



'A science belongs to its creator'

When the Frelimo government came to power in June 1975 in Mozambique, it held out promises of a radical restructuring of a society that had been ravaged politically, socially and economically by centuries of Portuguese colonialism and a bitter ten-year war. With Mozambique already in its fourth year of independence, **PRESIDENT SAMORA MACHEL** assesses the state of Mozambican society today in this interview with **AFRICA**.

AFRICA: The Marxist-Leninist party Frelimo, created just two years ago, began its first major campaign to admit new members in February last year. Briefly, how would you describe the party's presence in the country today?

MACHEL: The Frelimo structuring campaign which ended last November made it possible to create hundreds of cells in priority work places and residential areas. Tens of thousands of new members have been admitted. Today the party is present, through its militants, throughout the country. Its leadership



President Samora Machel: 'Marxism-Leninism is the common property of all exploited peoples and classes ...'

role in state and society is thus guaranteed.

Q Mozambique has a high level of illiteracy. What implication does this have for popularising Marxist-Leninist concepts among the largely illiterate workers and peasants?

A The concept behind this question is that Marxism is a foreign experience. So how will they learn it if they can't read? But listen — and this is the principal point — Marxism-Leninism is a class science. It is a science of class. It belongs to its creator — the working class. Its creator is the people, the people in their centuries-long struggle against the different forms and systems of exploitation. Its creator is, above all, the working class which, because of its specific role in society, is capable of conceiving a new order, a new type of relations among the people.

Now then, who is the best Marxist? Is it the person in the library or the one doing the job? Scientific socialism was not forged and developed by those who spend all their time in libraries and universities. That is a lie! It was not the agronomists who invented geometry. It was the peasants, in the demarcation of their land; they invented the science right there.

The Mozambican workers have a long experience of suffering and struggle against slavery, feudalism and capitalism. How do you interpret this? Who were the people who took power in Russia? Were they from the university? Who were the people who took part in the long march in China? Were they from the university?

Q But Mr. President, you yourself have said before that socialism cannot be built with an illiterate population?

A That's right. During the literacy campaign. Party members are the object of a special literacy drive aimed at raising their scientific knowledge and conceptions of the world. To be able to read, to have the capability to synthesise experiences, to raise them to the level of theory. There are two things, here: one is to see where the theory comes from, where the ideas come from. They come from practice. Now we want the people to synthesise this practice, to have the capability to synthesise their experiences.

The people's liberation war, our military science which defeated the colonial-fascist generals, was drawn up and developed by our own illiterate people. Marxism-Leninism did not appear in our country as an imported product. Mark this well; we want to combat this idea. Is it a policy foreign to our country? Is it an imported product or merely the result of reading the classics? No. Our party is not a study group of scientists specialising in the reading and interpretation of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Our struggle, the class struggle of our working people, their experiences of suffering all enable them to assume and internalise the fundamentals of scientific socialism. The same struggle contributes to the continuous development and enrichment of Marxism-Leninism, which is the common property of all exploited peoples and classes. In the process of the struggle we synthesise our experiences and heighten our theoretical knowledge.



Frelimo leader Samora Machel: 'Industrial production is recovering on all fronts'

Q Other countries building socialism have experienced serious abuses of power by party members. How is Frelimo trying to avoid this?

A Our party has had a great deal of experience with errors and abuses that arise in the exercise of power. During the course of our struggle for independence, we developed and institutionalised certain essential mechanisms. Criticism is a constant with us both in party structures and by the masses. People's vigilance is extremely important and we continually search for ways to increase it.

Party militants have the right to contact all party organs, including the Central Committee, and they exercise this right. All citizens have an equal right to get in touch with the state administrative organs, including the Head of State, and they exercise this right. Letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines are also an important source of criticism and, thus, control of abuses.

Cases of party and state leaders who were removed from their functions and publicly exposed for deviations from the political line or for improper conduct are well-known. In these circumstances, it seems to us that we can safely say that eventual abuses of power that arise will be rapidly detected and punished.

Q At the time of independence Mozambique's industry was virtually paralysed as a result of the flight of most of the European technicians and factory owners. Since then, how has this sector of the economy been reorganized?

A Industrial production is recovering on all fronts. Since independence the principal steps include combating the sabotage brought to a head by capitalism in flight — by the settlers who abandoned the country — and establishing priorities for industrial recovery. We have defined strategic sectors and set up state administrative structures to oversee them, and we have set clear objectives for production under new socio-economic conditions.

