As AFSC's Southern Africa International Affairs Representative, Edgar (Ted) Lockwood carries responsibility for writing reports, initiating conferences, seminars, and personal contacts that support the work of the member nations of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in fostering greater regional development and economic cooperation. To be included on the mailing list write to AFSC, Africa Programs, at 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102. Contributions to defray mailing and duplicating costs are welcome.

In this Newsletter Ted Lockwood looks at Mozambique as it faces a number of difficult choices and a future that may lead it further away from its socialist ideals. He reflects on some serious questions about FRELIMO's (the national party) potential to overcome the violent effects of the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR), which, with South Africa's help, is eroding the economic, political and philosophical base Mozambique has chosen. The Nkomati Accord, an agreement signed with South Africa earlier this year which was to quell the destruction MNR, has altered the country's image and generated debate among observers as to how its goals may change. Ted visited Mozambique in late September to investigate the likelihood of gathering members of producer cooperatives for a conference.

Dear Friends:

In front of me in the shimmering heat of downtown Maputo a company of Mozambican sailors stood at porte-arms awaiting President Samora Machel's review. From the sidewalk where I was seated among diplomatic and military guests, I could see paramedics patrolling the street, watching the military units assembled to celebrate the 25th of September, the anniversary of the day when FRELIMO had launched armed struggle 20 years ago. Suddenly a paramedic penetrated the rank of sailors and emerged with a fainting dress-white figure. It was the first of several such rescues.

I turned to the Zambian diplomat next to me and said, "It must be really hot out there, and the gun is hard to carry. Where is President Machel? The show is running a half hour late."

"It's more likely that he is hungry."

Of course, I thought. The food situation was rock bottom last year when I was in Maputo. But it has deteriorated since then.
One other thing that has deteriorated is support for the government. The crowd was sizable but not huge as it might have been in the past. More than that, applause seemed weak and dutiful. Even Samora Machel, a masterful orator, had to use all his cajoling to get the crowd even moderately responsive to his cries of "Independencia ou morte!" (Independence or death!) In the wake of the Nkomati Accord that has brought little but further privation, people are just tired of rhetoric and slogans and of the government's inability to deliver food, clothing and necessary consumer goods. "They are just fed up." A church official said. "They don't think the Mozambican National Resistance is a good option either."

"Something has to give!" a Quaker friend said to me. "In the next two or three months, something has to give." But he could not say what: perhaps the FRELIMO would have to take MNR people into the government. MNR had wanted to take over; now he understood they only wanted four ministries.

Maputo is a city of rumors, especially among foreign co-operantes. With things going badly, the government has resorted to a series of public relations exercises to cover the dismal truth. They hid the extent of starvation from drought until the situation was almost catastrophic. They ballyhooed Nkomati far and wide as a triumph for their diplomatic skills, their far-ranging belief in international principles and a victory for socialism. No one begrudged FRELIMO the right to national pride, but the reality was that FRELIMO had been desperate and had had to embrace South Africa and the western backers of South Africa for rescue from war and the collapse of the economy. And people know it. The government has advertised its triumphs and not been candid about its failures. With people a bit cynical about the government's current line, they indulge in spreading what they hear from friends. No one can confirm most of it; it leads to apprehension, fear and despondency; it may be disinformation spread by MNR agents. But one cannot disregard it either. Even so some things are reasonably clear.

Foreign co-operantes (government workers) do not believe it is safe to travel by road even in daytime outside the city limits of Maputo. People told me that no one goes more than twenty kilometers south or five north without military escort. I was told by people who knew the victims of two MNR attacks on vehicles proceeding along the main road to Marracuene in the last few weeks. South of the city as far as the South African border there is believed to be an MNR presence that numbers in the thousands, some of whom were inserted from South Africa after Nkomati. In Catembe the president of a collective cooperative and the secretary of a communal village were murdered by MNR in the week I was in Maputo according to a source in the Ministry of Agriculture. Electricity and water are erratic. One day when I was there people were filling buckets and jugs. MNR had sabotaged two electric pylons west of Maputo and maybe water pipes as well.

