

**Defend the Fatherland! Overcome
underdevelopment! Build Socialism!**

FRELIMO FIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE OF MOZAMBIQUE

The fourth congress of the Frelimo Party, Mozambique's Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, held in Maputo at the end of April, was an historic event, not only for the Mozambican people, but for all progressive and revolutionary forces in Southern Africa. It brought together 677 delegates from all parts of the country, 183 invited guests from various spheres of public life in Mozambique, and 145 foreign guests, representing 65 parties, liberation movements and solidarity organisations from no less than 54 different countries. The congress was conducted in a spirit of militant enthusiasm, open and uninhibited debate, and resolute determination to achieve the three objectives set out by the keynote slogans of the congress: **Defend the fatherland! Overcome underdevelopment! Build socialism!** Our special correspondent explains the background to and significance of the congress.

The first congress was the foundation of FRELIMO in 1962. The second congress in 1968 witnessed the decisive triumph of the revolutionary democratic line over narrow, reactionary, bourgeois and tribalist trends in

the national movement. The third congress in 1977 marked the transformation of FRELIMO, the broad front for national liberation, into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, dedicated to the building of socialism, and set the course for the many and complex social, economic and cultural transformations required for the achievement of socialism.

Since 1977 the Mozambican people have taken tremendous strides forward. The report of the Central Committee to the fourth congress, the reading of which occupied most of the first two days of the 5-day event, is full of facts and figures which demonstrate the numerous gains of the people, the advances made in a few short years. A brief survey can only skim the surface of the rich experience and the striking progress made since independence in 1975.

Economic development

The need for the state to take over numerous abandoned enterprises in the immediate post-independence period, and to intervene in many others, because of their strategic significance, or to prevent sabotage, both physical and financial, brought the state into the centre of economic life at an early stage. Since the third congress this pivotal role has been consolidated and extended, to the point where now some 85% of total production for the market is planned, and state enterprises produce 70% of total marketed production. State enterprises are dominant in the following sectors: agriculture, industry, energy, mines, transport and communications, construction, and external trade. Banking and insurance are also controlled by the state.

The significance of this is far-reaching. Private capital has lost its grip, and its role in future will be to work alongside and under control of the democratically controlled state sector. The introduction of planning, with all the faults and weaknesses inevitable in the early phase of such a complex process, has begun to involve working people in the management of the economy. To live and work in a planned and organised way has already come to be, in the words of the C.C. report, "a characteristic of Mozambicans. This is a great victory of the building of socialism in our country."

Parallel with the introduction of planned production has developed cooperative distribution. Today 20% of retail trade is carried out through democratically run cooperatives, with half a million members, and reaching 2,300,000 mostly urban consumers (nearly a fifth of the entire population). In Maputo the cooperatives have provided the organisational

basis for the efficient food rationing system which goes a long way to ensuring minimum supplies reach everybody.

Socialisation of agriculture has been another key aim, to overcome the dispersion and individual limitations of peasant producers. The main achievement here has been the creation of 1350 communal villages, with 1,800,000 inhabitants. Most of these have some or all of the following services (little of which would have been possible without villagisation, and none of which they knew in colonial society): schools, health posts, water and electricity supplies, postal services, drainage. Some 460 have elected popular assemblies, 156 have people's courts, and in 515 party cells have been established.

On the other hand, state support for agricultural cooperatives has been badly neglected — as many participants in the Congress debates pointed out forcefully. From 1977 to 1982 the number of production cooperatives grew from 180 to 370, but their total number of 37,000 members is a tiny fraction of the millions who need to be drawn into a variety of forms of mutual assistance if socialisation of the countryside is to advance. The past one-sided concentration of the government on the state sector in agriculture, and neglect of the cooperative and family sectors, were recognised as mistaken, and the Congress gave a strong emphasis to the need to redress the balance, and to encourage small projects which use local resources, promote local initiative and creativity, and start to satisfy immediate needs.