Thus, for example, we have transformed the cement industry into an exporting sector. We have begun to produce agricultural implements, and in the textile, shoe and furniture sectors we have reduced the number of models and simplified the production process in order to increase production and ensure that our people's needs are satisfied at prices they can afford to pay. We have also established training programmes at all levels to improve the skills of both the directors and the workers and have progressively introduced planning and scientific control of production in priority sectors.

The statistics reflect the success of our economic recovery and industrial reorganization to date. From 1977 to 1978 industrial production increased by 20 per cent and industrial productivity by 15 per cent and we expect production this year to rise by another 23 per cent.

Q In spite of Mozambique's serious unemployment problems, there does not seem to be a great deal of crime in Maputo. Most policemen are unarmed, and people freely walk the streets at night. How do you account for this, and will it last?

A One of the fundamental characteristics of a socialist society is the establishment of cooperation and brotherhood among men — where man stops preying upon other men. The struggle against the causes of crime — the social situations that produce crime — is an integral part of the struggle to build a socialist society.

During the war, we practically eliminated crime in the liberated areas. At the same time, it constantly increased in the regions occupied by the enemy, especially in the large cities and areas controlled by the fascist colonial army. The unemployment, the idleness which was forced on the people in the concentration camps called 'protected villages', the systematic contempt for women, the indifference to the moral and physi-

cal degeneration of young people, were essential elements of colonial policy which encouraged crime.

At our moment of victory, there were in our country thousands of prostitutes and drug addicts, drug trafficking and gambling networks, gangs of professional thieves. These networks had many links with the colonial police, especially the political police, and functioned as informers for the Western secret services.

Our struggle against crime has three components — the political struggle, the economic and social struggle, and administrative measures. Its objective, rather than punishing the criminal is to reform him and, above all, to wipe out the causes of his crimes. Soon after victory, during the transitional government, we launched wide-scale campaigns to organize and involve the people in the struggle against crime. The newly-formed dynamizing groups played a fundamental role in those campaigns.

Simultaneously, we took administrative steps to close establishments where criminals and delinquents tended to congregate and opened re-education centres for prostitutes, drug addicts, petty criminals, pimps and drug dealers. From the beginning, most of the gang leaders changed their nationality and left the country. In the re-education centres delinquents learn professions and develop good work habits. Already many thousands have been reformed and reintegrated into society.

Statistics from the capital demonstrate the kinds of results we have already achieved. They are especially significant because, at one time, the capital was the major centre of crime in the country. Before independence about 1,500 homicides were committed each year. In 1977 there were 171 homicides, and in 1978 there were 83, of which only 2 involved robberies. The rest were crimes of passion, crimes motivated by superstitions, or quarrels provoked by drunkenness. From 1977 to 1978 corporal offences dropped from 329 to 234 for all of Maputo Province. Thefts have also declined considerably, from almost 5,000 incidents in 1977 in the city of Maputo to about 4,000 for the whole province in 1978.

Q In light of the difficulties a number of countries have faced in their attempts to organise communal village and other cooperatives on a voluntary basis, how has Frelimo fared?

A The Party's decision to create communal villages and cooperatives was received enthusiastically by the peasants. The obvious benefits flowing from the establishment of this form of collective production and the concomitant elimination of exploitation stimulated the rapid development of communal villages and cooperatives. Today, there are more than 1,000 communal villages, with more than one million residents, and over 500 agricultural cooperatives with over 30,000 members.

Because of the success of these communal villages and cooperatives, many other peasants have taken the initiative and organised collective production units. Take the case of cotton, whose production during the colonial period was based on forced labour, leaving deep scars on the peasants subjected to it. Today, it is common for peasants to come together and form cotton-producing cooperatives.

The collectivization of production gradually leads to collectivization of other activities as well. Thus, consumer and marketing cooperatives have been created, there is collective construction of houses, and we are beginning to collectively resolve problems of health and education. The communal villages are centres of collective production and centres of political, social and cultural life, which will permit us to industrialize, urbanize and socialize the rural areas. In sum, the communal villages are essentially centres of organized life, collective life.

Q What about the role of the state farming sector?



President Machel:
 '... We can never forget the assistance of our friends in our most difficult hours ...'

A Development is proceeding quickly. We already have 130,000 hectares producing cotton, rice, corn, potatoes, peanuts and alfalfa under the control of state firms. The state farms are centres for the diffusion of advanced techniques for the cooperatives. They are also centres of scientific-technical training for peasant cooperative members, centres of high productivity and high revenue.

Q Have Mozambique's serious economic problems impeded Frelimo's social programmes, specifically health and education?

