

SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES
NO. 4

**POLITICAL DECOMPRESSION
AND HISTORICAL
REVISIONISM IN MOZAMBIQUE**

Mark Simpson

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INTRODUCTION

All societies embarking on a process of radical political transformation find themselves engaging in debates not only about the future, but also about their past. This is a reflection of an often widespread belief that contemporary problems can only really be understood when refracted through the prism of a past that is being re-interpreted in the light of new realities and recently discovered truths.

Nowhere is the need for a symbiotic relationship between a critique of past orthodoxies and a healthy debate about the range of choices available more transparent than in post-communist societies. However, under collapsing Marxist-Leninist systems, the effort of recapturing a 'lost history' is both more difficult and more necessary, given the extent to which official ideologues single-mindedly set out to erase and/or distort the pre-revolutionary history of those societies to make it fit within the accepted parameters. Pol Pot's attempt to return Kampuchean society to 'Year Zero' and eliminate any recollections of pre-Khmer Rouge history, with all the attendant horrors of that exercise, stands out as a reminder of the extent to which some Marxist-Leninist regimes were prepared to go in order to ensure conformity.

And in Eastern Europe two examples, one more distant in time and one contemporary, reveal the infatuation with the need to ensure that historical detail conformed to the prevailing orthodoxy. In the USSR under Stalin, legions of 'official historians', who were little more than censors, set about re-writing not only pre-revolutionary Russian history, but also all accounts of the 1917 revolution itself. One objective was to ensure that Russian society was depicted as having been caught in a sterile process of increasingly despotic and retrograde Tsarist authoritarianism, and growing popular immiseration, until given the breath of life by Lenin's Bolsheviks. Another was to turn post-revolutionary Soviet history into a series of hagiographies of Stalin, buttressing his rule and tangentially justifying, at least for the Party, the terror he imposed on Soviet society during the 1930's. At its most comical, those who wielded the scissors were so concerned with ensuring that the 'facts' matched the prevailing line that photographs of the early Bolshevik party were doctored so that all visual references to that arch-enemy, Trotsky, were eliminated.

More recently the demise of the Ceausescu regime in Romania has led to a deluge of books written by both Romanian and foreign scholars, detailing the extent of historical distortion prevalent under the old dictator, who set up one of the most megalomaniacal personality cults on record.¹ These works are meeting a deeply felt need to fill in the gaps caused by the *ancien régime's* success in crushing any independent intelligentsia, and are welcome antidotes to the 'official histories' put out,

under the auspices of the Communist regime, [which] while often informative, were almost unreadable because of their nationalism, their sycophancy, and the deadly boredom of all works produced...under the supervision of the police, the Party Central Committee, and Academician Dr Elena Ceausescu [the President's wife].²

In addition, these works are also helping to clarify the problems underlying the contorted and bloody developments in Romania since Ceausescu's overthrow in December 1989. They have highlighted the social costs of the Ceausescu years and the onerous legacy he left behind, which continue to hinder the development of a liberal democracy in that country, as evidenced by the bewildering fact that a group of anti-Ceausescu communists have managed to hijack a popular anti-communist uprising. As one recent report by a European human rights organisation noted,

Repression in Romania was so severe under Ceausescu that a civil society had no opportunity to develop. There was no human rights movement, no samizdat press. No groundwork had been laid for the development of democratic institutions.³

This article looks at developments at the periphery of the old communist world, by examining change in one ex-Afromarxist regime, namely Mozambique. Firstly, it aims to provide an overview of those factors that led to a radical shift in the rules of the political game in Mozambique between 1989-91. Secondly, it deals with the manner in which society there is coming to terms with its recent past, and in particular how both Mozambican and foreign academics are accounting for the failure of FRELIMO's project for the transformation of Mozambique along revolutionary socialist lines.

THE POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE

The reassessment of Mozambique's recent past that is currently underway is both a cause and result of the radical re-orientation of Mozambique's domestic and foreign policies that flowed from the official abandonment of Marxism-Leninism in the course of FRELIMO's Fifth Congress of 1989, following which, in 1990, Mozambique introduced what is arguably one of the most liberal constitutions in Africa.⁴ After over twenty years of adherence to the dictates of that ideology, dating back to its adoption by FRELIMO at its Second Congress of 1968 while the movement was still engaged in an anti-colonial struggle against Portugal, the decisions taken at the 1989 Congress closed a chapter in Mozambique's history. They represented a *de facto* admission of the failure to apply successfully the communist model of socio-economic

organisation to Mozambique, if not also an implicit recognition, given its timing in relation to events in Eastern Europe, of what was seen as the world-wide failure of Marxism-Leninism as a set of political and economic organising principles.

The factors that led to the historic decisions are manifold, but the overarching reality that faced the party members gathered in Maputo was that the country had been bled white by the continuing war against the Renamo rebels. By 1989 the war had caused an estimated 1 million deaths, either directly as a result of the conflict, or indirectly as a result of famine and disease. In addition, anything up to 3 million people were internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries. Mozambique's economic infrastructure had been ravaged by Renamo, as had the social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, rural health posts) which FRELIMO had so painstakingly constructed in the early post-independence years, and which were undoubtedly one of the major gains of the Mozambican revolution. After a period of unremarkable but steady economic growth between 1977-81, macro-economic indicators began to show a marked decline. Exports, for example, fell from US\$ 283 million in 1981 to US\$ 103 million in 1988,⁵ while between 1981-87, the country's GNP collapsed from US\$ 2.24 billion to US\$ 1.24 billion.⁶

An even more serious indication of the economic crisis was the fact that food imports jumped from US\$ 114 million to US\$ 172 million between 1981-87. And even these figures concealed the extent of the problem, since much the greater part of the food entering the country was in the form of aid. The seriousness of the growing food deficit can be gauged by the increase in grain donations during the ten years from 1976-86, from 114 thousand tons to 253 thousand tons.⁷ It was widely acknowledged that up to half of the population was to some degree dependent on food aid. By 1989, Mozambique had become the poorest and most aid-dependent economy in the world.

Pressures were also emanating from the external arena which contributed to a fundamental reassessment of the country's international position. As a result of changes in Eastern Europe, a significant part of Maputo's external alliance network was beginning to unravel. While Mozambique had slowly begun to cultivate relations with the West as early as 1984, partly a result of growing disillusionment with East European aid, the USSR and East Germany remained important trading partners and sources of military hardware, while official pronouncements continually reaffirmed the importance attached by FRELIMO to Mozambique's ties with the socialist bloc. Yet by the time of the Fifth Congress, the writing was on the wall.

The new Soviet leadership had made it increasingly clear that there was going to be a retraction of Soviet support to its allies in the Third World as a result

of a decision to concentrate resources on domestic problems. The implications of such a re-orientation in Soviet foreign policy could not but have been understood by FRELIMO when it met for its Congress in July 1989. In February of the same year, after a decade of support to the Communist regime in Kabul, the last soldiers of the Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan. Closer to home, the new found willingness of both Moscow and Washington to work together to put an end to various third world conflicts they had previously fuelled had impacted on developments in Angola, with the Soviets putting pressure on the MPLA to negotiate with UNITA, a process which would eventually lead to the 1991 peace treaty. And as far as Soviet support to Mozambique was concerned, it was telling that Gorbachev never took up on repeated invitations issued by Maputo to visit Mozambique. Furthermore, from 1986 onwards, the number of East European advisors in Mozambique began to fall.⁸ And just one month before the Fifth Congress, the Mozambican Defence Minister announced that the Soviets were planning to substantially cut their deliveries of military hardware.⁹ So at the time of the Congress, while FRELIMO may not have been expecting pressure from Moscow aimed at bringing about a negotiated settlement to the war, it was clear at the very least that it could no longer count on the same level of Soviet support.¹⁰

This weakening of the Soviet commitment had its counterpart in growing Western pressure on Maputo to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. The first lineaments of a triumphalist West's New World Order were in evidence even before the collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, reflecting Moscow's own admission that its model was in deep trouble. And the West's package associated economic prosperity with capitalism, and underpinned the latter with multi-party democracy. Western pressure on Maputo was therefore aimed at convincing FRELIMO to abandon its commitment to Marxism-Leninism, an alignment which had become increasingly symbolic anyway, at least at the economic level, given Mozambique's adoption of an IMF-monitored structural adjustment programme in 1986 which gave increasing scope to market forces. In addition, following on from the abandonment of its political trajectory, FRELIMO should also relinquish its monopoly on power. Both changes would not only, and most obviously, result in a western-oriented Mozambique but also, it was believed, help to create the conditions for an end to the conflict. And so, in the form of political conditionality attached to its aid, the West made it clear to Maputo that it saw the introduction of a multi-party system, as well as a deepening commitment to free-market economics, as pre-conditions for the continuation of Western assistance.¹¹

This is not to argue, of course, that it was solely external factors that account for FRELIMO's change in direction. Internal pressures had been building up which pointed to the necessity of abandoning both Marxist economics and politics, as well as opening up the political arena to other actors. For a start,

it had become increasingly obvious to the government that Renamo could not be defeated militarily. While, with the assistance of Zimbabwean troops, FRELIMO had managed to regain vast tracts of territory in the course of an offensive conducted in 1987-88, it remained the case that much of the countryside remained a no-man's land, one immediate effect of which was to seriously jeopardize emergency relief operations.