Part and parcel of this trust is the new commitment to push planning down to district level, so as to involve ever wider circles of people in planning, and to take better account of local realities, skills and knowledge. Provincial and central government bureaucrats who are remote from the daily lives of rural people, and sit in their offices shuffling papers and drawing up grandiose, often unrealistic plans, have been severely criticised in recent months, and are increasingly being pushed out to manage key enterprises, and to work more closely with people at the base.

It was on the basis of the huge political and organisational feats mentioned above and others, that tangible economic advances were registered in the four years after the third congress. In the period 1977-81, total social production grew by 11.6%, agricultural gross production by 8.8%, industrial production by 13.7%, production in transport and communications by 15.4% and in construction by 25%. Hand in hand with these advances went enormous progress in health and welfare services.

The nationalisation of the health service laid the basis for the creation of a health system at the service of the people. Since 1975 a total of 3,250 nurses and other professional health workers have been trained. By 1981 every district had at least one trained person with diagnostic and therapeutic skills. A national vaccination campaign was conducted for the first time ever, reaching virtually 96% of the population and making possible the elimination of smallpox. The infant mortality rate was reduced from 150 per 1,000 in 1975 to 80 per 1,000 in 1982.

In primary education the number of pupils rose from 672,000 (1975) to 1,330,000 (1982). In 5 years 10,200 primary school teachers were trained. Since 1975, 430,000 pupils have completed 4th class, more than in the entire period of colonial rule. The teacher/pupil ratio in primary classes fell from 1:84 in 1977 to 1:53 in 1982. In secondary education, the number of schools rose from 33 in 1975 to 121 in 1982, and the number of pupils from 23,000 to 94,400. Four literacy campaigns and 4 adult education campaigns were carried out in this period. All this has helped to reduce the illiteracy rate, which in 1974 was 93% for all those aged 7 upwards, by 20%.

Political development

What is the character of this state which plays such a central role in managing and developing the economy and providing for the well-being of the people?

Since the third congress an entire legislative apparatus has been brought into being as a major step in mobilizing the people to take control of their own destiny. The people's assemblies now exist at national level, with 11 at provincial level, 101 at district and 1,332 at locality levels. The process of establishing these bodies, and of electing the nearly 44,000 deputies involved in them, was a great schooling in democracy. A people denied democratic rights for centuries have begun to be drawn into political life, both by the assemblies themselves, and also by the formation and development of mass democratic organisations, such as that of the women (the OMM) and the youth (OJM), various socio-professional organisations (e.g. of teachers, journalists, writers etc.), and the production councils, embryonic workers' bodies, the process of whose transformation into trade unions was due to get under way a few months after the fourth congress.

Despite many weaknesses in the functioning of the people's assemblies, such as merely formal compliance with the legal obligations that compel them to function, passivity and lack of clarity as to their role, their

creation represents a great advance, and their improvement will come with consolidation, study and experience. Much the same can be said of the organs of popular justice — the 10 Provincial People's Courts, and their 34 district and 535 local level counterparts. Public criticism of weaknesses in the judicial system before and after the Congress have underlined the need to decolonise the law and its operation, and led to the closing of the Law Faculty and the appointment of a new Minister of Justice — two of several measures aimed at improving the training of lawyers, rooting the courts more deeply in the values of the Mozambican revolution and relating them more closely to the experience and expectations of the people. In all this, as in the questions of economic management, the key is Frelimo's method of involving the people in solving the problems of their daily lives.

It is this approach which justifies the Central Committee's characterisation of the state in Mozambique today as a people's democratic state. To maintain and extend this sort of power in the executive organs of the state is however a task of considerable complexity, especially since much of the executive arm of the present state, unlike the legislative and judicial arms which have been largely created since independence, has been inherited from the colonial-fascist state which it replaced. The problems in this area are legion, and they all have to be resolved in circumstances marked by a severe lack of qualified cadres in every field (the result of colonialism's denial of education) and by an unhealthy dependence in the state apparatus on the small pool of qualified cadres drawn from certain middle strata which enjoyed privileges under colonialism and which have elitist, if not bourgeois aspirations. These conflict with the class nature of the revolutionary transformations which the state must guide into being in the course of socialist construction.