A After the nationalization of private medicine in 1975, it was necessary to destroy the legacy of racial and socio-economic discrimination, introduce basic democratic management of health delivery centres, give priority to preventive medicine. Although our objective is to provide free, comprehensive health care to all our citizens, we are aware that, at present, we can only provide minimal primary health care. We have undertaken health education campaigns, and we recently concluded a national vaccination campaign against tuberculosis, measles, tetanus and smallpox. This campaign has been a striking success — smallpox has been completely eradicated and, while more than 20,000 children died annually from measles during the colonial period, there were only 110 such deaths in 1978.

With regard to formal education, under the colonial system education served the interests of the colonial bourgeoisie. Schools were reserved for the sons of Portuguese settlers, and the small number of Mozambicans who had access to education were relegated to mission schools where they received greatly inferior education.

Today, the schools are for everyone, and basic education is free. Whereas in 1973 less than 590,000 children attended school, by 1978 the number had increased to almost 1,420,000, an increase of well over 100 per cent. During the colonial period there were hardly any Mozambicans in the highest classes of secondary school — children of Mozambican workers, and at the university more than 1,000 students are distributed among the various departments in accordance with Mozambique's needs.

Q What is Mozambique's assessment of the recent elections in Rhodesia?

A With their 'internal settlements' and farcical elections, the racist regimes which rule Rhodesia and Namibia seek a mask of democratic legitimacy and thus legality. Such masks do not change the despotic and criminal nature of the regimes. Salazar and Hitler also held elections and referenda. The racist armies controlled the elections in both Namibia and Rhodesia, forced people to vote, arrested the people and activists who opposed the farcical elections. The big landowners loaded their employees into trucks and transported them to the ballot boxes where they voted under the vigilant eyes of the police. The farcical nature of the elections was clear to all.

The present manoeuvres will fail for the same reason the previous manoeuvres failed. Black though the puppet prime

ministers may be, they won't cease the aggression against their own people, they won't suspend the executions or prevent the murders disguised as 'death in crossfire'. They won't put an end to curfews and concentration camps. For these reasons the Zimbabwean people will continue to struggle and continue to identify with the Patriotic Front. The puppets will continue to announce open aggression against neighbouring sovereign states. These regimes have neither credibility nor viability and they have already been denounced by the non-aligned nations, by the OAU and by the UN Security Council.

Q Frelimo always had cordial relations with both China and the Soviet Union, but earlier this year a Mozambican official statement condemned the Chinese military attack on Vietnam. Does this represent a change in Frelimo's policy towards the split in the international communist movement?

A Frelimo has always defended and still defends the unity of the international communist and workers' movement and the international working class, and we will always act to support this unity. In particular situations there can be differences with fraternal parties and even contrary positions. We have abstained, on principle, from engaging in public debates over these divergencies and contradictions but, nevertheless, in private we do not hesitate to present our point of view when it is solicited.

We have always carefully made a distinction between the errors of our friends, however serious they may be, and the actions of our enemies. This permits us to critically analyse different situations. No matter how serious the errors of our friends, we can never forget their assistance in our most difficult hours and their support to the revolutionary movement at other times.

The principles of respect for frontiers and the inviolability of national territory, of the peaceful resolution of differences between states, of not resorting to force in international relations, are basic principles that guarantee international peace and security to be defended by all states. The People's Republic of China is a friendly state whose attack on Vietnam violated these basic principles. For us to remain silent would be to tacitly accept this serious violation of the norms which govern international relations. This violation is particularly painful because it represents an attack by one socialist state against another. Our friendship with the People's Republic of China continues unaltered, as does our deep appreciation for the assistance she provided us in our most difficult hour and for the historic contribution of the Chinese Revolution to the process of world revolution.

Q Mozambique was among the first countries to recognize and express support for the new governments in Kampuchea and Uganda. What are your views on the role of Vietnam and Tanzania in the changes that took place there?

A We supported Vietnam's fraternal aid to Kampuchea and Tanzania's fraternal aid to Uganda. Vietnam, like Tanzania, was attacked on several occasions by a despotic and expansionist regime. From the perspective of legitimate defence, they had the right to neutralize the aggressors, and from the perspective of internationalist solidarity they had the duty to support the insurrections against these despotic regimes. For us the important thing to know is: against whom are the guns pointed? Is it against the people or against tyranny?

Today in Southeast Asia, between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, strong bonds of friendship and solidarity have developed which are fundamental for the triumph of the cause of socialism in that zone and permit the consolidation of peace and international security throughout the region.

Between Tanzania and Uganda a new climate of peace and cooperation has developed which will contribute to the stability and progress of East Africa and will reinforce the struggle for liberation in Southern Africa. ■