

I have just returned from a 6 week visit to Tanzania and Zambia, much of it spent in long conversations with leaders and general militants of most of the active liberation movements in Southern Africa. I also visited two projects that the Africa Fund has supported for a long time, the Frelimo High School at Bagamoyo, and the Frelimo Hospital at Mtwara near the border of Mozambique. Such visits gave me a chance to see and feel at close quarters the way in which FRELIMO functions, an impressive experience which helped clarify my perspective on the coming period in Southern Africa and the role that ACOA could continue to play, particularly in the Portuguese colonies.

It was an exciting time to be in Africa. The collapse of Portugal's military and political capabilities in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique had produced a mood of great optimism. By early July, when I arrived in Tanzania, it was already clear that despite considerable wavering the new Portuguese Government would be forced to implement a program of rapid decolonisation linked to the transfer of power to the dominant liberation movement in at least two out of the three colonies.

Significantly, it was in the ranks of FRELIMO and MPLA movements whose disciplined organisation and determined struggle had done much to produce the conditions which generated the coup in Portugal, that I found the greatest caution about Portugal's intentions and the immediate future. In their view, time, in the post-coup period, was not automatically on the side of the liberation movements. It would only be their ally if used to intensify mobilisation of the people, broadening the base of political understanding and support and moving quickly into areas where work had heretofore had to be clandestine. Thus FRELIMO, in a move which apparently evoked considerable, though muted criticism among some sympathisers, opened a new front in Zambesia in the first week of July. Samora Machel, announcing this move said:

At the start of the struggle, ten years ago, FRELIMO solemnly proclaimed that our fight would end only with the liquidation of Portuguese colonialism. For us this means consolidating our struggle both horizontally and vertically.... ...the expansion of all forms of the struggle to all sectors, is the necessary precondition for generalising the offensive. It is not only a question of expanding and intensifying the armed struggle, but also of expanding and intensifying the ideological struggle for national reconstruction on the various fronts of production, education, culture, health and social welfare.

It is the deep roots struck by our line, the establishment of people's power and the gains of the masses on the political, economic and social fronts that are making the process of national liberation irreversible and laying the foundations for true democracy.

In a similar vein, when I asked Frelimo members in mid-July about plans for building schools and hospitals within Mozambique their attitude was that this kind of thinking was, as someone put it "reactionary politics." Too much thinking in terms of "maybe we shouldn't begin this now because next month/year we will be in Mozambique" might lead to the postponement of activity instead of its intensification. This does not mean that they were avoiding internal thinking and were not sometimes even prepared to talk to "outsiders" about the implications of the new situation in which FRELIMO would soon have to assume the responsibilities of a Government. But there was an avoidance of the kind of endless speculative discussions all too common in quarters where the struggle is less fully developed.

That said it remains true that the events of the past few months have laid the basis for a very changed relationship of forces in Southern Africa. The direct control of one of the three major powers in the South has been smashed in open armed confrontation with the force of organised popular resistance. When freedom comes to Mozambique, it will have been won in a long and determined military and political struggle. In such circumstances it is less likely that the victories won in struggle will be allowed to slip away in the days of peace. Once in power, an organisation such as FRELIMO is likely to maintain and intensify its struggle against exploitation as it builds a new society.

This in turn will have important implications for the liberation struggle further South. Nevertheless, there was a tendency towards euphoria in some of the movements which seemed to me to reflect an unwillingness to confront the harsh reality of the Portuguese lesson - that victory is won by hard internal struggle and is not simply a function of open borders and sympathetic neighbors. Joaquim Chissano (FRELIMO Defense and Security) underscored this in a conversation I had with him about South Africa's likely attitude to an independent Mozambique. What was the likelihood of open South African military intervention, I asked? "Why should they take the risk?" he countered. "Because they understand the example of the usefulness of Tanzania to the Mozambican struggle." "You know", he said reflectively, "long ago in 1963; before we had begun our armed struggle, I was at a Conference in Stockholm where the ANC and PAC were under attack for not having taken up arms. In their defence someone said, "First Mozambique will have to be free, then the South Africans will be able to fight." I said then, "it is not the external situation which matters, or the friendly neighbors, the internal conditions have to be right. After all, remember that Cuba is an island!"

