Dear Friends,

"These people are impressive. They're committed; they're hard-working; they know what they want - and they are going to get there."

Hank* took a drag on his dollar-fifty Brazilian cigar.

"These are really excellent. You can get 'em at the Loja Franca."

(The Loja Franca is part of the two-tiered class society in Maputo: those who have foreign exchange and those that don't; those who can buy wine and delicacies and those who are on rations.)

Hank is a geologist; an old hand in the third world - Latin America and the Caribbean, Somalia, and now Mozambique, where he is going to manage an oil exploration project for a multinational.

On a personal level, I found him an attractive example of how a man in his seventies could take a zestful interest in new surroundings and new people. Yet I was impressed also with the irony of the situation:

A representative of the multinational corporate world, whose collective activities Mozambique denounces as imperialism, was frankly admiring the dynamism of the leadership of a Marxist state.

And there were Jim Seawell and I listening to him in the Polana, not luxurious but the best hotel in Maputo; whose atmosphere, service and meals make one feel pampered. Why should two representatives of an organization that advocates the simple life be ensconced in this gorgeous setting? Had colonialism returned with the return of Portuguese management of the Polana? And were we engaged in it?

One reason we were at the Polana Hotel was because our travel agent said it had hot water. None of the rest did.

"Hot water?" said a friend who is an American co-operante. "Be thankful you have water at all." Because Maputo now has extended its water system to the shack city that surrounds the city of concrete where the Portuguese once lived, the water pressure has fallen so that many apartment and hotel buildings have water only at certain times and/or only at ground level. And the river from which the water is drawn is dead low due to the drought and also due to South African-induced Swaziland withholding of upstream waters.

* Not his real name.
It's easy in such surroundings, redolent with memories of colonialism, to forget the four horsemen of the apocalypse who ride just over the horizon—war, famine, disease and spiritual death.

Fortunately, we had good people, old friends and new acquaintances to brief us on those realities:

I arrived five days ahead of Jim Seawell to prepare appointments and test the ground for our mission—to see whether AFSC could and should extend its development work to Mozambique.

Sam Barnes and Judith Marshall, CUSO volunteers whom I had met briefly before, were generous with their time and enthusiasm. Both work in the Ministry of Education on the new adult literacy program, which is starting to roll. They had spent two months translating the basic documents of FRELIMO'S Fourth Congress, held from April 26-30th and were glad to interpret the new direction.

Ian Christie, an old friend who directs the English language service of Radio Mozambique, spent the evening briefing me on the war, the drought and the Congress.

Joe Hanlon, who strings for BBC, African Economic Digest and other magazines gave Jim and I a sensible and candid analysis. A Dutch Quaker couple, Sytse and Marlies Tjalingii, who have been working in education both in Chokwe and in Maputo, shared with us their insights and took us to church and to the beach.

At the Christian Council, Jim Shenk, a young Mennonite development specialist, not only gave us long briefings but helped set up appointments and ferried us round in the Council's automobile.

Wherever we went people said, "We're glad you're here. You have come at just the right moment."

Just the Right Moment: Food.

"This is the worst it's ever been," Judith Marshall said. She should know; she's been in Mozambique a long time.

Maputo is now on an efficient rationing system which has brought equity out of scarcity and has cut down on queues. But there is still great scarcity and most of the food is imported. Each person gets 4½ kilos of basics as a guaranteed minimum: 2½ kilos of grain (mealies or rice), plus oil, sugar and maybe some beans. Occasionally, there is tinned meat or fish; sometimes wine, soap, toilet paper. But it's a small ration. By the 20th of the month there are lines outside every restaurant. People have made reservations and as their name is called out, they go in and eat. Money is plentiful; food is not. You just don't drop in and eat in a restaurant these days. You have to plan it.

The most urgent task Mozambique faces is in food production, marketing and distribution.

Up until recently, Mozambique has followed a policy of centralized planning, with big projects—large state farms and heavy industry with a focus on building a strong working class. The rural peasantry have been largely left on their own except for the formation of communal villages and a small agricultural co-operative movement.
In the main, the principal advisors have been from eastern Europe, and the model for building socialist structures has been what worked in eastern Europe. But eastern Europe is not Mozambique. Ninety-three percent of the people were illiterate at independence; few had any job skills, technical training or experience with machinery. But most of all, there was no management experience to build on.