Three of the problems that arise in this area are: corruption, over-centralisation, and economic class conflict. In the period after the third congress, the priority concern of the government was the Zimbabwe situation. This called for the rapid creation of a military defensive and security capacity to defend Mozambique from the brutal assaults of the dying Smith regime, and concentration on military, material and political support to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, combined with participation in regional and international efforts to find a solution leading to independence on the basis of majority rule. As soon as this solution came into sight, the Frelimo leadership turned their attention to a major drive, called the political and organisational offensive, personally spearheaded by President Samora Machel himself, to purge the state

apparatus of corruption and illegality, of arbitrary and irregular conduct by officials and among the police and security forces, of laxity, irresponsibility and neglect — in short of corruption in the widest sense, of all forms of anti-people practices which alienate the people from the government and erode the popular, democratic character of the state.

This offensive was intended to become a permanent feature of government life, yet inevitably it has proved difficult to sustain with the full vigour and effectiveness with which it was launched. So the question of corruption came up again at the fourth congress, and provided one of its most dramatic moments. A delegate from Manica, veteran of the armed struggle, broke off from his prepared text to turn to the platform behind him and say, "Even the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee have been infiltrated." Yes, agreed the President, not infiltrated by enemy agents, but corrupted by comforts, by the privileges of office. He went on to launch a powerful appeal for a revival of the spirit of self-sacrifice which had marked the years of the armed struggle, and called for qualified and competent cadres to be prepared to give up the comforts of life at the top, in the cities, and to go to work where their skills were needed, in the place of production. In the months following the congress a number of appointments were announced giving effect to this policy.

It can be seen from what has been said so far that the state's role in managing the economy is a terrain of sharp class struggle. Enemies of Frelimo, of socialism, concentrate their efforts on the area of economic control. By deliberate acts or omissions that cause suffering or deprivation to the people, they seek to make the aims of the revolution fail, to make it be seen to fail in the eyes of the people, and to stoke up the fires of discontent. As the C.C. report to the congress states:

"The enemy seeks to create a breach between the Party and the people, between the leadership and the base. The enemy tries, on the other hand, to impose on our society values inspired by foreign models. In their language, their taste and opinions, they put forward a capitalist society attuned to the metropolitan centres of consumption, submissive to cultural imperialism."

It is in these social circles, abusing their official powers, and often tied in with hostile forces in neighbouring South Africa, that are to be found the arch instigators of the black market, which puts into illegal channels of circulation both luxury goods not available in the shops, and articles of prime necessity, including food supplies, which are often imported at the expense of Mozambique's limited foreign currency reserves. They do this for personal enrichment, at the cost of the people — who pay grossly

inflated prices on the black market or go without — and to the detriment of the state-controlled and democratic circuits of distribution. Several delegates were critical of the loafers of the cities who have no visible means of support, dress and eat better than the workers, and live off the black market. The Congress approved the tough measures introduced a short while before against ‘unarmed bandits’ — speculators, hoarders, profiteers, and all who aid and abet them.

The Party

Victory in the struggle against the internal class enemy depends ultimately on the Party — on the correctness of its policies, its strength and unity, and its links with the working people of town and country. The Frelimo Party (this designation was approved by the congress, together with some minor up-dating and clarifications of the programme and statutes adopted at the 1977 congress) is the leading force of the state and the society. The CC report noted with satisfaction that in the past six years the Party had implanted itself in “ a solid and irreversible way throughout the country.”

Attending the congress as elected delegates were 173 workers, 195 peasants, 85 soldiers of the Mozambican Armed Forces, and 44 members of other defence and security forces. Thus 72% of the delegates were workers, peasants and soldiers. “This number reflects the nature of our Party and the social base of the Mozambican revolution,” noted the report of the credentials committee. 105 of the delegates were women (15.2%). As to education, 54 delegates were illiterate, 60% had from four to nine years’ education, and 53 delegates had higher education.

192 of the delegates (27.8%) were already militants of Frelimo before 1977. This signifies the continuity of party life. It also reveals that over two-thirds of the delegates had been in the Party for less than six years. Even more revealing of the extraordinarily rapid growth of the Party in recent years were the figures of Party membership, released for the first time. In April 1983 the Party had 110,323 members organised in 4,244 party cells. 53.5% were peasants, 18.9% workers.