MNR had derailed a Swaziland-to-Maputo railroad train in mid-August and cut the line again in mid-September making it inoperative. The Chicalacuala railroad, which runs to Maputo from Zimbabwe, was attacked again on September 2nd and is not working. The effect of these attacks is to render Mozambique even more dependent on South Africa and on international aid for the supplies it needs for Maputo. (I note that the Komatipoort line from South Africa has not been attacked, although some South African travelers have been.)

The strategy of MNR in the post-Nkomati period seems to be to tighten a noose around Maputo and Nacala so as to make life unbearable for the urban populations and thus compel FRELIMO to share political power with MNR. While conditions in Gaza and Inhambane have improved as far as food and security are concerned, deliveries from countryside to the city are hazardous and erratic.
According to Ministry of Agriculture officials, rice production at Chokwe has increased dramatically since 8,000 hectares of the big state farm were turned over to family farms. With good rains in the early growing season, crops have been good in many areas although there is still drought in northern Inhambane. In some areas, through foreign aid, consumer goods suitable for peasant needs have been brought in as stock for local traders; with things to buy, such as clothes, machetes, radios, etc., peasants have increased production. The “Commercialization” program is only a year old, needs evaluation and adjustment, but seems promising. It also depends on foreign aid rather than local production for its success.

Maputo needs 25,000 tons of cereals each month in order to feed itself. With the international press publicizing the desperate plight of Mozambique, foreign donors shipped lots of food aid during the early months of year, but by May and June the imports had dropped to almost nothing. In August food reserves were three days' supply. In September they were down to zero to one day's supply. The monthly ration has been cut to four kgs. per person, and consists of cereals. This can be supplemented by cabbage and lettuce, currently abundant at the market. Protein is almost entirely lacking unless one has access to the foreign exchange shop or has used clothes or something else tangible to trade. Local fishermen sell their fish almost entirely on the black market, which grows larger all the time. No one wants the local currency, meticais, so the price for two or three kilograms of fish is some 3,000 meticais, $75 at the official rate of exchange and a good chunk of a person's monthly wage, but $2 or $3 if you pay in American money.

One answer to Maputo's plight and the plight of other cities has been the growth of small producer co-ops in the "zonas verdas" or green zones. The number of co-op members (co-operativistas) has grown rapidly in the last three years so that there are now 8,000 in Maputo alone, 80% of whom are women. In the last year there was a 30% increase in their production. Under the guidance of Father Prosperino, a Roman Catholic priest with 26 years' experience in Mozambique, I saw an impressive irrigated garden where seed and seedlings are nurtured and then sold to the co-ops at cost. A course for 30 creche teachers was about to be launched at the old farm house which serves as a center for the co-op union. A nearby piggery was full of suckling sows and young pigs of every size waiting to be sold to co-ops that would raise them for sale. The breeding institution had 997 pigs and I was told that other co-ops had 4,500 pigs in their feeding programs.

Because the food situation is so critical, the Ministry of Agriculture, in the wake of the Fourth Congress' directives, is paying new attention to the family farmer and the private sector as well. State farms and co-ops which are unmanageably large have been reduced in size by turning sections over to family farmer. State farms are supposed to supply technical experts to family farms, teaching how to select seeds, how to sow in lines, the proper density of plantations and how to irrigate. Because in many places tractors were introduced before co-ops had a proper grasp of maintenance and mechanics, few of them still work. Chastened by this experience, Mozambique is introducing more technical help and training for tractor maintenance and repair and more animal traction so that peasants will move more gradually into the progression of techniques: from hoe, to oxen, to tractor. In terms of meat, the Ministry of Agriculture is trying to emphasize ducks, pigs and goats rather than chickens. Chickens are being de-emphasized because of the need for imported stock feed. Still, I must say that the piggeries and the turkey farm I saw that were flourishing were all using stock feed imported from South Africa. The OMM cooperative, A Luta Continua, seemed to be using cauliflower and other greens rather than stock grain for its pigs and rabbits. The Chilean agronomist who was my guide thought lack of a proper diet made the pigs and rabbits sickly. Local maize and grains are not available because of drought.
I was shown a family farm which was run by a couple, the Peccinis. They were incubating turkey eggs in a carefully constructed heater room and then raising some 6,500 to adult size. They sell to the state enterprise for poultry. More disturbing evidence of the new emphasis on private sector was a 112-acre state farm in the Fulene Valley which had been sold to Paul Chissano, brother of the foreign minister. Ironically, I was shown the place by the former manager, who now runs the Agrarian House, where growers can come for help and demonstrations. I asked an accompanying Uruguayan agronomist why it had been sold. He said the state farm had been poorly managed. I asked if it was well managed now. He could not say. It was clear that he and others felt that there was a real danger that the old colonial relationships of master-servant could return with this emphasis on private sector development during the current emergency. The former manager of the state farm was most cordially greeted wherever he went.