In overview then, the events in Portugal and in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau are of tremendous importance - both in themselves and because of the intensification of actual and psychological pressures on the Smith and Vorster regimes. But while external conditions may accelerate, distort or retard the playing out of history, real change in the far South can only be a function of internal developments.

Zimbabwe.

I had discussions with senior representatives of both OAU-recognised movements, ZANU and ZAPU, in Dar es Salaam and Lusaka, and also with the FROLIZI representative. in Dar es Salaam.

All three movements report increasing activities internally in Zimbabwe, altho ZAPU says that it is concentrating primarily on political actions at the moment. ZANU guerrillas, operating out of the North East (with some co-operation from FRELIMO) have been reported active within 30 miles of Salisbury. The Smith regime - clearly very disturbed by the increasing disaffection of the local population - has begun moving between 40 and 60 thousand villagers in the so called "infected" areas into "protected villages" in an attempt to isolate the guerrillas from local support. The Rhodesian army, only about 5,000 strong, is having to draw in more and more black troops - a risky step - and military pressures on the regime are likely to increase as it is forced to cope with a hostile eastern frontier of over 700 miles. I had a long discussion with Tongogara, the man in charge of ZANU's military organisation, and he spoke convincingly of the increasing ZANU military activity and growing support for ZANU from the population - developments borne out both by the reports of Smith's increasingly repressive actions and by numerous Rhodesian reports of what they term "terrorist incidents." He felt that South Africa would be forced to intervene increasingly actively in the Rhodesian struggle,

spoke of 10,000 South African troops already committed to the Rhodesian struggle. In general, all three Zimbabwean movements see South Africa as a major element in the forces ranked against them and believe that massive South African military intervention is most likely. It is a view which is much less clearly dominant in the thinking of many white South African strategists. There is, I think, a good case to be made for the argument that South Africa would be glad to see Smith seek an accommodation with the African National Council moderates and might even prefer some arrangement including sections of the liberation movements to a continuation of the present intransigence, in the belief that the sooner such an accommodation is made, the less radical need be its basis.

The Rhodesian elections took place while I was in Africa, and were seen by all the Zimbabweans I spoke to as a fairly accurate reflection of the present intransigence of the white regime. At the same time there was also fairly general agreement (despite some interpretative differences between the movements) that the ANC would not be able to make a deal with Smith, that the popular African mood was such that a blatant sell-out was no longer possible, and that the ANC itself would be forced to link its demands to those of the liberation movements. Indeed, the ANC has subsequently indicated that it would only be prepared to negotiate with Smith in a constitutional Conference that included not only the British Government but also "the detained leaders" who would speak "on behalf of a substantial body of opinion."

An element in all my discussions with the Zimbabwe movements was their interest in the campaigns we have been fighting here to restore the sanctions. They asked detailed and perceptive questions about the kinds of constituencies - congressional, union, church etc.-involved. They felt that the re-imposition and intensification of sanctions was an important weapon in the international armory against the Smith Regime. They also stressed the need for more direct bilateral assistance of various kinds, ranging over a multiplicity of educational, medical and other projects.

Namibia

Throughout July, there were reports of intensifying South African repression in Namibia and of hundreds of SWAPO militants fleeing into Angola. Some reached the Benguela railroad, and used it to reach Zaire; others made their way directly to Zambia. Despite some initial confusion (some Namibians were arrested by the Portuguese, others by the Zaire authorities) the Portuguese soon adopted a policy of actually assisting the Namibians to reach Zambia. The problems with the Zaire authorities were ironed out with the assistance of the office of the Commissioner for Namibia, and by the time I reached Zambia in August, several hundred Namibians had already arrived, and SWAPO estimated that they might have several thousand people to deal with by the end of the year.

