

*Judith Marshall's and Otto Roesch's recent articles (SAR Vol. 5 No. 2, December 1989) described dramatic changes in Mozambique and opened up debate about their implications for the solidarity movement. In response, four long-time followers of events in Mozambique from Sweden, the US and the UK have contributed to a round-table discussion. We welcome further contributions to this debate.*

# Mozambique: Debating the Terms of Solidarity

## The New Terms of Solidarity

BY ANTON JOHNSTON &  
AGNETA LIND

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Under the pressures of low-intensity warfare, the world market, and international aid organizations, a system shift is taking place in Mozambique which is having no less dramatic transformational effects on that society than did the conquest of national independence by FRELIMO. In very concrete ways, the process of structural adjustment is changing political, economic and social relations, and the distribution of power and wealth.

We have been asked to comment on what all this means for anti-imperialist solidarity work with Mozambique. Our reply should be regarded as a very personal one, from people who have a long history of solidarity with FRELIMO, but not necessarily representing the views of any solidarity movement.

Like other solidarity workers, we understood that there was a worldwide class struggle under way, translated into struggles on a global scale between the socialist and the capitalist/imperialist blocs, with capitalism maintaining its grasp over the Third World through imperialism and neo-colonialism.

In most underdeveloping countries there sat puppet regimes composed of military/petty-bourgeois alliances serving a comprador role in relation to international capitalism, pushing the workers and peasants down with one foot and climbing up after the international bourgeoisie with the other. Their economies fell into dependency, from which there was no way out except through socialist revolution. Fortunately, revolutionary forces were, in increasing numbers, setting out to overthrow colonialism and capitalism and institute socialism and peoples' democracies. The socialist countries would stand for defence, for alternative markets and sources of finance. Solidarity workers could contribute through various forms of committed support, at home and in the front line. Autonomous non-capitalist development would ensue, in socially just forms.

Suddenly the face of the world has changed. There is hardly a socialist bloc any more. Its sudden demise, to a large extent from within, poses serious questions for anti-imperialists as to Marxist and Leninist theories on the alternatives to capitalism and imperialism. One

watches in dismay as the alternatives to state monopoly socialism proposed in the ex-socialist states turn out to be a fearful blend of Coca-Cola, chauvinism and Catholicism. What, after all, is a solidarity worker to make of well-received visits to East Germany and Hungary by Herr Pik Botha? Furthermore, their demise not only deprives the Third World of alternative markets and sources of support and supply, but even takes away from the Third World a lot of western (and probably eastern) financing that might otherwise have been available to it.

Meanwhile, the majority of socialist-oriented countries in the Third World have knuckled under to the pressures of international capitalism, been forced to go along with the prescriptions of "structural adjustment," and thus put on ice their policies of social justice, autonomous development and self-help. Objectively evaluated, we witness the present success of Imperialist Multilateral Finance, the highest form of neo-colonialism. The ruling regimes in both underdeveloped capitalist and underdeveloped socialist countries go along with the IMF, largely because they seem to have neither any theoretical alternatives nor, had these existed, any space in which to put them in practice.

It depresses us extremely that the success of the IMF is such that today even most people on the left begin their comments on structural adjustment by saying: "We all know that structural adjustment is necessary, but ..." (!) If the international solidarity movement has anything useful and revolutionary to do today,

it is first and foremost to change that formulation to: "Instead of this imperialist imposition of structural adjustment, what can be done in practice is ..."

The issue of solidarity with Mozambique falls squarely into this broader scenario.

