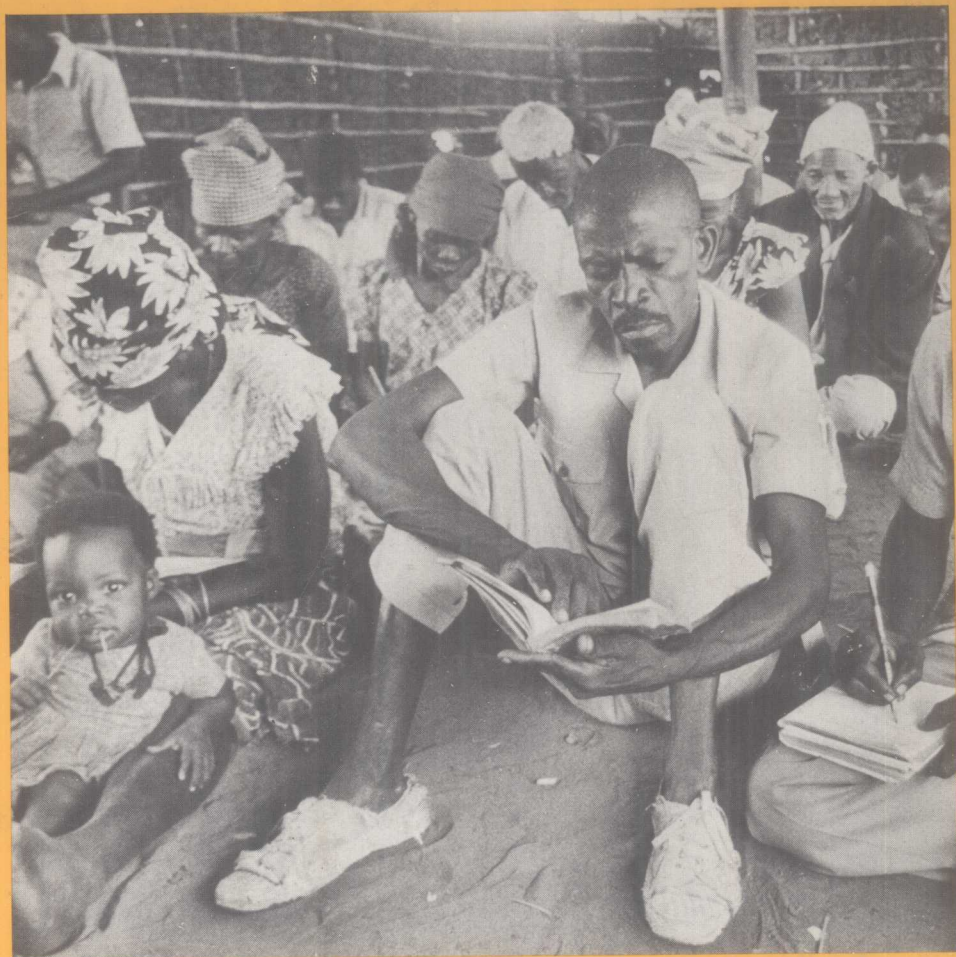


MOZAMBIQUE

From Colonialism to
Revolution, 1900–1982

Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman



Profiles / Nations of Contemporary Africa

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Jacket/paperback cover photo: A literacy class in Cabo Delgado (Credit: Ricardo Rangel)

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MOZAMBIQUE

For our children, Geoffrey and Erik,
and for all Mozambican children, the nation's *continuadores*

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Allen Isaacman
Barbara Isaacman
Minneapolis, Minnesota
November 10, 1982



The capital, Maputo—formerly known as Lourenço Marques (Credit: *Notícias*)

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
1 <i>Introduction</i>	1
2 <i>The Precolonial Period, 1500–1880</i>	11
Mozambique, 1500–1850	11
The Mirage of Portuguese Empire—Mozambique on the Eve of the Partition of Africa, ca. 1880	19
The Partition of Africa and the Wars of Resistance, 1885–1913	21
3 <i>The Colonial Period, 1900–1962</i>	27
Portuguese Colonial Policy Before the Salazar Regime, 1900–1926	29
Mozambique Under the Salazar Regime, 1928–1962	39
The Social Costs of Colonial-Capitalism	53
4 <i>Popular Opposition to Colonial Rule, 1900–1962</i>	61
Rural Protest	62
The Struggle of Urban Workers	69
Independent Churches	72
The Voice of Protest	73
5 <i>The Struggle for Independence, 1962–1975</i>	79
The Origins of FRELIMO	79
The Armed Struggle, Formation of Liberated Zones, and Radicalization of FRELIMO, 1964–1972	84
The Reaction of the Colonial State	100
Final Victory—Independence	105
6 <i>The Making of a Mozambican Nation and a Socialist Polity</i>	109
Political Changes Until 1977: Forging National Unity	111