The urgent need to restore peace to the countryside was strengthened by the fact that urban centres such as Maputo, Beira and Quelimane were overwhelmed by an influx of refugees, whose needs existing social services were finding it increasingly difficult to meet, thus creating a potentially explosive situation in the cities. In addition, the first wild-cat strikes, by dockers and workers, took place in 1990, something unheard of previously given that the official trade-union movement was simply a wing of the party. Aimed at defending the living standards of salaried workers against price rises resulting from the elimination of government subsidies and a tight wages policy imposed by the Structural Adjustment Programme, there was nevertheless a very real danger that such strikes could trigger off a wider social upheaval of a more overtly political, anti-FRELIMO nature. Increasingly frequent reports that growing numbers of ill-fed and badly paid government troops had taken to banditry as a means of survival contributed to the looming spectre of a possibly irreversible descent into social anarchy unless peace was achieved. An escape valve needed to be found, and the introduction of a multi-party system held out the prospect that this social discontent could be directed into less dangerous channels.

Such a process of political decompression, following on from FRELIMO's abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, would help to address what was perceived to be the root cause of the discontent, namely the continuing war. Put simply, a way needed to be found to entice Renamo to the negotiating table. Given that the rebels had always justified their rebellion in terms of the need to combat FRELIMO's Marxism, and had repeatedly stated that one of their main objectives was the introduction of a multi-party system, it followed that a concessions on this last issue could feasibly bring the war to an end.

And so, in January 1990, the government presented a draft of a revised constitution to the National Assembly for discussion which allowed for the introduction of a multi-party system, direct elections for President, and guaranteed freedom of the press and religious expression, as well as the independence of the judiciary. After extensive discussions, the new constitution was formally adopted on the 1st December 1990. At its heart lies the principle of the separation of powers, a fundamental revision of the 1975 constitution which posited an archetypal Eastern European socialist state with vast powers and which blurred the distinction between party and state. As the Vice-President of the Mozambican Supreme Court points out,

The principle that the party in power - the FRELIMO Party - is the controlling power of the state and society has been rescinded, so that it is now clearly established that the State and Party are, and should remain, two distinct and separate realities.¹²

It is out of this *lex fundamentalis* that all else has flowed in terms of political decompression in Mozambique. And by legalizing plurality (if not dissidence), FRELIMO's *de jure* relinquishing of its monopoly on power has opened up the necessary intellectual space for a more discriminating approach to Mozambique's post-revolutionary history. The central question that is being addressed is why and how, after being one of the darlings of the international Left which deposited high hopes in FRELIMO's plans to challenge the international structures of inequality, Mozambique was reduced to the status of mendicant.

The debates that have taken place revolve around two issues in particular. Firstly, questions are now raised about the appropriateness of the agrarian policies adopted by FRELIMO after independence. Though the war has undoubtedly played a major role in disrupting food production, contributing to the country's present misery, and while the government continually emphasised this factor in its discourse, problems in FRELIMO's agricultural policies were apparent even before RENAMO's activities became a serious national problem. It is clear now, and was obvious then, that any plans to radically transform the socio-economic structures inherited from the colonial period were going to stand or fall depending on how successfully they were applied in the countryside. Given that they did fail, attention has naturally focused on the reasons why. Secondly, there is the issue of Renamo. After years of being cast by the government as simply 'armed bandits' and mercenaries, a self-seeking group of foreign-financed individuals that was beyond the pale, deserving only to be crushed, FRELIMO presently finds itself negotiating a peace settlement with Renamo in Rome. Though now treated by Maputo as errant brothers, Renamo nevertheless remains an inchoate and shady organization to many Mozambicans. They realise that there is rather more substance to the rebels than was previously conceded by officials. Given that much of their destitution is undeniably related to the war waged by Renamo, it is hardly surprising that there have been vigorous discussions about the nature of the movement, and in particular what has sustained it over the last decade.

FRELIMO, THE PEASANTRY AND THE ARMED STRUGGLE

The problems associated with the phenomenon of urban intelligentsias heading rural-based revolutionary movements are hardly new. One could argue that with the exception of the Russian, Ethiopian and Iranian revolutions, all successful national liberation/revolutionary struggles have toppled their respective *anciens*

régimes by applying the Maoist strategy of encirclement of the cities. The countryside has provided not only the necessary strategic rear bases for such struggles, but also the peasant soldiers who have formed the rump of revolutionary armies from China to Nicaragua, and from Vietnam to Mexico. Relatively educated urban elements formed the greater part of the leadership of these movements, people who naturally had their own intellectual baggage. Furthermore, as time passed, it was often discovered that they also possessed their own agendas which were often at variance with the interests of the peasantry. This tension, not always apparent during the phase of armed struggle, (and where it was so, often downplayed), is starkest in those movements which drew their inspiration from Marxism.

In the case of FRELIMO, the potentially problematic relationship between a leadership composed of radical, urban, petit-bourgeois intellectuals and the peasantry was complicated by regional/ethnic factors. The former were predominantly Southerners from Maputo and Gaza provinces and the capital city (e.g. Mondlane, Machel and Chissano), and included a not insignificant number of *mestizos*, *assimilados*, Indians and even Whites (Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo were both of mixed race, while Jacinto Veloso was a Portuguese Air Force officer who defected in 1963).¹³ The latter, on the other hand, were largely Northerners, initially in particular Makonde from the northernmost province of Cabo Delgado. Yet despite these cleavages, FRELIMO proved to be highly effective, a reflection of the success with which the leadership built bridges to its growing peasant following, which sustained FRELIMO during its 13 year armed struggle.¹⁴

This unity between leadership and rank and file was largely based on a commonality of interests in putting an end to Portuguese colonial rule. As regards the peasantry, the colonial state was seen as an intrusive and exploitative entity. On the basis of subsequent developments, it could be argued that their primary concern was not to eliminate private production, but rather to remove the institutionalised obstacles which distorted the peasant household economy. Their objective was thus to put an end to *chibalo* (forced labour), compulsory cultivation of particular agricultural products as well as their sale to colonial state marketing boards at unfavourable prices, white domination of the small-scale rural trade networks, the elimination of the hut tax and the return of land appropriated by white settlers. When seen in this light, the motives underlying the support rendered by the Mozambican peasantry to the liberation struggle did not really differ in substance from that rendered by the rural population in other parts of Africa to their respective liberation movements, except that in the case of Mozambique, given Lisbon's intransigence, they were forced to take up arms to achieve their objectives.

However, after convergence on the basis of their shared interest in getting rid of colonial rule, the leadership went a step further. According to FRELIMO's own accounts of its development, the leadership (which is usually treated as coterminous with the movement) gradually underwent a process of political radicalization in the course of the armed struggle, and came to see FRELIMO's objectives in rather different terms. Instead of being satisfied with the termination of Portuguese colonial rule, the Marxists within FRELIMO, which over time came to dominate the movement, saw colonialism and capitalism as equally exploitative systems, and argued for the necessity of going beyond the national liberation struggle as conventionally defined and, come independence, to reconstruct Mozambique along revolutionary socialist lines. To have been content with simply ousting the Portuguese, so they believed, would have left a vacuum which an aspirant indigenous bourgeoisie would have attempted to fill, maintaining the exploitative capitalist relations of production which they saw as the root cause of the anti-colonial struggle. To have been content simply with a successful conclusion to the war against Lisbon, without addressing these larger socio-economic issues, was seen by the radicals within FRELIMO as constituting less than an improvement in relation to the status quo ante.

According to the official histories,¹⁵ reflected in the work of sympathetic scholars,¹⁶ FRELIMO's progression from bourgeois nationalist movement to revolutionary socialist party was a product of the factional in-fighting, or rather class struggle, between the adherents of two opposing groups, who lined up according to their views on how to organise production in the 'liberated areas' which FRELIMO soon found itself controlling. As the disputes raged on, it became increasingly clear that the conflict was between divergent views on the socio-economic profile of an independent Mozambique.