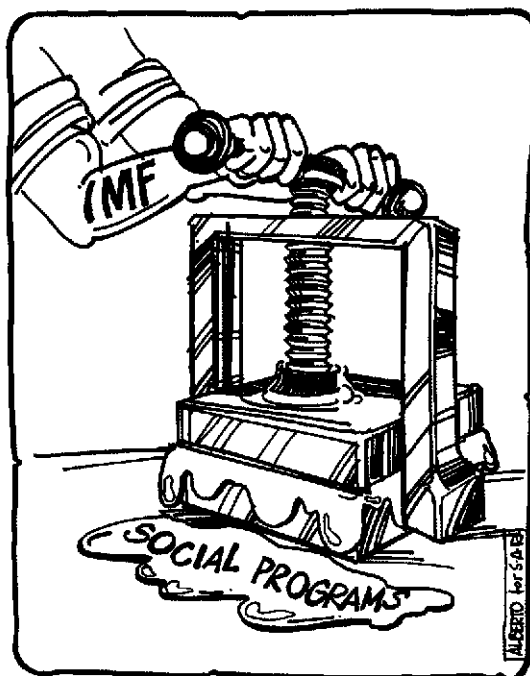
Until Mozambique's government buckled under and agreed to join the IMF/World Bank system, the country's economy was starved of access to foreign exchange. Although socialist countries and Sweden provided quite large amounts of aid, this was not sufficient to compensate for the general credit squeeze, the waste caused by internal policies such as the ten-year plan 1980-90, the destabilization undertaken by apartheid South Africa, and the destruction caused by its MNR.

Since the introduction of structural adjustment policies in 1987, large quantities of foreign exchange have re-entered the economy in the forms of donations and loans. There is alleged to have been constant economic growth since then, though how much is due only to capital influx is not clear. Nonetheless, Mozambique's current account deficit has risen by 45% since 1988, from about US\$660 million to about US\$957 million, and "is expected to rise to US\$1,146 million in 1993" (World Bank 1989). The World Bank forsores the country will remain totally dependent on concessional inflows of about US\$1,350 million per annum.

Where is all this aid going? Mozambique's debt amortization payments will average US\$284 million per annum. Some of the promised aid seems not to arrive; the provision of food aid this year has been much lower than expected. Aid in materials is often overvalued by the donor. A large amount of aid is tied; quite a large proportion returns to the donor through pur-

chase of equipment and consulting services. Most aid agencies administer their donations themselves, and thus set up and finance their own expensive local bureaucracy from the donated funds. To cap it all, they often weaken the state apparatus by employing key Mozambican officials themselves on salaries way above the level deemed to be appropriate under the adjustment measures.

Much of the small amount of cap-



ital Mozambique generates itself has to be thrown into fighting the South African-backed bandits. Furthermore, Otto Roesch's contribution to *SAR* (November 1989) clearly points out that the capital which is "left over" is to a large extent not being used for investment, but rather is falling into the hands of commercial enterprises and the higher managerial elite, for use in conspicuous consumption and illegal cross-border trading. Numbers of systems have been worked out to give higher managers and officials perks in foreign exchange; loans are given to ex-bureaucrats, allegedly to start up farms or enterprises. The "dumba-

nengue" markets flourish unchecked. Corruption is spreading through the state, now and then brought under Assembly debate or investigation, but with no punitive action taken. The World Bank is currently organizing further schemes to distribute foreign exchange to the "private sector," somewhat in the way that Zambia once auctioned off currency.

The IMF noted in its intervention at the Paris donors' meeting in October 1989 that while export of primary goods had indeed risen, notably of cashew and prawns, Mozambique's income from the export had stagnated "because of a sharp decline in the export prices" for these commodities. This can only mean in the medium term that the incomes of direct producers will fall, contrary to the claims made that structural adjustment would benefit them. The World Bank noted on the same occasion that there was a need to analyse "the provision of targeted food subsidies for the poorest households, possibly by encouraging self-selection by subsidizing only less preferred but nutritious foods ..." (!). *Tempo* (14/1/90) lamented recently that "[government] estimates of the population affected by poverty indicate 90%." It continued: "Contrary to what one might deduce [from the 5.5% economic growth], the producers of these riches ... far from seeing their circumstances improve over the three years of execution of the PRE [the economic recovery programme], live an economic and financial reality which deteriorates day by day."

In the period from the end of 1989 to the beginning of 1990 we are now witnessing extensive militant strikes in firms and the public sector in Maputo and Beira; the teachers have given notice that they will shortly go on strike.

*Tempo* comments: "The [striking Vidreira] workers in demanding their [promised] 13th wage [increase], alleged that in December, 14 million meticaís [about US\$17,000] had been spent in paying technicians' subsidies to nine people in the management ... to the workers were only distributed a few plastic toys ..."