	The Third Party Congress—Beginning the Transition to Socialism.....	121
7	<i>Transforming the Economy</i>	145
	Restructuring the Rural Economy.....	148
	The Problems of Distribution.....	159
	Reviving and Restructuring the Industrial Sector.....	161
8	<i>Independent Mozambique in the Wider World</i>	171
	Mozambique as a Front-Line State.....	173
	Mozambique in the Organization of African Unity and the Nonaligned Movement.....	179
	Mozambique and the Socialist Countries.....	181
	Mozambican Relations with the West.....	184
	<i>Appendix: Report from the FRELIMO Fourth Party Congress, 1983</i>	189
	<i>Notes</i>	201
	<i>Glossary</i>	223
	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	225
	<i>Additional Readings</i>	227
	<i>Index</i>	229
	<i>About the Book and Authors</i>	236

Illustrations

Photographs

The capital, Maputo (formerly known as Lourenço Marques)	xii
Faces	6
<i>Sipais</i> (African police), Zambézia Province	30
European being carried by African porters on a <i>machila</i>	32
<i>Magaiças</i> , or Mozambican mineworkers, stripped for inspection before going off to South Africa	35
Railroad maintenance crew	49
Women carrying 50-kilogram bales of cotton to market	55
Lourenço Marques dockworkers unloading rails, 1910	70
First FRELIMO president, Eduardo Mondlane, with Samora Machel, who succeeded Mondlane after he was assassinated	82
FRELIMO soldiers	85
Peasants aiding FRELIMO fighters in the liberated zones	90
Members of the Women's Detachment	92
FRELIMO soldiers in the liberated zones giving inoculations	94
President Samora Machel visiting Niassa Province	110
President Samora Machel	118
Candidates nominated for a local assembly	129
The Popular Assembly—Mozambique's highest legislature	133
A local people's tribunal in southern Mozambique	134
Health care for the elderly	140
Teaching the young	141
Heavy equipment for state farms	151
Working in a communal village	154
The coal mine at Moatize	162
CIFEL—Mozambique's only steel factory	164
Women in nontraditional forms of employment: welding	167

Tables

1.1 Population, 1980 and 1981	5
2.1 Legal Slave Exports from Mozambique Island and Quelimane, Selected Years 1764–1830	17
3.1 Mozambican Mineworkers in South African Gold Mines, Selected Years 1902–1961	33

3.2	Agricultural Exports as a Percentage of Total Exports, Selected Years 1955–1964	44
3.3	Farming Units by District, 1967	44
3.4	Cotton Exported to Portugal, 1926–1946	45
3.5	Industrial Production, 1928–1946	47
3.6	Origin of Imports, Selected Years 1949–1961	47
3.7	Destination of Exports, Selected Years 1949–1960	48
3.8	Balance of Payments, Selected Years 1950–1960	48
3.9	State of Education, 1960	51
3.10	Estimated Illiteracy Rates in the Portuguese Colonies, 1950	52
3.11	Agricultural Wages, 1962–1963	56
3.12	African Urban Employment, 1950	57
6.1	First Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique	112
6.2	Party Members in Selected Communal Villages, 1979	124
6.3	Women Workers and Party Members in Selected Production Units, 1979	128
6.4	Results of the National Elections Held Between September and December 1977	131
6.5	Distribution of People's Tribunals, 1981	136
6.6	Composition of the Elected Judiciary of the Provincial Court of Maputo, 1980	136
6.7	State Budget, 1981–1982	138
6.8	Educational System, 1981	139
6.9	Council of Ministers, 1982	143
7.1	Gross National Product, 1970 and 1975	146
7.2	Balance of Payments, 1973–1981	147
7.3	Estimated Crop Production, 1976–1981	150
7.4	Number of Communal Villages and Cooperatives as of May 31, 1982	155
7.5	Workers Organized in Production Councils, 1979	166
7.6	Value of Principal Exports and Imports, 1976, 1980, and 1981	168
7.7	Estimated Industrial Capacity Utilization, 1979	169