Such rapid growth, most of it achieved by the huge, open and vigorously conducted campaign of ‘structuring the Party’ carried out in 1978, brings with it dangers, and mistakes made in the process were analysed by the congress. Political and class criteria of admission had not always been adhered to with sufficient consistency, and training and preparation of cadres had also suffered from some weaknesses. As a result, certain cadres tended to act in bureaucratic and formalistic ways, bringing into Party life

some of the harmful tendencies seen in the state apparatus. Lack of experience, and the difficulty of identifying and playing a leading role, especially in relation to the tasks of economic planning and leadership, led many units of the Party into a sterile, even passive role, amounting to little more than relaying the slogans of the day “and exhortations unconnected with the concrete problems of the masses.”

As a result, when the time approached for the holding of the fourth congress, which, in terms of the Party statutes, should have been within 5 years of the previous congress, the Party found itself unprepared. The first national conference of the Party, in March 1982, decided to confront this situation, delay the holding of the congress for a year, and prepare for it thoroughly by a deep-going campaign of revitalising the cells, and involving them in a wide-ranging dialogue with the masses about all aspects of the situation in the country. This careful preparation, involving collective study of draft theses for the congress, and thousands of public meetings up and down the country in factories, farms, villages, institutions of every sort, ministries, localities and workplaces, laid the foundation of a congress that was superbly organised, and which summarised and rounded off a profoundly democratic, critical and self-critical process of debate and consultation.

The pre-congress debates reverberated through the congress, and the message of the congress in turn reverberated through the nation, as was amply demonstrated by the May Day rally which immediately followed its conclusion. With a mobilisation that far exceeded expectations, bringing some 150-200,000 people out into the streets of Maputo in a colourful, confident and militant demonstration of unity around the perspectives of the congress, the May Day rally — “the best ever,” by general consensus — set the seal on all that had gone before it, and underlined the real success of the congress.

War and economic setbacks

But if the Party was unprepared for the congress in 1982, the nation as a whole was even less ready for it. For by 1982 the country was in the grip of a double squeeze which began to call into question all the gains of the previous years, and even the capacity of the revolution to survive and defend itself. The principal source of this pressure was and remains the apartheid regime of neighbouring South Africa. In 1980, alarmed by the onward advance of the liberation struggle in South Africa, by the new momentum given to the liberation process throughout Southern Africa by

the independence of Zimbabwe, and by the steady progress of the building in Mozambique of a free, anti-racist, anti-imperialist society — antithesis of the South African regime and threatening it by the strength of its example as an alternative — the Pretoria regime took over the armed gangs of the so-called MNR. This organisation, originally conceived by fascist security agents of the dying Portuguese colonial regime, and drawing upon some of the most brutal units created to terrorise people into withholding support for Frelimo, together with deserters and traitors from the movement, was taken over by Rhodesian intelligence as a strike force to weaken Mozambique's principled stand in support of the liberation struggle of the Zimbabwean people. The defeat of its settler patrons in 1980 threatened to bring the MNR to an end.

But Pretoria's intervention gave the MNR a new lease of life. The racists took over the training, financing, planning, arming, equipping and logistical support (by land, sea and air) of the armed gangs, and began directing them at the economic lifelines of Mozambique — at the roads and railways, the oil pipeline and fuel depots, at the network of rural shops, at power lines, at major development projects, at the technical advisers from both West and East who have been assisting Mozambique's efforts to overcome under-development. This deadly sabotage, designed to paralyse the economic life of the country, sow discontent, and prepare for more direct forms of intervention, was accompanied by acts of brutal terror, rape, abduction, mutilation and the like, designed to cow the people and create an atmosphere of instability which would not only frighten off foreign investment but also undermine the government and bring closer its downfall. Rumour-mongering and panic infected several areas, in face of the apparently unstoppable spread of this vicious banditry which even reached the capital in the second quarter of 1982. This clearly was not the right moment for holding a congress.