Most distressing of all is the direct intervention of the World Bank in most aspects of policy-making in Mozambique, as part of the conditionality for loans. The issue is too wide to go into here, but in practice the World Bank presents Mozambique's government with detailed plans for implementation in almost all the state sectors, that are far more radical, far-reaching, and undemocratically derived than any of Mozambique's own short- or long-term "Marxist-Leninist" state plans ever were.

Objectively, therefore, Mozambique has become one of all those other neo-colonies. Politically it is dominated by international capital. The Frelimo Party itself has given up being a socialist party in all but the most vague and distant of terms (see Judith Marshall's analysis in *SAR*, November 1989). Economically Mozambique is totally dependent on aid, increasingly subjugated to South Africa, re-oriented towards the export of primary products, and has no hope whatsoever in the future of getting out of the debt trap on its own. Socially, it is ever more clearly divided. On the one hand, we have 90% of the population: exploited producers, workers, lower (ex) civil servants, refugees, and the unemployed. On the other, we have 10% (or even less) constituting a privileged petit-bourgeoisie divided into bureaucratic and commercial factions, both allied to international capital.

Whose side is the party or the government on? Even the official media protest that what is being done is not in the interests of the

producers, and is in the interests of the rulers (nowadays politely known everywhere as "managers").

Emotionally, it is not easy for us as solidarity workers to take the step of writing off Frelimo. We know how much bloodshed and external pressure it has taken for the situation to become what it is. It is manifestly unjust that the world capitalist system has managed by such means to suppress the socialists in Frelimo and promote a new privileged class which was previously hidden or suppressed. More unjust still, is that the "window of opportunity" was created by Frelimo's resolute anti-apartheid stand. The West allowed South Africa to ravage Mozambique in revenge for her position, at the same time as the whole world, including now Herr de Klerk himself, officially regards apartheid as being reprehensible.

Furthermore, it would be really unfair to ditch Frelimo when the solidarity movement has no concrete proposals as to what it should be doing instead. A new socialist revolution? Greater reliance on the socialist countries? Resignation from the IMF? Abstention from international aid? Indigenous development based on local resources and mass mobilization? Resignation from power and entry into opposition? Our lack of answers to all these questions is evident.

What are we to do? In the southern African context, it is clear that we have to redouble efforts to throw out apartheid completely, and prevent pro-apartheid manipulations from outside powers.

The solidarity movement has also to confront the IMF system in a more organized and coherent way. The debt trap has to be broken. We have to work to drive apart the present surface unanimity among the system's member government representatives. It is the case that all the governments subjected to structural adjustment would rather not implement the measures in the

first place. After all, they are being instructed to fit their countries into the world capitalist system as obedient, subjugate and permanently underdeveloping nonentities, and the payoffs for complying are meagre and short-lived. It requires little effort to prove that the structural adjustment measures are profoundly undemocratic, in conception, implementation, and results. What government would get elected on a platform consisting of adjustment measures? What constituency has ever been consulted or asked to vote on their introduction?

Central to the offensive against this system is to have not only a well-developed criticism of the iniquities of its operations, but also plausible alternatives to present.

As regards Mozambique, we must stand up as vigorously as ever to support Frelimo against the bandits and their backers, to oppose the war and all the other operations of apartheid.

Other questions are more problematic. If Mozambican education workers go on strike against the government, do solidarity workers in education scab or strike? What do we do if the government fires the strikers or puts down strikes with violence? If we stand with the workers, is that still solidarity with the governing party? Can we claim that we are in solidarity with Frelimo but not with the government? Is there a difference today between what is party policy and what is government and World Bank policy? Or should we instead treat the case as we would, say, Zambia or Senegal, maintaining a "broad" solidarity with the working masses, expressed through support to the unions and the cooperative movement, and keeping our distance from the governing powers?

We think we should maintain solidarity with Frelimo. But it must be (as it always should have been) a rigorously and constructively critical solidarity.

## Sadly Revisited

BY STEPHANIE URDANG

*Stephanie Urdang's most recent book And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change was published last year by Monthly Review Press, New York and Earthscan, London.*

The two pieces on Mozambique by Judith Marshall and Otto Roesch in November 1989 were timely indeed. Hard reading I found, but hard because they struck a tone and a reality that resonated with my own recent visit – alas only for two weeks – to Mozambique. It was the shortest visit I have made since I began travelling regularly to that country ten years ago. It was also without doubt the most depressing and sobering. Did I get it all wrong I wondered as I came back to New York and spoke of my impressions and experiences? I felt I hadn't, and Judith and Otto have done a commendable – and very difficult – job of putting the current situation in Mozambique into sound perspective, while describing some unwelcome realities.