On one side were those notables subsequently characterized as the 'new exploiters' who, in the liberated areas, attempted to set themselves up as private businessmen through their control of both the marketing of agricultural surplus produced by peasants on their individual plots and the FRELIMO shops which were meant to be consumer co-operatives, and even employed labour on their increasingly large farms. The result, as one pro-FRELIMO scholar has argued, was that these people became,

a group looking for change in government, but not social or economic relations. [However] for the guerrillas, and increasingly for the rest of the peasants, the war was not simply to change the colour of the exploiters.¹⁷

Supposedly taking their cue from the discontented peasants (though the extent of such consultation is a matter of historical interpretation) the radicals within the leadership began to push the line that the armed struggle should aim not

only to put an end to colonialism, but that its ultimate objective was the elimination of 'the exploitation of man by man'. The liberated areas began to be seen as counter-states, negations not only of the colonial dispensation but of traditional African society. The latter, characterised by the power of chiefs, tribalism, and the subordinate position of women, was judged to be as undesirable as Portuguese rule. It was as a result of their clash with the conservatism of, and abuses of power by, the traditional/bourgeois faction that the radicals came to see the need for a wholesale overhauling of Mozambican rural society, and which ultimately "moulded FRELIMO's commitment to socialist economics."¹⁸

They therefore began to push for 'people's power'. In the political sphere this meant the establishment of democratically elected village committees to perform administrative and judicial functions, and in the area of social services, the creation of elementary health and education facilities, thus simultaneously compensating for the neglect of the Portuguese colonial state and undermining the authority of the chiefs and notables. The significance of these developments was seen by the socialist tendency to lie in the fact that the liberated areas came to be seen as prototypes of an ideal post-independent society, laboratories where radical ideas were put to the test, the results heavily influencing future policy.

It was at the level of production, however, that the changes advocated by the radicals in the liberated areas were to have the most serious consequences. When, in the aftermath of the Second Congress of 1968, the socialists triumphed over the 'new exploiters', they immediately ensured that better prices were paid to the peasants for their surplus. More importantly, they began to push for co-operative production, encouraging the peasants, in addition to cultivating their private plots, to spend time on collective plots, production there being distributed according to the hours put in by each individual. In addition, there was also fully collectivized production by FRELIMO personnel attached to the movement's schools and health posts. Nevertheless - and this should have constituted an early warning sign to FRELIMO - even as sympathetic an observer as Barry Munslow was forced to admit that "for the peasants, full co-operative production emerged only in the liberated areas of Cabo Delgado, [the cradle of the armed struggle] and even there not extensively".¹⁹

By the time of independence, therefore, FRELIMO had clearly committed itself to some form of socialization of agriculture. The only question that remained to be answered was what form it would take.

VILLAGIZATION, COLLECTIVIZATION AND STATE FARMS

The policies formulated by FRELIMO after taking power were the product of a marriage between ideological pre-disposition and necessity. On the one hand the socialist tendency had become increasingly Marxist in outlook in the course of the armed struggle, though an affiliation to any particular variant had not yet been proclaimed. Nevertheless, at the time of independence, FRELIMO did possess its own revolutionary heritage as embodied in the notion of 'popular power', of grass-roots participation and decentralization of authority, and still considered itself a broad front of the Mozambican masses rather than a vanguard party of the working-class. But, so it is argued, the lessons of the liberated areas soon proved to be of only limited utility when FRELIMO was confronted with the complex tasks involved in administering a whole country. Put simply, FRELIMO needed to find a model.

Initially, however, like the halcyon days of all revolutions, FRELIMO went through a voluntarist phase, in which enthusiasm seemed capable of overcoming all concrete obstacles. The new government quite naturally applied its successful experience with Chinese-style mass mobilization practices in the liberated areas to the cities, and set up 'dynamizing groups' to spread the gospel, organize the urban population into neighbourhood committees, and assist workers in factories to set up Production Councils. At the time, given its weakness in terms of cadres and the chaos caused by the exodus of Portuguese, FRELIMO had little alternative but to delegate such functions to the dynamizing groups.

By 1977, however, the regime had managed to consolidate itself, and was able to emancipate itself from its own past practices. The reasons underlying FRELIMO's decision to transform itself from mass movement to vanguard party at its Third Congress in February 1977, to rein in the dynamizing groups, to opt for a Soviet-style state apparatus, to adopt an East European system of government and economic model, are complex. On the one hand, there are the reasons put forward by FRELIMO itself²⁰ and its foreign apologists, such as: that the dynamizing groups had, in some cases, been penetrated by that perennial and indefatigable *bête noire*, an opportunist aspirant bourgeoisie which threatened to sabotage the revolution. In any case, so the argument went, the dynamizing groups, as then constituted, had outlived their utility given the new phase in which the revolution was entering, namely that of the 'construction of socialism'. To succeed in this task, in particular given the enormous administrative burden taken on by the new regime in the wake of its extensive nationalizations, required a centralized, vanguard party composed of a restricted number of committed cadres, capable of monopolizing power in the face of perceived internal and external threats, of leading the working class, and of mobilizing and maximizing the use of scarce resources.

On the other hand, there was the effect of increasing Soviet influence which was to eventually lead to the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in March 1977.²¹ In light of Mozambique's understandable feelings of insecurity as a fledgling revolutionary regime in a region dominated by an antagonistic and bellicose South Africa, Moscow was able to come forward and forge links with Maputo, providing not only material assistance but also an already tried and tested model of socio-political organization which, if adopted, would supposedly enable FRELIMO not only to give substance to its revolutionary socialist commitments, but also to retain power.

The FRELIMO that emerged from the Third Congress was therefore very different from that which had conducted the armed struggle. Democratic centralism was the order of the day, and it was clear that orders were going to flow from top to bottom. And the state it controlled was clearly going to be *dirigiste* in nature, intervening extensively in all socio-economic institutions, imposing ideological orthodoxy and controlling the channels of political influence. FRELIMO's adoption of East European style Marxism entailed the automatic privileging of the urban proletariat, since according to that cosmology it was the proletariat, with the help of a vanguard party, that would fulfil its historic mission of building a classless society. Given the weakness in numerical terms of this class in Mozambique, added to Soviet prescriptions as to how embark on a process of self-sustaining non-capitalist development, emphasis was placed on the need to industrialize. In particular through a concentration on heavy industry, the shackles of underdevelopment would be broken, while in the process a powerful industrial proletariat would be created which would lead Mozambican society forwards to the socialist millennium.

What were the implications of these decisions for rural Mozambique? FRELIMO had come to power thanks largely to the support rendered by the peasantry. Yet as a result of the decisions of the Third Congress, their role had clearly been downgraded. With agriculture now considered 'the base', and industry as the 'dynamic factor' of development, much as FRELIMO talked about the need for a 'peasant-worker alliance', and indulged in semantics by designating the peasants the 'principal' force of the revolution while the workers were the 'leading' force, it became clear that the inevitable process of state-directed capital accumulation through the extraction of surplus would be carried out at the expense of the peasantry. Industry was to be a priority over agriculture, cities privileged in relation to countryside, workers favoured over peasants.

The fundamental question that faced FRELIMO was how to ensure control of the peasantry in order to be able to extract the required surplus, and the answer arrived at was through the socialization of the countryside. The policy had three main components, namely the creation of state farms, an increase in the level of co-operative activities between individual peasant farmers, and the

establishment of communal villages. The state agricultural sector, a result of FRELIMO having taken over a large number of foreign-owned agro-exporting plantations and settler farms after independence, was the centre-piece of the new government's agricultural strategy. The state farms were to be highly mechanized enterprises to which the benefits of socialist planning could be applied, producing food for the cities and employing (and creating) a rural proletariat. As far as cooperatives were concerned, the Mozambican peasantry were to be encouraged to form such units, without necessarily abandoning their private plots which were still seen as the principal source of agricultural production at this stage. The advantages of co-operatives were seen to lie in the fact that they would gradually instil a spirit of cooperative work in the family sector, and more concretely,

generate higher production and better productivity,... produce a larger surplus and so contribute more to the process of accumulation,...and consolidate a political base for the revolution amongst rural producers.²²

The third pillar of the policy was the communal village programme, the objective of which was to concentrate dispersed populations so as to more effectively deliver social services such as health and education and agricultural extension services. In the communal villages people would be inducted into new ways of socialist living, learn better agricultural techniques, and co-operative farming could be encouraged by the representatives of the state.²³ One side-benefit which often went unmentioned was that it also permitted greater political control and supervision of rural communities.