Worse, the apartheid criminals showed that they were prepared to use all other forms of aggression and destabilisation against Mozambique — from the raid on Matola in January 1981, to a series of incursions and provocations at places such as Ponto D'Ouro in the south and Ressano Garcia on the Transvaal border, to economic pressures affecting transport, power, currency matters and trade, to the infiltration of spies and would-be provocateurs and assassins, even down to interfering with the water supplies from rivers that rise in South Africa and cross Mozambique on their way to the ocean.

All this has compelled Mozambique to devote more of its human and material resources to defence, and to make defence against this 'undeclared war' waged by the racists the top priority of the day. Speaker after speaker at the congress rose to denounce the crimes of the bandits, to describe the tremendous difficulties of maintaining production and distribution in the areas infested by them, to criticise shortcomings in the organisation of an effective response to them, and to express an unyielding determination to rid the country of this destructive blight. For there can be not the slightest doubt that the bandits are deeply hated, and command no popular support whatsoever. They recruit by terror and bribery, and could not last more than a few weeks without the backing of their South African masters.

By a cruel turn of fate, this reactionary offensive against the Mozambican revolution has coincided with severe economic setbacks. The causes of these are several:

The economic crisis of the capitalist world since the mid-seventies, and especially its deepening in the eighties, together with the steep rise in oil prices, has reduced Mozambique's capacity to import the food, raw materials, spares and machinery it needs. Between 1981 and 1982 the average prices of Mozambique's exports fell by around 11%, while in the same period the average prices of her imports rose by 3%. Credit conditions have become tighter, markets have shrunk.

The worst drought in the history of the country, which has been going on for over two years, and became gravely serious with the almost total absence of rain in the rainy season of 1982/3, has decimated livestock, caused the loss of nearly all cereal production in most of the centre and south of the country, and negatively affected some 4 million Mozambicans.

The mistakes made in managing the economy, which have already been referred to.

The consequences of this double squeeze were plain to see in the economic reports given to the congress. Total agricultural production in 1982 fell by 2.4% in relation to 1981. (It must be borne in mind that population has been growing at around 2.5% a year). Industrial production in the same year (1982) was 2.2% lower than the 1977 level. Transport and communications fell by 6.7% in 1982, after growing by 15.4% over the previous 4 years. The gross value of domestic trade, which has remained constant from '77 to '81 (which signifies a real decline, given population growth), fell by 4.2% in 1982. Behind these dry figures lie increased shortages and scarcities, the disappearance of many goods from

the shops, the reversion of many peasant producers to bare subsistence production for lack of any incentive to market their surplus, and widescale deprivation and suffering. All of which has been compounded by the activities of the black marketeers, and helps to explain why these unarmed bandits are seen as being as dangerous to the people's interests as the armed bandits, and why the fight back against both was the predominant theme of the congress.

The fight to defend the country against aggression and destabilisation, and the fight to improve production so as to meet the immediate needs of the people, were seen by the congress as being closely related to each other, and several measures were announced on both fronts soon after the congress. As though to underline the need to improve combat capacity and readiness to defend itself, Mozambique suffered two blatant acts of aggression from South Africa within a month of the congress. The first was the racists' aerial raid on Matola on 23 May, and the second the sending of two spy planes over Maputo a week after, one of which was shot down. The hot reception given to both lots of raiders showed that Mozambique's ability to fight back has indeed improved. In this most crucial of spheres, the fine words of the fourth congress are being resolutely put into practice. After 20 years of war, first against Portuguese colonialism, and then against the settler regime of Ian Smith, the Mozambican people are definitely not prepared to lie down submissively in the face of Pretoria's bullying.

On the contrary, the Frelimo Party displayed its unswerving commitment to its internationalist principles by inviting to its congress as representatives of the South African people, both the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. The warmth with which Oliver Tambo and Moses Mabhida respectively were received matched the high honour of the invitation, and demonstrated once again that the unity of the progressive and revolutionary forces of our region, and the unity of the South African and Mozambican people in struggle against oppression and for liberation, are growing and irreversible trends.

Long live the Fourth Congress of the Frelimo Party!
A Luta Continua!