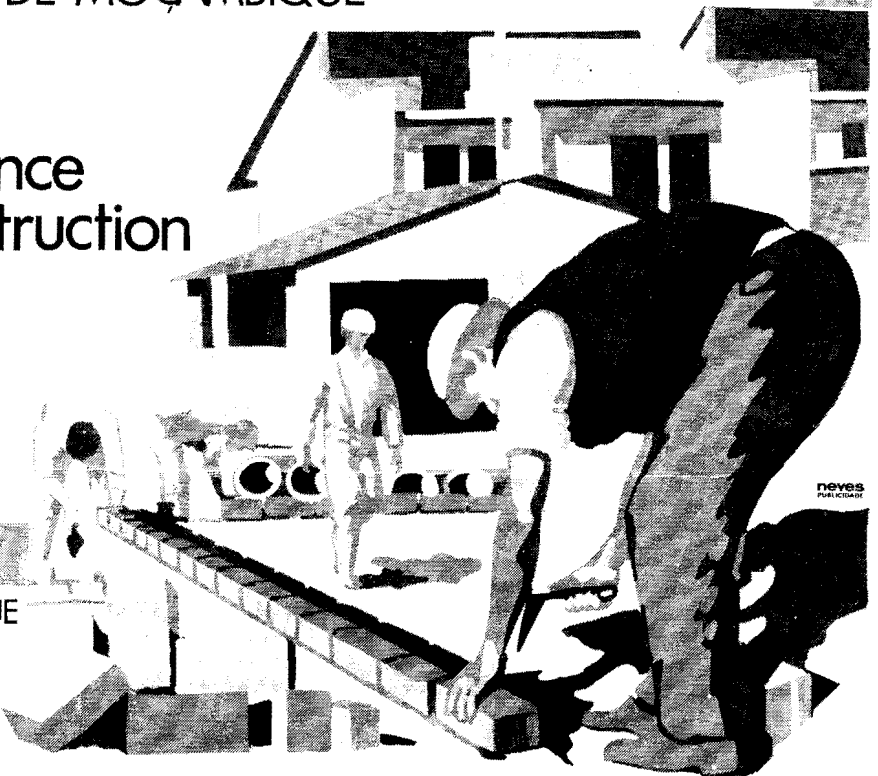


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"All African countries and members of the OAU are our allies. Secondly in Africa all the freedom movements are also our allies."

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"Teachers of the negative school, they will serve to help the new generations who will not know what colonialism was to understand the definition of the enemy."

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● MACHEL: Rhodesia has already removed its diplomatic representation in Portugal. We do not know why they are in Mozambique. South Africa is also in Mozambique because strictly speaking it is still a colony. However, they will have to take measures; on June 25 all will have to present their credentials. But, to answer directly: the Central Committee is going to study with whom we are going to establish relationships, what position to take with regards to South Africa—with regard to the Mozambican workers in South Africa. But I can answer categorically already with regard to Zimbabwe, because that is Frelimo's policy.

■ AFRICA: What are going to be the overall guiding principles of foreign policy after independence?

● MACHEL: Our policy is clear. First, all African countries and members of the OAU are our allies. Secondly, in Africa, the freedom movements are also our allies.

The socialist countries are our allies. The basis of our relations with them existed at a superior level, even when we were still a liberation movement. Fourthly, the progressive parties of capitalist Europe. Fifthly, the democratic forces of the capitalist countries. Sixth, we have solidarity with the newly independent countries who struggle for economic emancipation and consolidation of independence. Finally, we are for peace; therefore, against expansionism and imperialism.

■ AFRICA: During the liberation war a number of countries, while not really physically opposing you, did so nonetheless through their relationships with Portugal. I am thinking here of Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and the United States in particular. What will be your attitude toward these countries after the 25th?

● MACHEL: During the struggle we defined the following: we have direct enemies and indirect enemies. The direct enemy was always Portuguese colonialism. Indirect enemies were those who always helped Portugal. Against the direct enemy we fought the armed struggle. There was never direct combat against indirect enemies, who were involved either for economic reasons or ideological reasons, or by century old alliances, as in Britain's case.

For those who were involved for economic reasons, the war was a business, and they developed their countries selling war material to Portugal, bringing about in this way the ruin of Portugal. Portugal is today in a crisis and these countries will not help her because it was economic interests which motivated them. We take into consideration that there are progressive forces in Britain who always supported us. The people of Britain, America, Japan, France, etc. always supported us in the struggle. Consequently, we do not want to isolate peoples, we want to isolate governments. But these governments represent peoples, represent the workers. That help which they want to bring to Mozambique is the product of the workers of those countries, and what we want is to

establish good relations with those peoples. We must differentiate: Governments go, peoples remain.

■ AFRICA: There has been some talk of an economic federation possibly involving Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. How does the President view this suggestion?

● MACHEL: We never discussed that problem because Mozambique was always a colony. But if it happens, it will be welcome. We are favourable to that because it would allow the rapid development of this zone.

■ AFRICA: Has an overall economic plan been drawn up yet giving priority areas such as education, communications and are there any figures that one can attach to what is immediately being sought in terms of aid?

● MACHEL: To start with, in Mozambique we need about \$400m to be used in two main fields: agriculture, which is the basis, and industry which is the invigorating factor. When we speak of agriculture as the basis, and taking into consideration that one does not live with hunger, we want to liquidate hunger in our country. This is a priority. We want to liquidate illiteracy in Mozambique, this is a priority. We want to improve the health services. The rest will come.

■ AFRICA: What do you intend to do with the political prisoners you are holding such as the former Vice President, Simango?

● MACHEL: The prisoners for us are precious because they educate us and at the same time we learn with them how people become corrupt, how they transform themselves into agents of imperialism. The war in Mozambique was against Portuguese colonialism. Many thought that the Portuguese were bad—colonialists: they massacred people, concentrated them in villages, cruelly exploited Mozambicans. Therefore, the appearance of Uria Simango and Lazaro Kavandame is a school for us, which teaches us that exploitation has no colour, has no race, that the enemy has no country, no people and, more, has no pity.

Uria Simango has political ambitions and Lazaro Kavandame economic ambitions. As the two things are inseparable, they became allies immediately. Simango, having the power in his hands, Lazaro could exploit the people. He needed political power to exploit the Mozambican people. For that reason, after the coup in Portugal, they did not hesitate to join the enemy to massacre the people, after the agreements and ceasefire they joined the enemy so that the war and massacre was prolonged, to enable them to earn money and live comfortably. It was within this perspective that they had no doubts to join Spínola, fascist, aggressor of Guinea-Conakry, assassin of Amílcar Cabral. Therefore, we say: it is a great lesson for us, for those who doubted our definition of the enemy—in short, it is a school. Teachers of the negative school, they will serve to help the new generations, who will not know what colonialism was—to understand the definition of enemy. ■