This creates two sets of problems, which I discussed at some length both with SWAPO Executive members in Lusaka and with the representative of the Commissioner for Namibia. Short range, there is the enormous logistical problem of taking care of hundreds of people who have nothing but the clothes they arrived in. SWAPO already has some land, on which it hopes to house people in temporary shelters, but it made an urgent appeal for assistance at this level. Long range, there are the problems generated by the mass exodus of a significant body of the militant cadres of an organisation, and the need to develop programs which will ensure that those who fled, because they have been fighting, do not become simply refugees. but are trained in various ways to continue serving the struggle. It is this aspect of the problem which will certainly have to occupy a great deal of SWAPO thinking in the coming period and may make the coming period a particularly testing and critical time for the organisation.

Apart from discussions with Andreas Shipanga, Moses Garoeb, and President Sam Nujoma, I also spent several hours talking to two of the SWAPO leaders who had just arrived from inside Namibia, Johnny Otto, the Acting Secretary General of SWAPO and A. Nuunkuawo, a Youth League leader. They gave me a very vivid picture of the developing struggle inside Namibia. Both stressed the fact that the struggle has become a national one in Namibia - that while activities of the Youth League (the SWAPO youth section) are consistently reported simply as random "incidents" at public meetings, or sporadic arrests, while SWAPO itself is generally pictured as an "Ovambo based" organisation, important work has in fact been done in organising throughout the territory, so that South African authority is now being challenged all over the country. The South Africans are retaliating with fierce counter measures. They described the wide-scale arrests of people active in politics, the victimisation of such people who almost automatically lose their jobs and are sent back into the reserves if they have been in town, the use of the Chiefs as agents of repression, the floggings, beatings etc. They stressed the increasing isolation of the Chiefs, who have been used as labour recruiting agents as well as law enforcement agents. They outlined the close link between the South African police and the Chiefs. "The Chiefs have never come to any person and arrested him" said Johnny Otto. "First people are arrested by the South Africans under Proclamation 17 (the emergency regulation which allows for preventive detention). They are jailed without trial for a few weeks, then handed over by the Security Police or Boss men to the Tribal Chiefs. Statements that have been taken by the police in the course of detention, answers to questions etc. are all handed over to the Chief who brings them to his court. People are then charged in the Tribal Court, which sits in the absence of the accused. After they have discussed your case you are just called in and told what they have already decided - there are no questions, no time to defend yourself." Sentences, usually flogging of men and women, are carried out immediately. Otto talked of other instances of South African repression - of the brutal treatment of the strikers in 1972, when the police in Ovamboland used their trucks as police cells and left them standing in the desert sun all day, where they built special "cells" out of corrugated iron, 8 feet square, in the full sun, in which there was no room for people to lie down, of the rumoured concentration camp which has been built in the North, on the road to Ruacana. "We have no firm proof - I cannot say I have seen it myself, but I have talked to a man I met from there who when he was a little drunk confided that he had seen a camp with hundreds of people - and we know that many people have just disappeared since the protests."

Despite the repression those who have just come out of Namibia are convinced that the mood of the people internally will not weaken. They report involved people at all levels - high school students, people in the hospitals, teachers, workers, many young women as well as the men.

At one point, when discussing the numerous political trials now going on in Namibia. I raised the question of whether aid at that level would be useful. "Often it is useless to go to a lawyer. We know that most of them are antagonistic to our struggle." Otto mentioned a recent case where 4 Youth League members had totally rejected the service of lawyers as another indication of the determined and courageous mood of the people, but agreed that legal defence could sometimes serve a useful purpose. Expanding on the mood of the people, he said, "You know, the police have been looking for a SWAPO man, Patrick Iyambo for 9 years, and have offered a R1000 reward - but he is still free in Namibia." We finished our morning together with a brief discussion of some of the work we had been doing in the U.S. They laughed when I told them that we were often attacked when we condemned the continued activities of Tsumeb and other U.S. corporations inside Namibia as not knowing the true desires of the Namibian people. "Tsumeb is one of the biggest enemies,"

they said. "We all know that South Africa depends on the big powers for its friends. If closing down Tsumeb has a real purpose then the people will understand that that suffering will be short, and it will be worthwhile."