"Until independence and one must repeat it, Mozambique had access to virtually no level of management in any of these sectors (large-, medium- and small-scale production enterprises and services)." (Report of the Central Committee, IV Congress, Out of Underdevelopment to Socialism.)

Large machines were imported, broke down, could not be repaired. The eastern Europeans have tended to be "unto themselves" and, while teaching technical skills, have not been so successful in fostering self-confidence and African leadership. Training has tended not to be appropriate to the level of technical sophistication required. And the scale of big projects made them difficult for inexperienced managers.

The fact is that the growth of Mozambique's agricultural production from 1977 to 1981 was only 8.8%. From 1981 to 1982 it declined by 2.4%. And in 1982 as a result of drought and war it has dropped in six of the ten provinces to only 20% to 30% of what it had been. The overall rate of growth is lower than the rate of population increase, a sure recipe for disaster especially when foreign exchange for food imports is so scarce.

While the state farms produce 50% of marketed agricultural production, according to the Central Committee, and the family sector 36%, these figures understate the importance of the family or traditional farm sector because so much is produced to be consumed by the family and not marketed. Jim Shenk gave us an estimate, which he said was reliable, that the family sector produces 85% of total agricultural production. Ten million of the 11 million Mozambicans are traditional farmers.

Producer co-ops have scored some important successes and their number of members is now 37,000, but they have only received 2% of investments in agriculture.

**Just the Right Moment: A New Direction; Small is Beautiful.**

The ground for the new direction has already been laid in the Theses which had been discussed and debated before the Congress convened. The Fifth Thesis reads:

"The solution of our material problems will come from matching major projects with small projects and local initiatives, as well as from the effort, dedication and intelligence of every Mozambican worker."

And in detail the thesis was spelled out:

"Small projects are the way towards immediately resolving the main needs of the people. In carrying them out, the people should take part in defining priorities, listing existing resources, choosing appropriate technology, and in planning and implementing the project.

"Implementing small projects develops people's confidence in their own capacities...."
"Small projects are a school for technicians...a constant source of inspiration to Party cadres, who, in solving people's concrete problems, get to know the most active citizens, those who are the most imaginative, most dedicated and have qualities for organization and leadership."

The local authorities are to encourage organization of communal villages, increase production for the market in the family and cooperative sector, develop small-scale local industries and maintain the infrastructure of roads, dams and utilities.

Since experience has shown that top-down, center-periphery-imposed plans don't work, direction is to be decentralized. The state is not to do direct management but rather to guide and support the other sectors. The Politburo member most closely associated with the small project emphasis, Jacinto Veloso, is to be minister in the president's office for economic affairs. He will be the dominant figure in economic affairs in this new post.

Joao Perreira, who was secretary of state for cotton, has now been made minister of agriculture. He has a reputation for being hard-driving and someone who can produce results. A Deputy Minister for the Cooperative and Family Sectors, Francisco Joao Pateguana, has been appointed within the Ministry in order to emphasize the Congress' decision to give priority to cooperative and peasant family work.

No one knows if it will work. Time after time we were told that management skills were crucial and in very short supply. Top ministers and party officials, who are believed to have demonstrable skills and commitment, are being sent out to man the provincial governorships and to guide and dynamize the big enterprises. Whether the top-down management of the past can be reversed is an open question. Party directives to emphasize the family and co-ops have been sabotaged by the civil service in the past. To correct the acknowledged underestimation of people's knowledge and labor skills and to involve them in solving their own problems is the method that helped Frelimo in its early days, helped it to grow its own food, tend the sick and shelter its people in the liberated areas. Yet to reverse a bureaucratic mind-set now will take more than inspired rhetoric.

Although the small project emphasis has won out as a first priority, it is by no means clear whether this is to be a fundamental change in direction and strategy or simply a tactic that is useful for now until the big projects take off; a tactic adopted simply in order to meet people's needs for food, clothing, transport and housing. The Congress decision represents a compromise; consensus was reached only on what was to be done for the next three years, not for the usual five. Big projects will be continued but small projects will be first priority. Overall growth will be slower but people need to be fed.