By 1981, however, it was being admitted by both FRELIMO and foreign observers that the strategy had run into trouble. It is worth quoting the conclusions drawn by a meeting of government ministers, since they indicate how the problem was being viewed:

Many communal villages are still in an embryonic phase essentially because their economic base remains one of individual production. Cooperative production is not developing at the desired rate. The agricultural cooperatives are still, in most cases, pre-cooperatives which do not constitute the principal form of work of their members and do not display...the advantages of this form of socialist property.²⁴

The debates took place against the background of falling agricultural production. In 1980, the government was forced to launch an international appeal for food aid, and admitted that the country was only producing one third of its food requirements.²⁵

The problem, as seen by the government, was that voluntary cooperativization had shown meagre results in the period between 1977-81; throughout the country there were only 375 cooperatives working collective plots in 1981, employing a mere 37,000 people, a miniscule fraction of the rural population.²⁶ Given that FRELIMO worked on the assumption of not only the political, but also economic superiority, of collective agriculture, the low levels of agricultural output were attributed to the low levels of collectivization and villagization that had been achieved up till then. Less emphasis was placed on the highly questionable performances registered by the state farms, which during the same period had sucked in vast amounts of capital in the form of machinery, and in the process used up extremely scarce foreign exchange as well as managerial expertise. Contrary to expectations, they were proving neither rational nor highly productive.

Indicative of the scale of the problem in the state sector was the performance of the Complexo Agro-industrial do Baixo Limpopo [Agro-Industrial Complex of the Lower Limpopo Valley], (CAIL), a mammoth project in Gaza province, set up in 1977 with Bulgarian assistance, which it was envisaged would become the country's rice basket. The project never met its production targets, yields consistently falling far short of what was expected.²⁷ The problems were evident by 1981, but were seen, however, as being of a technical nature namely lack of managerial and financial resources, rather than the result of fundamentally flawed conceptualizations of the potentialities of state farms. Logically, therefore, the solution appeared to be more of the same, and this was what was done. The managers of the complex blamed the late delivery of seed, fertilizers, pesticides, tractor mechanics, and significantly, the lack of workers, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons. Reforms were carried out after an investigation, but these clearly did not go to the heart of the issue, so much so that the report concluded by stating that the optimistic production targets were in fact realizable.²⁸

The experience of the Limpopo project is generalizable to the rest of the state sector. Resources continued to be overwhelmingly directed to this sector, and the tiny 2% that went to cooperatives in the period between 1977-81,²⁹ did not significantly improve. The family sector was basically ignored when it came to the provision of extension services. And this at a time of falling marketed output,³⁰ increasing dependence on food imports and aid, when it was already known that peasant farmers produced 3/4 of all crops in the country, 1/3 of all marketed output, and that family agriculture was of course responsible for feeding the 80% of Mozambique's population that lived in rural areas.³¹

Wedded to a particular vision of a Mozambique purged of 'the exploitation of man by man', FRELIMO persisted in its efforts to socialize the countryside despite mounting evidence that the policy was proving disastrous not only in

purely economic, but also political terms. At the Fourth Party Congress of 1983, some concessions were made to what were seen as short term problems such as that of the supply of food to the urban areas. Private farmers who demonstrated a capacity for producing a surplus were to receive greater support, producer prices were to be improved, and the supply of consumer goods for the rural areas given a boost as a means of increasing the marketing of peasant surpluses. Nevertheless, these were seen as adjustments at the margin, minor tactical retreats. Private agriculture was still ultimately to disappear, and the state sector was to be strengthened and remain dominant, while marketing and distribution of produce remained subject to central planning.³² The core premises of FRELIMO's agrarian policy, dating back to 1977, remained inviolate. And it is precisely on the consequences of this policy for the country as a whole, for the peasantry in particular, and its relationship to the war, that scholars have recently focused.

THE LOGIC OF PEASANT WITHDRAWAL AND RESISTANCE

Much of the revisionist literature on Mozambique has stressed the relative importance of the mistakes committed by FRELIMO in its dealings with the rural population as a factor in the present crisis, as opposed to the official emphasis on externally supported armed dissidence, a change which one scholar has appropriately designated a 'paradigm shift'.³³

FRELIMO's emphasis on South African destabilisation as the root cause of current problems is now seen to have confused cause and effect. For example, in the hands of an eminent *compagnon de route* - or fellow traveller - of FRELIMO's such as the journalist Paul Fauvet, the minutiae of the origins of Renamo, its links with the Rhodesian and then South African security forces, its role in Pretoria's destabilization strategy of the 1980's, its membership composed of FRELIMO renegades, 'askaris' from the old colonial army, and white right-wing elements in Portugal who had fled Mozambique in 1975, are all convincingly detailed. Yet no mention at all is made of the relationship between the movement's growth and the ongoing agrarian crisis in Mozambique, the unstated assumption being that the former is a cause of the latter. Renamo is thus portrayed as a completely extraneous entity, working in the service of counter-revolutionary foreign interests, with no organic links to the rural masses, in sum, the archetypal proxy movement.³⁴

If there is one study that has singlehandedly gone to the very core of these assumptions, it is surely the study by the French anthropologist Christian Geffray, *La Cause des Armes au Mozambique*.³⁵ Returning to Mozambique in 1988, and more specifically the district of Erati in Nampula province where he had worked between 1983-85 while attached to the Centro de Estudos Africanos

in Maputo, Geffray set out to throw light on the fact that some population centres in Erati, which on his first sojourn had apparently been loyal to the FRELIMO state, had since switched sides, becoming centres of dissidence when Renamo arrived in the surrounding region in 1984.

Much emphasis is placed by Geffray on the pre-existing conditions in Erati, prior to the appearance of Renamo, in order to demonstrate the existence of a pool of rural discontent which the rebels were able to capitalize on and operationalize. It is a reflection of the sophistication of his study that Geffray recognises the complexity of the situation on the ground, pointing out that while some ethnic groups in the district joined Renamo, others remained within the FRELIMO fold, and explains their differentiated responses in terms of historical rivalries between these groups which date back to the colonial period.³⁶ These cleavages, which Renamo succeeded in playing on, are treated however as secondary tensions, the primary one being that between the rural communities and FRELIMO. Two factors, in particular, are given extensive treatment, namely FRELIMO's communal village programme, and the wider *problematique* of FRELIMO's attitudes towards rural society.

In regard to the villagization programme, this began to pick up from 1981 onwards. This was a result, on the one hand, of FRELIMO's desire to proceed with its programme of socialization of the countryside, and in the context of worsening food production, to ensure that the state would be able to access whatever surplus was produced. On the other hand - and as the war worsened, this factor undoubtedly became the main one - there was the need to deny the rebels a sea in which they could swim. Seen in this light, the great push for villagization which began in 1981 was a result of FRELIMO's growing sense of internal insecurity. In an earlier co-authored article, Geffray estimated that in Nampula province, the number of communal villages increased by 400% between 1981-85.³⁷ And on the basis of studies conducted by Michel Cahen, another eminent French scholar in the field of Mozambican studies, it is clear that while initially conceived of as a voluntary programme, force was gradually resorted to by the authorities as a means of speeding up the process.³⁸ Rather than a development model, the communal village programme became a means of implanting the presence of an increasingly insecure state apparatus in the rural areas, with all the heavyhandedness that this sense of urgency necessarily entailed.³⁹ In a prophetic statement he made in 1984, Joseph Hanlon argued that

Like the Portuguese before them, FRELIMO will have to make its own decisions about the military merits of forcing people into villages. But I think forced villages are an important source of recruits for the MNR [RENAMO's old acronym], and are building up antagonism towards FRELIMO that will take years to remove.⁴⁰

In the case of Erati district, Geffray points out that when the first rumours of a Renamo presence in the region reached the ears of government authorities (1985), people living in dispersed settlements were ordered to concentrate in existing villages, hastily designated communal villages, and forced to abandon their ancestral lands and huts which were torched by the armed forces to prevent their return. The size of the population of these centres thus often increased three or fourfold, putting enormous pressure on existing land, to the chagrin of both previous and new occupants. FRELIMO itself was thus responsible for softening up the terrain for RENAMO's subsequent penetration, by creating a pool of rural discontent. As Geffray goes on to note,

Some weeks after the forced displacement of the inhabitants by the armed forces, the first overpopulated villages were attacked by Renamo. After these attacks, the officers commanding the detachment of guerrillas...explained the hostility of their organization to the communal villages. They invited the villagers to return to the lands they had abandoned under FRELIMO's orders.⁴¹

Yet it was not only alienation of peasant land that was to prove disastrous for FRELIMO. Of equal, if not more importance, was Maputo's attitude towards the mores of rural cultural life, and it is for this that Geffray reserves his most scathing criticisms. Through extensive interviews, he comes to the conclusion that what most antagonised the rural population were FRELIMO's efforts to create the New Mozambican Man, stripped of his vestigial pre-scientific religious beliefs and forms of social organization. This is not to be separated from the communal village policy. In fact the two were intimately linked, the latter constituting the geographic space within which the re-education programme was to take place, FRELIMO's schools and health posts being the transmission belts for this policy which was overseen by the village administrator and local party secretary.