Those of us who have worked in the broad southern Africa solidarity movement for years now – many since the mid to late 1960s – did not accidentally chose to focus on Mozambique. The choice came out of our own political perspectives and our hopes that Mozambique would be one of the few countries that could demonstrate socialism with a human face in Africa, through its commitment to a new society. The work we did in the 1970s and 1980s was the result of political choices. And it became more urgent with the escalation of South Africa's destabilization tactics – "low intensity warfare" (LIW). This not just because of the starving masses – a horrific reality – but because of apartheid's role in the region and how it has gone about smashing the dream, a dream, that I still believe could have

been achieved in different, less hostile circumstances.

In 1987, my previous visit, I was appalled by the manifestations of the "LIW." I had become used to interviewing women at length in the rural areas for the book I was writing. But this time most of the interviews were done in refugee camps where stories of indescribable pain and courage unfolded. Anger against the apartheid regime seethed in me like a constant undertow, and kept tears flowing as I wrote some sections of my book.

This recent visit provided no respite from these harsh realities. The war continues. The brutality and personal and community disaster mount as inexorably as before. But there was something more. My visit came some two years after the implementation of the IMF/World Bank-sponsored economic recovery program so well outlined in the two articles. What was this? A spruced-up Maputo? Could it be that buildings were being renovated left and right and up and down so that scarcely a dilapidated building in central Maputo could be seen (in a city that was previously crumbling and collapsing).

The abundance of new model cars, cars belonging not only to the pervasive aid agency personnel. The market displayed high mounds of fresh produce of every description, and incredibly, piles of fresh shrimp, so long unavailable, alongside large fish, eggs and chickens. The bustle was reminiscent more of west than south-east Africa. No more bare store windows. Modern refrigerators to tacky toys to a variety of clothes to cricket bats (has anyone ever played that quintessential British pastime here?). "Why is Maputo such a well-kept secret?," commented a visiting UN official. "This is a little paradise!" Indeed, but one that few Mozambicans can delight in.

Beggars of every age haunt the market. Hundreds of young boys live in the streets, huddled together at night in ditches or abandoned buildings, cajoling passers-by for money by day. The prices in the market are so high that few but the most privileged can afford them (This is why the market is always full of produce, commented one Maputo resident.) One asks who is recovering in the economic recovery program. It is not the majority of Mozambicans whose poverty and appalling living conditions drag them down further by the month. And while buildings are spruced up, the slum conditions spread to encompass the steady stream of destitute refugees.

The stories of corruption were perhaps among the hardest to hear. Not just the petty level which is easier to understand – those with some access making sure that they can acquire a bit of security in a society and economy marked by almost total insecurity. But the large scale corruption within the army and those administering disaster relief is something other. And although, as Judith pointed out, the pre-Congress debate had been energetic on this issue, there was a deafening silence in terms of Party response at the Congress itself. This in a country that prided itself on its lack of corruption. A country that donors – United Nations and governmental – were only too happy to provide with aid a few years back because they could trust that virtually every aid dollar reached its destination instead of being siphoned off to half its size in deep pockets along the way to its destination.

I returned from Mozambique relieved that I did not have a general writing assignment, so that I could leave dealing with these questions till "next time." Nonetheless, I wanted to be part of discussions around how we in the solidarity movement address the question of broken dreams, not only Mozambique's but our own. How to



Joel Chiziane/AIM

Food distribution to people displaced by the war, Zambezia province

make sense of what is happening in Mozambique? Are there still points where people continue to struggle or has a dream of a different kind of society itself been destroyed?

It is too simplistic to dismiss it merely as a failure of socialism. It can't be clocked up as just one more failed socialist state as the US media has happily been describing events in eastern Europe.