Notwithstanding the growth of the zonas verdas organizations, productivity per acre is not at a satisfactory level, according to Father Prosperino. "We get five tons an acre. We need ten tons." For him the key was management and commercialization. And a work ethic.

Father Prosperino pointed to me as an example to a smiling crowd of women at the union center: "You see this man. He is an American. He is big, big like an American. You know how Americans get big like that? They eat plenty. You know why they eat plenty? They work hard, hard, I tell you. If you and your children want to be big like this man, you got to work hard like him." It was far too simplistic, but other co-operantes expressed similar frustration with the attitude of Mozambicans toward working past what was necessary for their family's needs. Given the lack of usefulness of the money they earn, it seemed to me that exhortation was not the answer. Thirty percent of co-op production gets sold for hard currency or bartered goods according to one informant.

For USAID, the answers seem simple, also. Turn everything over to the private sector. One USAID official I breakfasted with at the Polana had this prescription:

- USAID should go to private sector only;
- currency reform, devaluation, IMF restraints;
- auction off all imported food aid at dockside to wholesalers, draining off meticais;
- tie the local currency to the rand;
- make the private sector, which alone benefits from the U.S. commodity import program, pay for it at real rates of exchange. As it is the private farmer gets his tractor for $100 because he pays in local currency at the official rate ($1 = 40 meticais) not the real rate ($1 = 1,500 meticais.); and
- production comes from private sector work only.

But what becomes of the little person, the ordinary wage-earner when the crunch comes? Inevitably, as Mozambique joins the great disciplinary institutions: IMF, World Bank, Lome, etc., a price will be paid for their help. One thing that will have to stop is wages paid without relationship to production.
I saw an example of the problems when I visited Campoane cooperative in the Umbeluzi District, which has 37-1/2 acres of state farm land set aside for its use. The main problem is maize seeds, which have not arrived from the provincial agricultural center due to lack of transport. Members complained that when they go to the local consumer co-op in the communal village they get no preference because they are working collectively. The producer co-op feels this is not correct. It gives them no incentive to work collectively if they have to pay the same price and be treated equally with those who do not work collectively. The co-op feels it is difficult to weed some crops like onions with the big hoes they have. And since the floods, there has been a problem of lack of shoes, boots, vests and all sorts of clothes. Members felt if they had a consumer shop of their own they might get some attention from wholesale distributors and a better price.

When I raised this issue with officials in the Ministry of Agriculture they acknowledged that the complaint about not getting consumer goods through the communal village co-op was common. Apparently, one difficulty is that the distribution of goods is in the hands of private wholesalers who distribute the scarce commodities to "their friends" and not necessarily to the producer co-ops, though these are accorded priority by the state.

The whole country needs peace

Nkomati was based on the premise that it could bring peace to a country that has paid a very heavy price for war: perhaps as much as $3 billion in damaged infrastructure, loss of revenues from closed ports, inoperative railroads and the collapse of what economy there was. Yet peace has remained elusive. The question is not whether peace is desirable—everyone knows it is indispensable—but what price Mozambique will be made to pay to get it.