'Feudalism', 'tribalism' and 'obscurantism' were the targets of the government, anxious to embark on a homogenizing, socialist, nation-building project from 'the Rovuma river to Maputo' (FRELIMO's favourite slogan), assisted in their objectives by both foreign and Mozambican Marxist intellectuals based at the Centro de Estudos Africanos in Maputo. And in the speeches of those in power, the tremendous diversity of the country in terms of social and productive structures, as well as belief systems, was ignored in the course of the villagizing project, the end-result of which would be the socialist New Man.

The new rulers of the country were incapable of thinking about nation-building without this implying the immediate elimination of the concrete historical diversity and heterogeneity of the social

groups which they wanted to subsume under one entity.⁴²

On the basis of his own experiences in the CEA, Geffray recollects that,

The strange contours of a fictional country appeared little by little in the discourse of those in power: it spoke of a 'worker-peasant alliance' which had delegated its authority to FRELIMO in whose name it exercised its dictatorship... This voluntarist and blind discourse did not appear necessarily to imply any violence; it was rather characterised by that particular form of naiveté that was a feature of the urban and cosmopolitan intelligentsia of the capital.⁴³

However, as Geffray notes, out in the countryside coercion was precisely what was used in order to attain the objective of creating a new FRELIMO culture. Extending the presence of the state in the communal villages through the establishment of 'people's courts', 'people's assemblies', as well as the women's and youth wings of the Party, necessarily meant undercutting traditional authority in the countryside, added to which were attempts to suppress practices such as polygamy, the payment of *lobolô* and ancestor worship. Mozambican rural society was treated as a blank page upon which FRELIMO could write its vision, the peasantry as an atomized mass of individuals with no history, as if they had "dropped from the sky, waiting for FRELIMO to organise them..."⁴⁴ The humiliation of chiefs, the destruction of religious items, the constant denigration of traditional values by the representatives of the party-state, compounded the feelings of resentment against the representatives of an increasingly alien and threatening entity which had already been produced by the process of geographical displacement.

As Geffray shows in the case of Erati, when RENAMO entered the scene, this provided those most aggrieved (in this particular case the Macuane people) the opportunity to withdraw from the world of FRELIMO, and place themselves at the disposal of RENAMO which promised to restore the *status quo ante*. And while the historical rivals of the Macuane, the Erati, preferred to remain under the protection of FRELIMO, the two groups shared a common sense of injury towards the state. On the basis of his case-study, Geffray argues that,

If what we discovered in the case of Erati is applicable to the whole of Mozambique, one could characterise things in the following manner: RENAMO has managed to give a violent form to the opposition of local populations to the *villagizing state* wherever people who had been marginalised during the colonial period, remained so in independent Mozambique, and when they believed they could profit from RENAMO's weapons in order to place themselves beyond the reach of the State.⁴⁵

The faults inherent in FRELIMO's agrarian policies are also highlighted in the fascinating study undertaken by the Mozambican scholar Luis de Brito. On the basis of field work carried out by the Centro de Estudos Africanos in 1983 in Mueda district in Cabo Delgado province,⁴⁶ Brito concludes that contrary to the mythologization of the wartime 'liberated zones' that were to inform post-independence policies, according to which they constituted shining examples of voluntary collectivization and grassroots popular participation in the decision-making process, the former in fact never lived up to the ideal. While he notes that in some cases the population depicted the liberated zones favourably, stating that decisions were arrived at through a process of consultation, other respondents stressed the authoritarianism prevalent in the settlements where they had been grouped, because "there were surveillance posts, and people were beaten, and those who tried to escape to Tanzania were sent back to Mozambique".⁴⁷ And on the specific issue of the prevalence of collectivized production in the liberated zones, Brito argues that this has been overestimated and points out that with the end of the war, in the majority of cases people simply returned to their old lands, and even those peasants who remained in the villages reverted to family-based agriculture.⁴⁸

Peasant resentment against the alienation of their land, was also a consequence of the state farms policy. Once again the agro-industrial complex of the Limpopo valley looms large as an example of the problems created by FRELIMO's fixation with proletarianizing the peasantry. Prior to independence the region had been the site of a Portuguese settlement programme. Irrigation schemes were established in order to enable the land to accommodate thousands of Portuguese peasant farmers, though over time a significant number of Mozambicans were also granted land on the project. With independence and the exodus of the Portuguese, the number of Mozambican peasants increased until 1977 when the giant state farm was set up, in line with the directives of the 3rd Congress. That year also saw devastating floods in the Limpopo valley, and the government seized the opportunity to move people on to high land and villagize them. As Kenneth Hermele notes, the commission in charge of the project established that 'administrative measures' i.e. force, were to be used against those who resisted, and that state farms and cooperatives had first priority in the redistribution of land. Two years later, in a further effort to create a rural proletariat for the state farms, new directives were issued, according to which private plots could not be inherited, while certain groups of peasants, such as those cultivating less than one hectare, would have their land taken away.⁴⁹ Even those who managed to hold on to plots found themselves living in communal villages up to 20 kms away from their plots.⁵⁰

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that the peasants of the Limpopo should have "shown no interest in working on the state farms or in living in the communal villages established with a view to providing the CAIL with a labour

force,"⁵¹ and that they did not become "diligent, disciplined, dedicated and conscientious workers in their new role as salaried employees of the CAIL".⁵² Hermele concluded that "one of the basic reasons for the problems confronted by the CAIL and by collectivized agriculture in general, was that it was erected in the face of opposition by the peasantry - at the same time as the state enterprises and cooperatives were dependent on these peasants as workers".⁵³

UNMASKING RENAMO

The above works by both foreign and Mozambican scholars have established the causal nexus linking the estrangement between FRELIMO and the peasantry as a result of the former attempts at socializing agriculture, with the country's growing economic crisis particularly in the area of food production. At the same time, by placing FRELIMO's agrarian policies at the centre of their analysis of the collapse of FRELIMO's post-revolutionary project, they have helped to throw light on those factors that have assisted the spread of Renamo, factors that resulted from Maputo's own misconceived policies which created the necessary social base for the rebels. When viewed in these terms, external support to Renamo should therefore be viewed as a *catalyst* rather than the *root cause* of the war.

If Geffray's work has led the way towards a better understanding of the internal social dynamics of the Mozambican conflict, Alex Vines' *Renamo : A Study in Terrorism*⁵⁴ is its counterpart in terms of providing a long overdue serious analysis of Renamo. The merits of the text, besides the fact that it is the product of exhaustive and meticulous research, lie primarily in its success in transcending the caricatures imposed on Renamo by those on the extremes of either side of the political divide. The assumptions underlying the output of those academics and journalists that line up on the side of FRELIMO have already been noted. But a Manichean depiction of the conflict in Mozambique is far from a monopoly of the government's supporters. The miniscule, but vocal, group of propagandists for Renamo have not been far behind in the race for the moral high ground. Apologists such as the South African-based academic Thomashausen, capitalizing on the global rightward swing in politics during the 1980s, sought to present the rebels as the West's natural allies. These 'freedom fighters' - to use the favoured designation of the European and American New Right - were engaged in an unequal but just struggle against a Soviet-backed communist tyranny, their objectives being the introduction of a multi-party system and free-market economics.⁵⁵ Others, such as David Hoile, head of the Mozambique Institute in London which is RENAMO's P.R. office in the U.K., have made it their brief to counter reports associating Renamo with a number of atrocities committed in the course of the war.⁵⁶

As Tom Young, one of the first to restore a modicum of sanity to the debate, has argued:

the understanding of Mozambique has been crippled by shallow and partisan rhetoric which all too often has been allowed to pass for serious analysis...The people of Mozambique have been ill-served by these cliques of the Left and Right, especially in relation to the Renamo phenomenon. The Left has responded to the propaganda needs of the Mozambican state and presented Renamo as 'just puppets' of somebody or other, preferably the South Africans. Marginally worse in terms of utter dishonesty and opportunism have been various right-wing groups who...have seen fit to portray mass murder and mutilation as a 'struggle for freedom'.⁵⁷

Lifting Renamo out of its place in Pretoria's destabilization strategy (though not ignoring the importance of this factor) enables Vines to focus on the movement itself as an independent rather than a dependent variable in the maelstrom of southern African politics, and to study it as a subject rather than an object. As a result Renamo, surely one of the least understood political phenomena in Africa, becomes more understandable not only in general terms as one of many rebel movements in the Third World, but also more specifically as a product of Mozambique's pre- and post-colonial development.