Nor can we continue to place the blame on external factors alone, comforting as it would be to do so. Nonetheless it would be hard to overstate the apartheid regime's responsibility for Mozambique's economic distress. It has been and continues to be a very powerful factor. In the face of South Africa's relentless economic destabilization, the beleaguered nation had little option but to sign the IMF/World Bank agreement. And with the structural adjustment package came measures

which have increased yet more the hardships faced by the great majority of Mozambicans.

Since independence there have also been many mistakes and disastrous policy decisions that have contributed to Mozambique's current crisis. What we are witnessing now is the outcome of these various factors, intentional destabilization still being the primary one. This vast and intricate patchwork of causes and effects has given rise to a reality in Mozambique that in the heady post-independence days we could not foresee. And many millions of Mozambicans starve or live with hunger, while a privileged strata entrenches itself, benefitting from the economic changes swept in by the IMF.

Describing some of my thoughts and impressions to a journalist who has long been sympathetic to the region, he sighed and said, "So this is

just one more corrupt African government after all?" It clearly is more complicated than that. I am convinced that the new directions must be placed in the broader historical and current context. But neither can we delude ourselves that Mozambique is simply taking a different, but temporary path, while it gets its house in order with the help of the IMF/World Bank. At best we don't know if Mozambique can or will return to the socialist path. At worst, there are many with power who five-ten-fifteen years down the line will have new class interests to defend, a result of the rapid process of class formation under way.

What *Southern Africa REPORT* has done is to bring these issues into focus and allow for the much-needed debate to ensue. There will be many disagreements and different interpretations. What is healthy is that it is encouraging such debate to flower.

I travelled for a brief four days to Gaza province. I talked to old women trying to cultivate fields allocated by their communal village in drought-stricken areas, close to rivers that are too low for adequate irrigation. One woman, wrinkled, wizened, saddened and bent, leaned on her hoe and responding to my question, said, "Life was better under the Portuguese. Far better." What was context for her? Yes, the South Africans had launched a war on her country and new government, but she could feed her children before independence and she can't now.

And I talked to a district official, full of energy, full of love for his country, full of ideas about how to get things going again. For these two people, the struggle continues. And it is for people like these that the solidarity movement remains important. Urgent also is continued exposure of the South African regime's merciless policy towards its neighbours in the region, however much it might like to portray with its new "gentler and kinder" image.

## Jobs & Charity?

BY JOSEPH HANLON

*Joseph Hanlon is a writer on southern Africa and author of Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?*

Why are we involved in Mozambique? Are we offering charity to the deserving poor? Are we creating jobs and careers for ourselves involving adventure in an exotic country? Or are we trying to assist a process of political change?

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit to a mixture of all three reasons. And at its best, perhaps ten years ago, how wonderful it was. We supported the revolution, we helped poor peasants and we had jobs that allowed us to lie on some of the world's most beautiful beaches. We did not have to make choices; we could wear our rose-tinted glasses and ignore the problems and contradictions all around us. Indeed, support for the revolution meant we should not talk about forced villagization, corruption, a lack of democracy and economic policies which benefited a bureaucratic elite; indeed, we did not "see" these things, because blindness was a revolutionary virtue.

Well, the party's over. The bandits occupy the best beaches and aid agencies with more money are taking our jobs. We have lost our rose-tinted spectacles and express horror at the contradictions that were always there.

But we remain involved in Mozambique. So it is essential to return to the three reasons for supporting Mozambique, and to try to establish our priorities.

Clearly the first priority is our own jobs - without money for air fares, consultancy contracts and salaries, we can do little to help Mozambique. But having quickly resolved the first priority, it is the choice of the second priority that causes the major debate, both here (SAR, November 1989 and October

1988) and elsewhere. Some ask, as does Judith Marshall, whether the struggle "actually does continue." Is there a process of political change to support, or is the best thing to simply identify a few peasants and help them?

It has often been stated that the poor are poor primarily because they lack money (and power) - not because they are stupid, short-sighted, uneducated, or incompetent. Undoubtedly, the most efficient way of redressing the immediate problems of poor Mozambican peasants would be to pass out handfuls of US\$10 bills (or even better, 10 Rand notes); with generations of experience living close to the margin, most peasants would use that money wisely to buy food, clothing, agricultural inputs, education, and whatever else they needed.