Being in Maputo during the recent Pretoria negotiations did little to clarify the new agreement. MNR is demanding a share of political power, if Machel is to stay on as President and if the fighting is to stop. Mozambique says it will never negotiate with MNR for any share of state power. But there have been other things they said they would never do. They said they would never negotiate at all with the "bandits". In some sense this refusal has allowed South Africa to play the role of peace-maker and "honest broker" even though it was MNR's patron and promoter. In signing an agreement with MNR, Mozambique has to some degree recognized that MNR has some legitimate status and is not just a puppet. Furthermore, even though the commission to implement the agreement is supposed to deal only with "technical matters", it is hard not to see this step except as a slide toward recognizing MNR as a political force.

In all of this, it becomes quite clear also that it is South Africa, the United States, Great Britain and Portugal, that are calling the tune. South Africa claims the role of security manager for the area. South African troops are patrolling the electric lines from Cabora Bassa. South Africa now is proposing that its troops act to implement the ceasefire agreement. Mozambique says this was not discussed and MNR rejects the idea, but it will probably happen.

Mozambique is slowly having to make more concessions as time goes on. While for the moment both Mozambique and MNR are emphasizing the necessity of military action as the prelude to further diplomacy, Mozambique is not in a strong position. Besides the south, MNR is entrenched in the mountainous areas of the north and could hold out for two years or more. In a well-coordinated operation, in July it moved into Cabo Delgado, an area where the Makonde people once supported FRELIMO.
In June South Africa had suggested a plan for re-integrating the 18,000 MNR troops which are in camps in South Africa. Eight thousand were to be given jobs in South African mines. Ten thousand were to be rehabilitated and re-integrated with help from western and international donors. Those whom Mozambique rejected as unsalvageable would be absorbed by the U.S.A. and U.K. There would be an amnesty for everyone including those in prison. While Mozambique rejected it initially as "recolonization", a form of the plan is now being put forward by Mozambique itself as a step toward peace.

A journalist long associated with FRELIMO told me: "The imperialists really have their act together this time. ANC had better negotiate with South Africa now for whatever they can get."

All of this is not to say that there are no differences between the western strategists and South Africa. Some long time observers of FRELIMO say that South Africa wants too much; that the West is urging South Africa to take charge and dismantle its creature, MNR; that it is enough to have Machel converted from socialism, "having seen that it has failed"; that his turn to capitalism and its official aid programs are a clearcut choice of development strategy that will enhance the private sector. But South Africa needs to cut a political deal of some sort for MNR because if it did so it would ensure that Machel, whom South Africa does not trust, could not turn back to socialism. Furthermore, if South Africa ditched MNR what would Botha tell Jonas Savimbi of UNITA about his prospects? While South Africa's military support for MNR has diminished, MNR still seems to be getting South African intelligence, military advice and possibly some supplies, perhaps by delivery along the coast.

It is also quite apparent that the West does not want FRELIMO to be forced out of power and turned into a guerilla force once again, to return in eight or ten years, possibly with the backing of the Soviet Union, with increased wisdom and a clearer program for socialist evolution. The West would prefer Machel to act as a sort of converted Marxist who can help fashion a peaceful solution to apartheid. In this scenario, already hinted at in Mozambican statements about the struggle in South Africa now being a struggle for human rights to be conducted by nonviolent means, Mozambique would act as an interlocutor with ANC and others on behalf of western interests.

Given the present state of relations between Machel and ANC, it is scarcely likely that this scenario for dialogue will be enacted. The summary way in which Machel treated ANC has left a number of unhealed wounds. Strategic and theoretical disagreements remain unresolved. While ANC is determined to avoid being confrontational, its criticisms of Mozambique and of Machel voiced privately make it clear that Machel has lost credence as an ally and friend who could mediate.

According to the Rand Daily Mail (July 18) the West is mounting pressure on ANC to abandon "armed struggle" in favor of diplomatic and political action and to sever its ties with the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc. In return, the organization, which is presently banned, would be offered a negotiated return to function constitutionally inside South Africa and safe passage for exiles who are not facing criminal charges. (ANC's response has been that it would negotiate with South Africa only for the dismantling of apartheid.)