RENAMO's murky past prior to 1975 is exhaustively disinterred by Vines. In a detailed account of the fractious politics of Byzantine complexity that plagued not only FRELIMO but also its numerous rivals (who often go unmentioned in accounts of Mozambique's history), he demonstrates that the raw material for a rebel movement was there even before independence. Furthermore, as Vines notes, some of these splinter groups already claimed to be operating inside Mozambique by 1977.⁵⁸ FRELIMO's claim to being the only true representative of the Mozambican people and, after it assumed power in 1975, its moves to suppress political dissidence and imprison opposition figures, must therefore be factored in to any analysis of the genesis of armed rebellion against the new government in Maputo. And in addition to the opposition groups, which the Rhodesians were to cobble together into a rebel force, must be added a not insignificant number of FRELIMO dissidents, discontented 'by-products' of the triumph of the 'correct line' during the movement's internal struggles, who in official historiographies tend to vanish into thin air.⁵⁹

Three previously obscured factors in the Renamo phenomenon have been teased out by Vines, namely the movement's non-South African connections and in particular its regional support network, its ethno/religious base, and finally the

strategy and tactics it adopts out in the field. In regards to the first, Vines shows that while the Smith government as midwife and the PW Botha government as wetnurse played vital roles in first creating and then nurturing Renamo, support for the rebels on the continent was far from limited to the two white minority regimes.

Malawi, for example, has lent support on and off to Renamo throughout the post-independence period, assistance dictated partly by the fact that Malawi and Mozambique lie at opposite ends of the political spectrum. In addition, there were Banda's territorial ambitions, namely that he may have hoped, through such support, to have annexed territory in northern Mozambique and thus gain access to the Indian Ocean.⁶⁰ Kenya, another increasingly important player in recent years, is host to a Renamo office, and since the 1960s has been a traditional place of refuge for anti-FRELIMO dissidents. Vines invokes evidence to suggest that, with the gradual withdrawal of South African support, Kenya has taken over as the main logistical rear base for Renamo, though he is as baffled as are most observers concerning Arap Moi's motivations. Two possible explanations would seem plausible. Firstly, that Arap Moi would like to project Kenya as a regional power-broker. Secondly, given the historically warm ties between Dar-es-Salaam (Kenya's traditional rival who had stationed troops in Mozambique in support of FRELIMO) and Maputo, the logic of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' could have been operating, though in this case the permutation would have to be taken one step further to 'my enemy's friend's enemy is my friend'.

In regards to the second factor, namely RENAMO's ethno-religious base, Vines points out that Ndaou Shona-speakers from Manica and Sofala provinces dominate the movement's military command structures. This is a reflection of, on the one hand, early patterns of recruitment by the Rhodesian military - Manica province borders on Zimbabwe - and on the other to the fact that the Ndaou were predisposed to dissident activity given their low level of representation within government circles. In addition, the Ndaou had historically enjoyed a reputation as warriors, and the Portuguese had recruited extensively amongst these people during the war against FRELIMO. Dhaklamba is Ndaou and RENAMO's headquarters, Casa Banana, was for many years located in Sofala province. Nevertheless, it is important to note that as the movement moved out of its ethnic heartland in the early 1980s, so its ethnic composition was diluted, though Ndaou has retained a role as a *lingua franca* of the movement.⁶¹

As far as the role of religion in the movement's ideology is concerned, Vines notes that Renamo has successfully made use of traditional spirit cults in order to bolster its position vis-a-vis the civilian populations it has come into contact with. In the case of captured communal villages Renamo has made a point of allowing the reassertion of traditional religious practices, as well as used spirit

mediums in order to boost the morale of its own rank and file.⁶² Otto Roesch, an astute observer of the war, in a recent study of the *modus operandi* of Renamo in Gaza province based on extensive interviews with ex-combatants and those who have lived under Renamo control, notes that the constant political propaganda refrain of the RENAMO military commanders is that the war they are waging is a,

"war of the spirits" - a crusade - in which FRELIMO is painted as a treacherous organization that has turned its back on African traditions and sold out to foreign ("communist") ideas. RENAMO, on the other hand, is allied with the ancestral spirits in a war to return Mozambique to its traditions and ancestral ways.⁶³

It is, however, in his discussion of Renamo strategy and tactics that Vines has arguably made his most important contribution to a better understanding of a conflict that does not appear to obey any discernable logic, where like leopard spots violence erupts in first one place and then another, and where apparently mindless brutality holds sway. Particularly baffling to urban Mozambicans, as well as foreign observers, has been RENAMO's relentless targeting of anything, be it personnel or property, perceived to be associated with the State. The wholesale destruction of health posts and schools in rural areas, and the brutal treatment meted out to state or party functionaries have been extensively documented, but a coherent explanation was lacking. If there was an explanation, these actions were often attributed solely to orders emanating from Pretoria to bring Mozambique to its knees. To any thinking person, however, it was clear that something else was at work which could not be pigeon-holed so conveniently.⁶⁴

Echoing Geffray's spatial analysis of RENAMO's strategy, Vines depicts the atrocities in terms of the strategy applied largely to what he terms 'destruction zones' i.e. areas lying between Renamo and government controlled territory.

RENAMO's policy is to devastate them so as to force Government withdrawal, to turn them into no-man's land, even a wasteland...The major targets...are anything that can be associated with the Government, from whole regions to particular settlements to economic targets.⁶⁵

Civilian populations in these zones are then kidnapped and brought back to those areas under direct Renamo control, where they are either incorporated into the guerrilla army or used as a labour for food production and/or portage. A recurrent factor in accounts by those who have managed to escape from Renamo camps is the particularly vicious treatment that is meted out to party or government functionaries, decapitation after extended periods of torture

not being uncommon. The targeting of these individuals, apart from eliminating individuals who could possibly come to constitute a source of dissidence in the Renamo camps, may also represent a form of exorcism carried out by Renamo on behalf of the captive community against the abuse they had suffered as a result of FRELIMO's agrarian policies.⁶⁶

The use of a punishing violence is also an ubiquitous feature of life in Renamo camps, any sign of dissidence being dealt with through summary execution. Through the systematic application of terror, the captive population is cowed into submission. Recruits, many of them children, are inducted into the fighting force by being forced to commit atrocities themselves, often against relatives, thus resulting in self-imposed ostracization from their communities.⁶⁷ Such brutality is a reflection of a fundamental problem facing Renamo, namely that it is apparently incapable of transforming itself from a war machine into an entity that could profit from the new political dispensation in Mozambique, and compete for popular support as a political party. This helps to explain the obstructionist role Renamo has played in the peace negotiations in Rome with FRELIMO, which have now been going on for over two years. By introducing the radical reforms of 1989-90, FRELIMO has removed RENAMO's *raison d'être* for continuing the conflict. Yet the former, deprived of a meaningful set of political objectives, and aware of its limited base of support in the country as a whole, has had no alternative but to continue fighting in the hope that a continuing deterioration in socio-economic conditions may lead to a final collapse of the State from which it could profit, or that FRELIMO may renege on its commitment to hold multi-party elections and concede to some sort of power-sharing arrangement.

CRITICISM AND RECONSTRUCTION

While peace in Mozambique remains elusive at the time of writing (September 1992), both sides have committed themselves to signing a cease-fire which would come into effect on 1st October 1992. Whether Dhaklana will be able to deliver his rank and file is another question altogether. In a recent interview with the author, RENAMO's leader seemed to be attempting to extricate himself from any commitment by threatening to "return to the bush" unless FRELIMO met a number of pre-conditions such as the dismantling of the country's intelligence service, and excised certain unspecified "Marxist" clauses in the constitution.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it was clear that he still held FRELIMO to be a Marxist organisation, and believed that Marxism-Leninism was far from moribund, its adherents in Mozambique and elsewhere having adopted a tactical retreat in order to recover their strength for a renewed offensive. None of this augurs well for a meaningful peace, even if a cease-fire were to be signed.

Despite these problems, however, the reforms introduced by FRELIMO as a result of the conflict have already had profound and lasting consequences. On one level, they have allowed for a much more frank exchange of views as to the causes of the present situation than was previously possible. In fairness, it should be pointed out that, in contrast to say the MPLA, FRELIMO always possessed a remarkable capacity for self-criticism. It is highly unlikely, for example, that someone such as Geffray would have been invited to Angola by a state funded entity such as the CEA to carry out research of a similar nature. Frank debate is the order of the day in Mozambique, and many sacred cows are now being subjected to critical analysis. In addition, the revisionist works referred to above have not been without their critics, further contributing to the utility of the process of re-evaluating the country's post-independent trajectory. Questions such as the extent to which one may be justified in extrapolating from Geffray's findings in Erati to the rest of the country, and the attempts to reassert the centrality of external forces in any account of the current crisis⁶⁹ indicate that many issues still await a final audit, one which may only be possible when peace returns to Mozambique.