South Africa.

I met with many of the senior men (and the very few women) in all three of the South African movements, ANC, PAC, UMSA in Dar es Salaam and in Lusaka. The mood generally, was optimistic - both because of recent events in the Portuguese colonies and because of the increasingly obvious tide of renewed activity inside South Africa amongst workers, students etc. The issue of unity amongst the movements has been raised again by the O.A.U. which at its most recent series of meetings, had also taken the step of, for the first time, granting assistance to the Unity Movement of South Africa; but I had little sense that the pressure for the creation of such unity would in fact become a reality at this stage. There is clearly some work going on in all three movements, but it is, not suprisingly, difficult to gauge how much close contact there is between the movements in exile and the situation inside South Africa.

We had extensive discussions on the growing South African attempt to strengthen its external alliances, on the use of the Bantustan and other Black leaders as propaganda men, on the dangers inherent in the line taken by the Progressive Party of acting as external spokesmen for S.A.

South Africa and Lesotho.

(Confidential)

In Zambia, I had a series of discussions with the President, Secretary General and other Exec. members of the B.C.P. (Basutoland Congress Party) which seemed particularly useful in illuminating the direction of current South African strategy in relation to independent African countries. The BCP members are now living in exile in Zambia, having been forced to flee from Lesotho in January under the very real threat of death. It is their contention that Lesotho is now in a state of civil war, with the South Africans deeply involved in supporting the rule of Chief Jonathan against the challenge of the B.C.P., which represents a stronger, more independent nationalist position. They have been granted asylum in Zambia only on condition that they engage in no political activity at all -- a condition imposed because of the difficulties inherent for any country in Africa of granting protection to the militant opposition of another country which is technically also an independent African state and a member of the OAU.

Background.

Lesotho, a former British Protectorate was granted independence in 1966, after an election in which the conservative Basutoland National Party won 31 seats, the B.C.P. 21 and the small Maramatlou Party, 4 seats. Accusations that the popular B.C.P. was defeated because of widespread election rigging were given considerable credibility when several charges of such rigging (with the connivance of some British expatriates) were upheld in court. Nevertheless, it was Jonathan who formed the new Government after independence - and he soon launched a campaign of violent persecution against the B.C.P. The B.C.P. continued to organise and in 1970 it achieved a clear

victory in the elections, winning 36 seats as against Jonathan's 23. Jonathan then seized power illegally, declared a state of emergency, suspended the constitution and detained the leadership of the BCP. His actions were strongly backed by South Africa, and in fact the BCP claims that the South Africans still bear the entire cost of maintaining the special para-military type police force that Jonathan has been using to harass and intimidate the political opposition in a most brutal way. It is certainly true that overt South African influence in Lesotho is very strong, that many of Jonathan's closest political, economic and other advisers are well known conservative white South Africans. The South Africans still seem to regard Jonathan as basically their man, despite some recent attempts by Jonathan to assert a measure of independence by making various condemnatory noises about Apartheid. There have in fact been periods of tension between the two governments, exacerbated by the shooting in 1973 of 5 Lesotho miners during the Western Deep Level Mine labour strike. This conflict seems to flow primarily from Jonathan's attempts to raise the price of his friendship to the South Africans, and not from any attempt at genuine disentanglement from dependency and interdependency relationships with the white regime.

Thus, in Lesotho the South Africans have intervened politically rather than militarily (except for some assistance to the police force) and, having chosen their stooge have done much to try and bolster his position, while creating conflict and confusion amongst the general population; they have used their economic leverage to exert pressures on what projects shall and what shall not be developed, have poured funds into publicity in papers, radio etc. for Jonathan, have moved their agents into various key positions. It is this kind of tactic that I see as being used increasingly in the coming period. Lesotho was an early and rather crude attempt; future attempts will almost certainly be more sophisticated.