Meanwhile South Africa is pressing several frontline states to "do the Nkomati." Lesotho is being pressured by means of a threat to cancel the Highlands Water scheme (see SAILAR Newsletter No. 5). Botswana is being pressured to sign a non-aggression agreement. South Africa is insisting that it should have the right
of "hot pursuit" and that it should have the right to designate who is a proper "refugee".

The real politics, the exciting politics, are going on inside South Africa, where opposition to apartheid seems more solidly based on a broad front of resistance than ever before. South Africa's attempt to squeeze and dominate and destabilize its neighbors is a response to the internal challenge it faces and which it refuses to meet by peaceful negotiation for genuine transformation of the state.

Prospects

No one can predict the course of the next two or three months. My guess is FRELIMO will not agree to a coalition government. It would be the end of the party. But MNR is now enjoying, notwithstanding its unsavory reputation, a measure of popular support or tolerance and is not likely to give up its ambition for state power unless South Africa compels it to do so. Conceivably, one solution might be to allow an election with MNR and FRELIMO and others testing their popular strength. But with FRELIMO at an all-time low of popular support, an election now could well mean an MNR government with all its implications--of a restoration of properties to the Portuguese who lost them and some form of colonial economic relationships as well.

The likelihood is, however, that South Africa and the West will buy off MNR somehow, perhaps by guaranteeing a share in various business ventures now being discussed. South Africa has ambitions to take over at least some of SADCC's projects. In fact, it has already signed a wide-ranging agreement for rehabilitation of the Maputo-Matola port and the railroad links to it worth at least $10 million. I found an example of what the agreement means at the Polana bar. Three South African engineers told me that they were working already on rehabilitating and replacing coal handling facilities in Matola even while handling a traffic flow that will be 350,000 tons this year. They said the equipment had seen no maintenance in 20 years and was antiquated and worn out. They were contemptuous of the Mozambicans they had available to do the work: "Two hundred of them turn up on a shift. But you can't get work out of more than thirty."

It was a complaint I had heard from others. But I reflected, "How would you be motivated to work when your diet leaves you malnourished and your earnings buy little? How would you have any initiative or sense of responsibility when the colonialists had rigorously taught that Mozambicans are congenitally incapable of work?"

All of which is not to deny the problem of low productivity in relation to wages, which exists in many African countries but is perhaps at its most critical in those countries Portugal colonized.

What to do now?

The last two years have been so filled with anxiety and stress for expatriates friendly to FRELIMO and its inspirational vision for Mozambique that there is now a tendency especially among "progressives" to cut and run or simply to fold their tents in exhaustion and go home—or to attack FRELIMO as sell-out capitulationists: understandable but sad and unproductive.

In talking with "progressive" expatriates who have not given up and gone home, I was told almost universally that AFSC and other like-minded development agencies would do well to pitch in and help precisely because post-Nkomati fallout would be worse if they stayed away. Aid agencies with big budgets swollen by USAID money are
plunging in with large amounts of relief that is often spent with little regard for Mozambique's political philosophy.

An example of this came up in a breakfast-time conversation with a USAID official. He said that a high-level officer of a nongovernmental organization had called to announce they were flying hundreds of thousands of dollars of relief supplies into Tete. They had purchased the supplies and the airlift from South Africa. The USAID person said:

"I asked whether he had checked with the Mozambican Government about it."
He said: "No."
I said: "Don't you think you ought to?"
He said: "Does that really matter?"

According to the Economist Intelligence Report one of the U.S. NGO's working in relief has CIA relations.

There is a danger that development aid agencies that are critical of U.S. policy in southern Africa and/or see development as a people-centered and people-determined process will simply leave the field to the more aggressive and well-heeled organizations whose relief work and political views retard healthy development.

My good friends Sytse and Marlies, who are salt-of-the-earth Dutch Quakers, put it this way:

"We do not think it is correct from a Quaker perspective to stay away where there is conflict. Rather we should seek to work within the situation of conflict making solidarity with the people who are suffering. That is how we think."

I say Amen (Anglican) to that.

Ted Lockwood