The second level at which the revisionist literature has, and will continue to impact, is in terms of current policy. In the last two years a few have profited greatly from the Structural Adjustment Programme and its enforced imposition of the new god of unbridled free-market capitalism, and chosen to interpret the revisionist literature as justifying the radical shift in the country's economics and politics, in particular the almost complete abandonment by the state of any role in society.

It is for this process that the Left has reserved its spleen. Dan O'Meara, for example, notes that some within the state apparatus, with the zeal that only new converts can muster,

"have absorbed entirely the ideology of the IMF programme. Many now believe that they are engaged in a mission of national salvation to rebuild their country, to recreate Mozambican society and enrich themselves in the process".⁷⁰

An old FRELIMophile such as John Saul was clearly horrified, after a trip to Maputo in 1990 to attend a conference, to "find the World Bank standing marginally to the left of spokespersons from the Mozambican government".⁷¹

If untrammelled capitalism is savage at the best of times in the Third World, when it operates in a Fourth World country such as Mozambique it is murderous. The genuflections to unalloyed market economics in a situation such as that which faces the vast majority of Mozambicans are clearly ludicrous, if not obscene. Two thirds of the rural population are estimated to be living in

conditions of absolute poverty. In the face of such realities, to demand conditionalities as the IMF has done, such as the removal of food subsidies and increases in charges for health services, is nothing less than criminal. And the World Bank's push for the wholesale withdrawal of the state from the economy, and its belief that the private sector will singlehandedly revive the devastated infrastructure, in an economy that has been blasted back to the stone age, verges on the surrealistic.⁷²

Yet an alternative set of conclusions could be drawn from the revisionist literature. If one of the lessons of Mozambique's experience is that state interference in the rural sector, and more specifically the peasant household economy, is fraught with dangers, another is that land hunger can have extremely destabilizing political consequences. Given the number of refugees who, with a cease-fire, will be returning to reclaim their land, it is imperative that the state play an active role in the process of resettlement and land distribution. As a result of the massive dislocations that have taken place due to the war, many will find their traditional lands occupied by others. Coupled with persistent rumours of land-grabbing by powerful government officials⁷³ as well as the interest expressed by South African and Zimbabwean farmers in cultivating land in Mozambique,⁷⁴ there is therefore a very real danger that unless the state intervenes and allocates this resource according to pre-established criteria a permanent rural underclass will develop, with all the explosive consequences that this would have. Whoever is in power in Maputo at the time would then, in all likelihood, once again have to face serious rural discontent which may very easily translate itself into an insurgency.

ENDNOTES

1. Of particular interest are those works dealing with the destruction of Romanian Jewry during the Second World War by the German occupation forces, a process which the then fascist government in Bucharest actively assisted, capitalising on widespread anti-semitic feelings amongst the populace, but which the post-war communist government denied as having taken place. See, for example, the autobiographical account by Siegfried Jagendorf, *Jagendorf's Foundry: Memoir of the Romanian Holocaust, 1941-44*, Harper Collins, 1992. On the wider phenomenon of the distortion of Romanian history see Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, University of California Press, 1992.
2. Istvan Deak, 'Survivors', *The New York Review of Books*, Vol.39, No.5, 5 March 1992, p.45.
3. *Since the Revolution: Human Rights in Romania*, Helsinki Human Rights Watch, 1992.
4. For text, see *Southern African Record*, No.62.
5. Direcção Nacional de Estatística, *Informação Estatística 1988*, Maputo.
6. *Geographical distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries*, OECD, Paris, 1989, p.326.
7. Figures cited in Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who calls the shots?*, Indiana University Press, 1991, p.273.
8. J. Stephen Morrison, 'The Battle for Mozambique', *Africa Report*, 32, 5, 1987, p.45.
9. *The Independent*, 3 June 1989.
10. In the event, from 1990 onwards, Moscow did begin to make it clear that it desired a political settlement to the conflict. See Richard Weitz, 'Continuities in Soviet Foreign Policy: The Case of Mozambique', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol.11, 1992, p.91.
11. It was hardly a coincidence that in January 1990, i.e. after the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism in July 1989 and before the adoption of the new liberal constitution in December 1990, President Bush took

Mozambique off Washington's black-list of Marxist states, allowing Maputo access to official Export-Import Bank credits.

12. José Norberto Carrilho, *Alguns Aspectos da Constituição*, Departamento de Investigação e Legislação, Ministério da Justiça, Maputo, 1991, p.13.
13. Marcelino dos Santos was Secretary of External Affairs during the struggle, member of the Politburo after independence, and amongst other posts held that of Minister of Planning from 1975-1980. He is currently President of the National Assembly. Rebelo was a regional organiser for FRELIMO before independence, and then became a member of the Politburo and was Minister of Information from 1975-1980. He is currently a member of the Central Committee of the party. After independence, Veloso also became a member of the Politburo, was Minister of Security, Minister of Economic Affairs in the President's Office and is currently Minister of Cooperation.
14. This is not to say, however, that the movement was not plagued by the attempts on the part of certain elements to politicize ethnicity as part of the internal struggle within FRELIMO. On this see the seminal article by Walter Opello, 'Pluralism and Elite Conflict in an Independence Movement: FRELIMO in the 1960s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, October, 1975, pp.66-82.
15. See, for example, FRELIMO's interpretation of the events of 1968 in the official document put out the following year by the Central Committee, *Os graves Acontecimentos de 1968 e as Divergências Ideológicas* [The Significant Events of 1968 and the Ideological Disputes], according to which the internal conflicts within the movement were the product of class cleavages and the clashing of class interests which came to a head that year.
16. See, for example, John Saul, 'FRELIMO and the Mozambique Revolution', *Monthly Review*, 24, 1973, pp.22-52.
17. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*, Zed Press, 1984, p.30.
18. *Ibid.*, p.34.
19. Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins*, Longman, 1983, p.143.

20. See, for example, the document which laid the theoretical groundwork for the decisions taken at the 1977 Congress, *A FRELIMO e as Classes Trabalhadoras Moçambicanas na Edificação da Democracia Popular*, [FRELIMO and the Mozambican Working Classes in the Building of Popular Democracy], Maputo, 1976.
21. For text, see *Southern African Record*, No.62.
22. 'Editorial', *Estudos Moçambicanos*, Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, No.3, 1981, p.6. It would not be incorrect to see the Centre for African Studies as FRELIMO's think-tank, and therefore the views expressed as closely reflecting the Party's official line.
23. See, for example, the references to communal villages, and the role of agriculture in general, in the 'Economic and Social Directives' that came out of the Third Congress in *Tempo*, No.333, 20 February 1977.
24. 'Levar o Povo a participar em Todas as Fases do Plano' [Encourage the people to participate in all the phases of the Plan]. Summary of the discussions held at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers, 20 April 1981, in *Noticias*, 21 April 1981, Maputo, pp.3-4.
25. See *An Appeal: Food Aid for the People's Republic of Mozambique*, Maputo, 1980.
26. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*, Zed Press, 1984, p.103.
27. In 1981, for example, while the target yield was 3.2 tons/hectare, the complex only managed 1.6 tons/hectare. See *Tempo*, Maputo, 30 August 1981.
28. See *Noticias*, 25 August 1981.
29. *Relatorio do Quarto Congresso* [Report of the 4th Congress], Maputo, 1983.
30. Between 1977-1981 marketed agricultural output stagnated, while in the following year it began to fall. Barry Munslow's 'State Intervention in Agriculture', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.22, No.2, 1984, p.217.
31. It is noteworthy that when, in 1983, the Limpopo state farm was

eventually broken up into 10 smaller units, some land was distributed to peasant farmers for private cultivation. In stark contrast to the rice yields obtained under the old dispensation (1.6 tons/hectare in 1981), the private farmers were managing yields of 3.9 tons/hectare by 1984/85. See Kenneth Hermele, 'Lutas Contemporâneas Pela Terra No Vale Do Limpopo' [Contemporary Conflicts Over Land in the Limpopo Valley], *Estudos Moçambicanos*, CEA, No.5/6, 1986, pp.71-72.