In the meantime, the BCP are appealing for various kinds of assistance. Most important of all, they want the true position as widely exposed as possible - they want the world to know about Jonathan's despotic role, and about the close link between South Africa and Lesotho. They also need legal assistance for the number of cases shortly to come to trial inside Lesotho.

Angola.

It is difficult to offer anything but the most general comments concerning the extremely complex situation which now exists in relation to the liberation movements in Angola. I had some discussions with members of the Neto wing of MPLA, but was unable to make contact with representatives of the other groups, or with representatives of UNITA. There was, not unnaturally, much speculation in the ranks of the other Southern African movements about likely future developments, and a great variety of interpretations as to the basis of the current split inside MPLA; but none of this served to produce a really clear picture of either the immediate past or the coming period.

It seems unlikely that the split inside MPLA will simply be healed at the behest of the OAU, despite the recent announcement that notwithstanding the failure of the MPLA congress in Lusaka in August to reach agreement, a united front had been reached 10 days later at Brazzaville under the aegis of Tanzania, Zambia, Zaire and the Congo.

Nor is it easy to predict the future shape of relationships between the three movements. It would seem to me unrealistic, at this stage, to dismiss any of the three movements as "irrelevant." This applies particularly to UNITA. I found a very ambivalent attitude towards UNITA amongst many rather careful people in Africa. Only the staunchest MPLA supporters still adopted the attitude that UNITA did not exist as an organisation, or existed only

as a tool of the Portuguese. On the other hand, there was not much clarity on either the degree of support and control which can justly be attributed to UNITA or on the politics of the organisation. Perhaps the most common attitude was simply "wait and see", and indeed it seems likely that only the passage of time will enable a clearer analysis to be made of developments inside Angola.

Mozambique.

I met with many members of the FRELIMO leadership while I was in Dar es Salaam and managed to have some good discussions, despite feeling rather inhibited about taking up people's time at such a critical juncture. I had a long talk with Janet Mondlane about specific projects and needs, visited the secondary school at Bagomoyo, and talked to friends and staff there, and had a long discussion with the Doctor who had just ended a three year stay at the FRELIMO hospital in Southern Tanzania. The experience that gave me the clearest and most powerful insight into the strength and solidity of FRELIMO as an organisation was a 3½ day visit to the Amerigo Boavida hospital at Mtwara.

The hospital, a simple whitewashed brick structure around a quadrangle, took three years to build and was finished with the help of many Mozambican refugees. It is neat and clean, like most hospitals, but functions without the rigid standardization and regimentation of hospitals I have known. Equipment is not standardised because most of it has been donated from scores of different sources. Most striking of all is the attitude towards the patients, who are treated as human beings vitally involved in whatever is happening to and around them, instead of being simply passive recipients of services. Comrade Dhlakama, the man responsible for all FRELIMO health services, took me around the hospital. As we entered each ward, he would explain to the patients who I was, a little of my own history, from South Africa onwards, what organisation I worked for in the United States and why I had come to Mtwara. One of the young medical aides would interpret into an African language for those who did not understand Portuguese, and only then would the Doctors begin their technical explanations to me. This was the pattern wherever we went. I was never shown anything that FRELIMO members were doing, without the people involved being told why I was there. This may seem a simple point to make so much of, but I think it lies at the core of FRELIMO's strength - because it involves each member in the full process of the organisation, instead of reducing individuals to small cogs who do not understand the working of the whole machine.

The hospital itself is small, too small. It has 70 beds, and when I was there, children were sharing beds; two men who had been wounded, fighting inside Mozambique, had arrived the night before and were still on stretchers because there were no empty beds. There are about 12,000 consultations a year at the hospital, 1000 hospitalizations, 700 operations (50% of these until very recently being war-related injuries). As an emergency measure, because the hospital was so desperately short of accommodations, FRELIMO has obtained the use of two buildings which were previously small shops and storerooms in a nearby village called Kianga, for use as a "convalescent center". Men and women who are not critically ill, but are still receiving or awaiting treatment, stay there. Conditions were primitive - no light, water, kitchen, double bunk beds crowded together in most of the rooms.