The War.

The problems of food are compounded with interest by South African-sponsored destabilization. Mozambique's is a war economy, as an ordinary incident of life illustrates.

Outside the Christian Council office I was introduced to a pastor who had been waiting for transport to Imhambane for two weeks. He had come down for the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) meeting at President Machel's invitation. He had been waiting with 60 others for a place on an eight-seater plane. The boat goes every so often, once or twice a month.
"No one takes the bus if they can help it. The buses get attacked by the bandits," Jim Shenk said.

The road from Maputo to Beira is impassable except under armed escort from Imhambane north, although most of Gaza province is reasonably secure (except for some sporadic guerilla attacks west of Chokwe).

Nampula has been difficult in the last two months, with travel to some large areas impossible. But the hottest spot is Zambezia, the heavily populated province north of Beira, where the great river exits to the sea. The railroad to Malawi, an important SADCC project, is in effect inoperative because of Mozambican National Resistance Movement (MNR) attacks.

Security in Sofala and Manica, on the other hand, has improved greatly in recent months. We were told that the railroad, the oil pipeline and the highway from Mutare to Beira were functioning and well-guarded. In part, the improvement is due to the presence of 1,000 or more Zimbabwean soldiers who have been sent to Mozambique to guard the Zimbabwe-Mozambique pipeline. And in part it is due to the formation of militia units who have been posted on the railroad trains and at factories and production facilities as armed guards, freeing up troops for more aggressive patrolling.

More generally, the army is being upgraded by infusions of former guerilla commanders and even by technical assistance from the Portuguese military, who certainly should know the terrain and some of the former Portuguese intelligence agents who are involved in MNR. Samora Machel himself has been serving as a real commander-in-chief since last year.

Drought.

How to compound compounded trouble? The drought is enough to make church people question the goodness of the Creator. Some four million Mozambicans in the southern and central provinces are suffering from the worst drought in history.

In response to an international appeal Zimbabwe has pledged 25,000 tons of maize, an amazing display of solidarity and gratitude to Zimbabwe's ally in the liberation struggle, since Zimbabwe has its own problems with drought. Ian Christie pointed out acerbically that the United States had managed to come up with only 2,325 thousand tons of food in spite of its reputation as the bread basket of the world.

And, as I later found out, the Mennonites, through the Canadian Food Bank, are sending 8,500 tons of wheat through the Christian Council of Mozambique, wheat that will be exchanged for maize, the staple food in the country, and distributed in Gaza and Imhambane. The government has asked the Council to have local pastors select volunteers to help in the distribution. In addition, the Council and the government are to finance jointly chosen development projects out of the proceeds of sales of donated maize. Forty percent of the donated maize is to be sold since there is a cash glut in many districts where there are few consumer goods.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is now trying to fly food into isolated areas but coordination with government is not yet well-developed. The government has bitter memories of ICRC's role in the liberation war.
Church Relationships with the Government

In the wake of an unprecedented dialogue meeting between President Machel and the leaders of the Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Moslem communities, there is, at least in Protestant circles, a feeling of optimism about cooperation and friendly relations with the government. The Protestant churches, with assistance from the Mennonites, are gearing up to identify development projects in which local churches can be involved. We certainly found Jim Shenk deeply knowledgable and helpful.

Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church, especially through Caritas, is already engaged in agricultural work and reconstruction and is planning to do more. We met two Portuguese Grail members (a Catholic lay women's group) who have been doing a survey of possibilities throughout the country. But the Catholic Church remains under a cloud of suspicion because of its links with Portuguese colonialism in the past. Samora Machel has not forgotten many incidents of the Catholic establishment's racism or his own forced baptism. Both the Catholic Bishop of Beira, Jaime Goncalves, and the Anglican Archbishop, Dennis Singulane, have called for a search for ways and means of reconciling all Mozambicans to one another. For the government, these calls have aroused suspicions that these churches are trying to mediate between MNR and the government, an unacceptable proposal that acknowledges MNR as a serious movement and not a South African creation.