Unfortunately, there are few jobs for us in simply handing out money. So taking account of our first priority, the question becomes: how can we do enough good in Mozambique to justify our own salaries?

If we choose to help just one identified group of people, we can never do enough good for them to justify what we are being paid. Our salaries and overhead costs mean that we are providing very expensive services indeed. Even if they thought that what we were doing was useful, peasant groups would surely prefer to hire technicians from the Third World, who cost much less and have more relevant experience. Given the money being spent on us, they could hire the best expertise in southern Africa - if that was what they chose to do. Or they could buy food or tractors or tickets out of Mozambique.

The only way we can be cost effective is to support and build structures and organizations which will benefit many more people than we can help directly. And that is a question of politics, not charity.

Most non-government organizations (NGOs) and many aid agencies (notably the World Bank and USAID) believe that this can best be done by strengthening the private sector - NGOs, churches, and businesses. Where such agencies do not exist, as is often the case in Mozambique, they try to create NGOs and companies. Most NGOs (on both the right and left) agree with the US line that third world governments do not act in the interests of their people, and thus it is important to create new private institutions which will take over the development jobs previously given to the state. Thus NGOs and bilateral aid agencies alike work to promote alternative (and often parallel) bodies to distribute emergency food, provide agricultural and development assistance, support small industry and so on. Often this extends to the promotion of alternative health and education services.

The often explicit goal of many NGOs, many bilateral aid agencies, and multilaterals like the World Bank, is to reduce the role and power of state institutions. This is remarkably similar to the goal of destabilization. It is not accidental that South African-backed forces destroy health posts, then IMF rules make it impossible for the state to pay health workers enough to return to dangerous areas, and then NGOs and churches move in to create a new parallel health service rather than rebuild the damaged state one.

The socialist goal of Frelimo was to provide basic services and a minimum living standard to all. The shared goal of NGOs, churches and most aid agencies is to provide a better standard of living and better quality services to a few. They differ, however, in choosing which few - NGOs help a favoured group of peasants, churches help their members, USAID helps the rich and so on.

For many of us, our initial support for Frelimo was support for a socialist project. As recent upheavals show, there is no recipe



Joel Chiziane/AIM

Bridge on the only road linking Nakalu port to the famine-stricken district of Memba, northern Nampula province

for socialism. But at a minimum it must involve a central role for government, in response to the demands of genuinely popular organizations – co-ops, peasant associations, trade unions, and the like – as well as degrees of autonomy and self-sufficiency by those organizations. If we are to support the building of socialism in Mozambique, we must continue to support the government at the same time we support the growth of co-ops and other popular organizations.

Judith Marshall asks if the struggle continues. Yet the answer is clear from her own article, as well as the accompanying one by Otto Roesch (who has always written about the internal struggles when many others chose to ignore them). The recent strikes, the quite public actions by the growing co-op movement, and the angry complaints about corruption in the run-up to the Congress show one level of struggle. Another

is the bitter (albeit often secret) battle by some members of the government to resist World Bank and IMF pressure and maintain some level of socialism. One mark of struggle, which Judith mentions without analyzing, is the very different strategies now being followed in health and education, in the face of similar problems and pressures. Health workers and the Ministry of Health have succeeded in defending, at least temporarily, a socialist health policy.

Destabilization and the accompanying invasion of aid agencies and NGOs has clearly intensified the struggle. Many Mozambicans are choosing sides: class formation is rapid. In my regular visits to Mozambique, I still find people who are committed to the original socialist goals. But it gets harder for them: the bribes and benefits offered by the aid agencies are huge, while the old solidarity groups find the struggle too intense and with-

draw or retreat to doling out charity. The money (both personal and for projects) goes to those who advocate capitalism and privatization, not those who still support socialism.

If we really are in Mozambique to help build socialism (and not just to ensure our jobs and hand out charity) we must wade into the struggle and help our friends. We should use our money and expertise to support progressive Mozambicans, especially those still in government.

In the coming years, ordinary Mozambicans will be looking to see who has the resources to help them. Will it only be private traders, churches, foreign NGOs, and wealthy donors? Will a socialist government and the popular organizations have only rhetoric and good ideas to offer, or will they too have money and power? Progressive foreign agencies will have a key role to play in this struggle.