Until recently, the hospital had only two Doctors, now it has six - men and women from other countries eager to help in FRELIMO's work. It has only one trained nurse - nursing in the hospital wards is supplied by

the young people who FRELIMO is training to work as medical assistants inside Mozambique.

Health Services.

The hospital is responsible for much more than taking care of the sick and the wounded who come to Mtwara. It is the organisational center for medical services inside all of liberated Mozambique, and it is responsible for training the people who will carry such health care inside. There are 45 trainees this year, and they do a very intensive one year training course, working from 6:30 in the morning to 9:00 in the evening. They have to learn to recognise and treat the most basic and common diseases that beset the population - malaria, parasites, bilharzia and many more; they have to learn how to treat shock and trauma associated with war wounds, how to set bones, how to provide preventative medical care, how to carry out a vaccination campaign, and most important of all, how to explain to the people the links between nutrition and health; they are taught new agricultural methods so they can help the people grow new and better foods.

An impressive aspect of the work at the hospital was the way in which everyone who came there (patients, students, etc.) was involved in learning new techniques that would help them play a role in improving life when they went back to Mozambique. Thus, the morning I arrived at Kiangá, I interrupted a literacy class under the mango trees, and there is a shamba (vegetable garden) close by the convalescent center on which everyone who is well enough to work a little is taught about new crops and the ways to grow them.

Health care inside Mozambique.

FRELIMO has set up a system of health care in the liberated areas which starts at the level of single health assistants at local dispensaries or clinics, then small regional and then larger hospitals, (but all staffed only by medical assistants - the first FRELIMO Doctors are due back this year). Nevertheless, this is the first health care that thousands of people have ever received, and already careful records are being kept of the number of cases seen, the major types of diseases, the births, deaths etc. in the regions; all this information is meticulously recorded and sent back to the hospital at Mtwara. Showing me some of the carefully handwritten reports, Dhlakama stressed the importance of such information. "With this we can begin to plan - first we have to know what the problems are."

The future.

In the evenings, when the most pressing work was over, we sometimes sat and talked about the future. "Look here, people have struggled a long time, now they will want their lives to be better" some said. I met no-one in FRELIMO who seemed intimidated by the awesomeness of that task - they have built a strong organisation, and it is clear that they have great respect for each other, and a belief in their ability to meet the challenge.

It seems to me that we, in turn, can play an important part in providing the physical equipment and possibly the facilities for training that will enable that organisational strength to translate itself into changes in the life of the people of Mozambique.

We discussed very concrete things that would soon be needed - mobile units equipped not only with medical materials, but with projectors and films that can be used to teach the people how to improve water supplies, grow food, avoid disease; tent hospitals, because hundreds of thousands of people now live and die without any hospital facilities; assistance for mass vaccination campaigns; there will be more needs than we can possibly fill. To stop giving assistance now, because Mozambique (or Guinea-Bissau) have become independent countries would be to lose a tremendous chance to help translate into reality the promise of the long years of struggle we were proud to help.

A View of ACOA From Africa.

Wherever I went, I was received with warmth, both by the liberation movements and by representatives of the Governments of Zambia and Tanzania. There is considerable respect for the work that ACOA does, not only in the shape of direct material support for the movements, but also in its attempts to re-direct U.S. foreign policy. One of the major complaints I heard was that we do not send enough of our literature to Africa - everything that I took with me disappeared within the first few days. The Committee is also seen as playing an important role in educating U.S. opinion about the struggle in Africa, and I found people eager to talk to me, and to give me detailed documentation - so much documentation, in fact, that I had a hard time convincing the customs official who heaved my bag onto the counter back in New York that the weight was simply paper and not gold bars.

Jennifer Davis
September 12, 1974