There are other unresolved issues such as churches which have been closed, church institutions which have been nationalized, restrictions on travel and education for religious purposes, etc. The churches would like to build new churches in communal villages but so far the government has been unbending in its refusal to permit such construction.

Still, the government is clearly reaching out to the churches and to the nongovernmental agencies. One sign of the latter is the creation of a new Secretariat of State for International Co-operation, headed by Antonio Sumbane, a member of the Central Committee and formerly in charge of disaster relief services.

Morale

Clearly Mozambique cannot solve the problems of destabilization, hunger, development and war without the enthusiasm, confidence and support of the greater part of the people. This is obviously the most important political objective as Samora Machel, the extraordinary orator and campaigner, knows full well.

Mozambique is a relatively underpopulated country with large areas that have little contact with one another. There are 20 different language groups. Literacy is still not widespread and Portuguese, the lingua franca, is far from universally spoken or understood. While many Mozambicans suffered from colonialism, large sections of the population do not think of themselves as Mozambicans. Regional and ethnic loyalties and cultural ties are realities which MNR deliberately plays on to evoke hostilities to "those southerners" (i.e., the government). In the remote areas the peasants are terrified of MNR brutalities and not anxious to be seen as FRELIMO either. Some thousands have gone over into Zimbabwe as refugees from the fighting or to avoid the draft.

Within the cities there are the "unarmed bandits" as FRELIMO calls them. Not only are there bureaucrats left over from the old days who long for a return
to power, there are also those who, while mouthing the party line, enjoy their Volvos and their soft desk jobs and make plans for others, as President Machel pointed out in scathing terms.

I was told by someone who works in the Ministry of Culture that where once there was active criticism and self-criticism in the bureaucracy, there is now a cynical effort to sabotage the government. "You wait," these people say. "One day soon they will come (MNR)." Some will purposely delay processing papers for the citizens—"Come back tomorrow; it's not ready yet"—leading to fury with the government.

And as in every country where there are severe shortages of food—Angola and Tanzania come to mind—there is a flourishing black market, which the government is trying to stamp out with repression and exemplary punishments such as flogging. The latest measure is a compulsory relocation of all those who cannot produce evidence that they are employed. The unemployed in their thousands are being flown north to Cabo Delgado to be put to work on state farms and enterprises. It's an attempt to deal at the roots with the problem of candonga, the black market. The candongueiros stand in line for food and have the time to do so because they are unemployed. They then resell the food at inflated prices. While sympathizing with the government's objective, some church observers feel that the repressive measures are wrong and counter-productive. They may even feed into MNR recruiting. And of course, South Africa gleefully points out resemblances to its own influx control and relocation programs, which have met universal condemnation. What the South Africans don't point out is that their own role in disrupting Mozambique's food production has played a significant part in creating the candonga. And of course the Mozambican relocation is not based on race. One can also assume that there is work to be done in the north, as there is not in the bantustans.

Beyond this, there is a certain weariness that has set in even among the well-intentioned and well-oriented. Congress was a remedy by way of good theater. What made it so impressive is that FRELIMO heard the strong criticism and vociferous protest and incorporated it into their work. One war veteran electrified the Congress by accusing the Central Committee of having been infiltrated. He was not put down but gently corrected by Machel's pointing to the corruption of a life of bureaucratic softness as the real difficulty. Ministers run the risk of becoming "prisoners of their armchairs."

To regain touch with the people, the Central Committee has been expanded to 130 members from 67. The new members are not government people but are representatives of the workers and peasants, including those whose criticisms were so trenchant. In this way, FRELIMO hopes to regain its dynamism in mobilizing the state to fulfill the promises to the people.

Summary.

Jim and I returned "high" on Mozambique. In spite of all the problems, it's hard not to be impressed with the commitment, the gentle perseverance and the seriousness of the leadership. We felt Hank was right. No one can say if Mozambique will succeed in its new effort, but one thing seems dead certain. It is headed in the right direction.

As AFSC's Southern Africa International Affairs Representative, Edgar (Ted) Lockwood carries responsibility for writing reports, and initiating conferences, seminars, and personal contacts that support the work by the member nations of the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) to foster greater regional development and economic cooperation.