32. See the 'Economic and Social Directives' drawn up by the Congress in *Tempo*, 19 June 1983. It is noteworthy that in the months leading up to the Congress, the orthodox position was clearly evident in government statements. The Minister of Agriculture announced in February that peasants were to be encouraged to form 'associations' as a first step towards the creation of agricultural cooperatives. Though the next logical step, namely collectivization, was not specifically mentioned, it undoubtedly formed part of the sub-text of the announcement. (*Agencia de Informaçao de Moçambique*, 1 February 1983). In addition, Marcelino dos Santos was placed at the head of a new government organ which had as its stated objective 'the socialisation of the countryside'.
33. See the review article by Gervase Clarence-Smith, 'The Roots of the Mozambican Counter-Revolution', *Southern African Review of Books*, April/May 1989, pp.7-10.
34. Paul Fauvet, 'Roots of Counter-Revolution: The Mozambique National Resistance', *Review of African Political Economy*, No.29, July 1984, pp.108-121.
35. Christian Geffray, *La Cause des armes au Mozambique: Anthropologie d'une guerre civile*, Karthala, Paris, 1990. When the present author was working for a British aid agency, the Save the Children Fund, in Mozambique in 1989-1990, Geffray's work circulated widely in photocopied form amongst journalists, foreign aid-workers, embassies and, as was widely rumoured, government circles. It has since been translated into Portuguese, and though still ignored by the official press, is on the shelves of the library of at least one academic institution in Maputo.
36. The Macuane people of Erati district, which had been marginalised under colonial rule, went over to RENAMO, while the Erati people themselves, privileged under the Portuguese and the Macuane's historical enemies, remained loyal to the state.

37. Christian Geffray and Morgan Pedersen, 'Sobre a guerra na provincia de Nampula e consequencias socio-economicas locais' [On the War on Nampula Province and its local Socio-economic Consequences], *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos*, Lisbon, No.4/5, 1986.
38. Michel Cahen, *La revolution implosee*, Paris, 1987.
39. It is important to note that this quickening of the pace in the villagization programme was backed up by existing directives contained in the Ten Year Plan devised by FRELIMO in 1981, and which, amongst other things, called for the elimination of family (individual) farming by the end of the decade. Communal villages, at least in their ideal form, were to have as their productive base collective plots. When viewed in these terms, the war provided both an additional reason, as well as an opportunity, for a great push on the issue of villagization. An interesting insight into the mind-set prevalent amongst policy-makers is offered by a Canadian scholar, with longstanding links with the Centro de Estudos Africanos, when she notes that "FRELIMO's tremendous confidence in the support it had from the peasantry was used to justify ambitious programmes of rapid political and economic change...Gradualism was considered to be a defeatist dirty word which the then minister of agriculture asked us to remove from a document prepared in 1980 by the CEA on planning in cooperatives". (Bridget O'Laughlin, 'The Anthropology of a Civil War', *Southern Africa Report*, January 1992, pp.30-31).
40. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*, Zed Press, 1984, p.129.
41. Geffray, *La Cause des Armes*, pp.175-176.
42. *Ibid.*, p.25.
43. *Ibid.*, pp.28-29.
44. Christian Geffray, 'Fragments d'un discours du pouvoir (1975-1985): du bon usage d'une meconnaissance scientifique' [Fragments of a Discourse of Authority (1975-1985): Putting Scientific Ignorance to Good Use], *Politique Africaine*, *op.cit.*, p.78.
45. Christian Geffray, *La cause des armes*, *op.cit.*, pp.219-220.

46. *Situação actual nas antigas zonas libertadas de Cabo Delgado*, [The present situation in the old liberated zones of Cabo Delgado], History Workshop of the CEA, Maputo, 1983.
47. Luis de Brito, 'Une relecture necessaire: La genèse du parti-État FRELIMO', [A necessary re-reading: the genesis of the FRELIMO party-state], *Politique Africaine*, No.29, March 1988, p.24.
48. *Ibid.*, p.25.
49. Kenneth Hermele, *op.cit.*, pp.64-65.
50. *Ibid.*, p.68.
51. *Ibid.*, p.67.
52. *Ibid.*, p.69.
53. *Ibid.*, p.65.
54. Alex Vines, *RENAMO: A Study in Terrorism*, James Currey, 1991.
55. Andre Thomashausen, 'The National Resistance Movement of Mozambique', *Africa Insight*, Vol.13, No.2, 1983, pp.125-129.
56. See, for example, his attempts to pass off two particularly shocking incidents of RENAMO brutality, namely the Homoine and Lalaua massacres of 1987 and 1991 respectively, as acts perpetrated by either FRELIMO or Zimbabwean soldiers. David Hoile, *Mozambique - Propaganda, Myth and Reality*, The Mozambique Institute, London, 1991, pp.19-22.
57. Tom Young, "The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics", *African Affairs*, October, 1990, p.491.
58. Alex Vines, *op.cit.*, p.17.
59. As Vines points out, RENAMO's first leader was André Matsangaissa, a FRELIMO commander who had been arrested for theft and succeeded in escaping in 1976. See Vines, *op.cit.*, p.16. Matsangaissa's successor and current RENAMO leader, Afonso Dhaklama, is also believed to have been a member of FRELIMO prior to independence, though he was also discharged for theft in 1975.

60. *Ibid.*, pp.53-60.
61. *Ibid.*, pp.84-85.
62. *Ibid.*, pp.111-119.
63. Otto Roesch, 'RENAMO and the Peasantry: A View from Gaza', *Southern Africa Report*, December 1990, pp.22-24.
64. When I was working for Save the Children Fund in Mozambique between 1989-1990, one of the project areas of the Fund in Zambezia was the locality of Luabo near the mouth of the Zambezi River, once headquarters of Sena Sugar Estates.

Luabo had been captured by RENAMO, like many other towns in the Zambezi Valley, in 1985, and was only retaken by FRELIMO in 1988. During a visit to Luabo in 1990, I was accompanied by a work colleague who had lived in Luabo up until the RENAMO attack. Fleeing to the other side of the river on the night of the attack, he had been able to witness the two day orgiastic destruction of property that went on. Everything from cars to houses and the giant sugar mill was set alight, while on our visit it became clear that the estate's hospital and schools, as well as the local FRELIMO branch, had been singled out for particularly harsh treatment. While such behaviour may be explained in strategic terms, i.e. the targeting of valuable social infrastructure, the fact that scarce shelter was destroyed in a town which that particular RENAMO group had clearly been ordered to occupy does not fit into the strategic imperative.

65. Alex Vines, *op.cit.*, p.95.
66. It was pointed out to the present author, by a number of Mozambican colleagues, that as part of FRELIMO's villagization campaign, the traditional authorities who were granted the title of *regulos* by the Portuguese, and who carried out certain administrative functions on behalf of the colonial state, were unseated by the new government. FRELIMO, in its search of personnel to take on the necessary administrative functions, was often forced to appoint a member of the *regulo's* family who, because of the relatively privileged position they had enjoyed during the colonial period, had achieved the minimum degree of literacy necessary. In matrilineal societies, i.e. those north of the Zambezi River, the person appointed would have been the nephew of the *regulo*. The fact that these new district administrators were specifically targeted by RENAMO may be explained in terms of the

perception that they had committed the 'double sin' of both 'betraying', through pre-emption, the logic of lineage succession, while in addition using their new positions to attack the foundations of traditional life by attempting to impose the directives of FRELIMO. RENAMO's practise of restoring the authority of the *regulos* would follow on logically from this. Clearly much more work needs to be carried out on this particular aspect of the dynamics operating between RENAMO and the rural societies it comes into contact with.

67. Alex Vines, *op.cit.*, pp.95-96.
68. Interview conducted in Johannesburg on 3 September 1992.
69. See, for example, the critical review of Geffray's book by Bridget O'Laughlin, an anthropologist attached to Eduardo Mondlane University. ('A Base Social Da Guerra Em Moçambique' [The Social Base of The War in Mozambique], *Estudos Moçambicanos*, No.10, 1992, Maputo, pp.107-142). O'Laughlin argues, on the basis of her own field research in Nampula, that in fact, at least on the ground, FRELIMO authorities were much more tolerant of manifestations of traditional culture than Geffray has presented them as being. In addition, stressing once again the importance of external support to RENAMO, she points out that this support is a determining factor in the geographical distribution of rebel activity, concentrated as these were on the borders with Rhodesia, Malawi and South Africa.
70. Dan O'Meara, 'The Collapse of Mozambican Socialism', *Transformation*, No.14, 1991, p.101.
71. John Saul, 'Mozambique: The Failure of Socialism?', *op.cit.*, p.105.
72. For a devastating critique of international donor policies in Mozambique see Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?*, Indiana University Press, 1991.
73. *Mozambique Country Report*, No.4, Economist Intelligence Unit, 1991, p.33.
74. *Ibid.*, No.3, 1991, p.32.