Figures

1.1	Mozambique, 1982	2
1.2	Ethnic Groups in Mozambique	4
2.1	States of Central Mozambique, ca. 1650	13
2.2	The Western Indian Ocean System	20
3.1	Major Mozambican States and Portuguese Administrative Centers, ca. 1900	28
5.1	The Progress of the War, 1967	87
6.1	Xiconhoca	114

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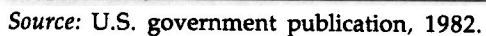
Introduction

Straddling the Indian Ocean and the volatile world of racially divided Southern Africa, Mozambique has assumed an increasingly strategic international position. Its 2,000-mile (3,200-kilometer) coastline and three major ports of Maputo, Beira, and Nacala—all ideally suited for naval bases—have long been coveted by the superpowers (see Figure 1.1). These ports, from which a great power could interdict, or at least disrupt, Indian Ocean commerce and alter the balance of power in Southern Africa, also offer international gateways to the landlocked countries of the region. Through them Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland, and Malawi can reduce their economic dependence on South Africa.

No less important is Mozambique's proximity to South Africa and Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), which gained its independence in 1980 with substantial military and strategic assistance from Mozambique. A progressive regime in Mozambique provides inspiration to the 20 million oppressed South Africans as well as support to the African National Congress (ANC), which is leading the liberation struggle. As the spirit of insurgency spreads within South Africa, the region may well become a zone of international conflict in which Mozambique would figure prominently.

The young nation's strategic importance, however, transcends its geographic position. Mozambique, according to Western analysts, has enormous mineral potential.¹ The world's largest reserve of columbotantalite—used to make nuclear reactors and aircraft and missile parts—is located in Zambezia Province, and the country is the second most important producer of beryl, another highly desired strategic mineral. The country's coal—10 million tons will be produced annually by 1987—has also attracted the attention of such energy-starved countries as Italy, France, Japan, and East Germany. The Cahora Bassa Dam,² the largest in Africa, has the potential to meet much of the energy needs of Central and Southern Africa. Large natural gas deposits and the increasing likelihood of offshore oil enhance Mozambique's role as an energy producer.

The goal of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the country's liberation movement and governing party, to create "Socialism with a Mozambican Face" and to break out of the spiral of impoverishment and underdevelopment carries important ideological implications for the continent as a whole. Whereas most African nationalist movements were



content to capture the colonial state, FRELIMO's ten-year armed struggle radicalized it. Political independence became only the first step in the larger struggle to transform basic economic and social relations.

"Socialism with a Mozambican Face," as expressed by FRELIMO, is not a variant of the vaguely defined form of African socialism that was in vogue in the late 1960s. Nor is it an Eastern European model transplanted onto Mozambican soil. To Mozambican leaders it means a synthesis of the concrete experiences and lessons of the armed struggle—experimentation, self-criticism, self-reliance, peasant mobilization, and the development of popularly based political institutions—and the contemporary Mozambican reality with the broad organizing principles of Marxism-Leninism. Listen to Mozambique's President Samora Machel:

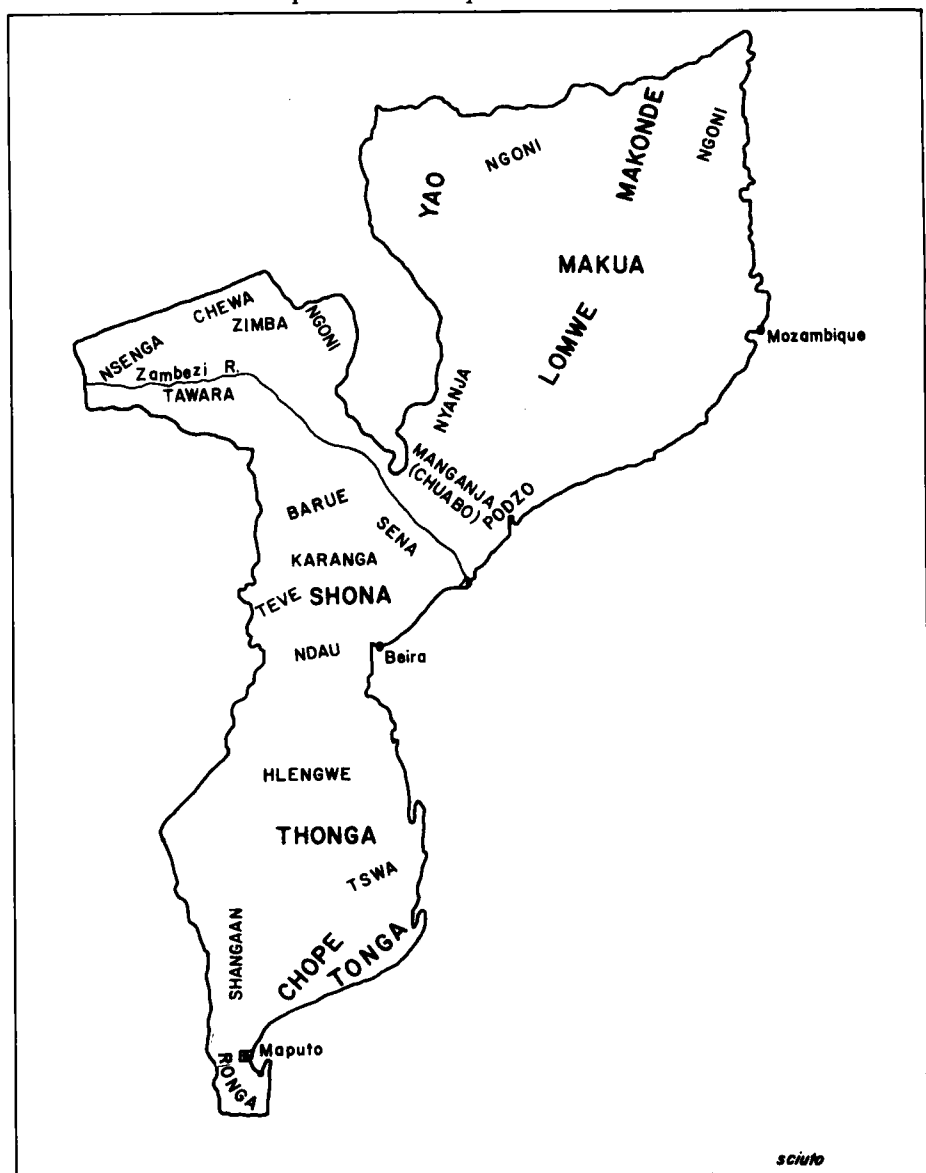
Marxism-Leninism did not appear in our country as an imported product. Mark this well, we want to combat this idea. Is it a policy foreign to our country? Is it an imported product or merely the result of reading the classics? No. Our party is not a study group of scientists specializing in the reading and interpretation of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Our struggle, the class struggle of our working people, their experiences of suffering enabled them to assume and internalize the fundamentals of scientific socialism. . . . In the process of the struggle we synthesized our experiences and heightened our theoretical knowledge. . . . We think that, in the final analysis, this has been the experience of every socialist revolution.³

Mozambique's social experiment also merits critical attention because of its highly visible campaign against tribalism and racism. In a continent marred by ethnic, religious, and regional conflict, the intensity with which the Mozambican government is combating these divisive tendencies is unprecedented. It is no easy task. Mozambique's population—12 million in 1980⁴—is divided into more than a dozen distinct ethnic groups (see Figure 1.2 and Table 1.1). Although they have some common cultural and historical experiences, each has its own language, material conditions, identity, and heritage. The patrilineal, polytheist Shona of central Mozambique have little in common either with the matrilineal, Islamized Yao and Makua to the north or with the Shangaan to the south, whose ancestors migrated from South Africa only a century ago. Historical rivalries, fanned by the Portuguese colonial strategy of divide-and-rule, heightened particularistic tendencies. FRELIMO is also committed to the creation of a nonracial society in which the 20,000 whites and somewhat larger number of Asians enjoy the full rights of Mozambican citizenship. Although impressed with the government's vigor in attacking racism, skeptics, both black and white, question whether Machel's policies are not naively attempting to jump over history.

Despite its uniqueness, Mozambique shares with other African nations the host of problems associated with underdevelopment. These include the lack of transforming industries and skilled workers, a staggering level of illiteracy—more than 95 percent at the time of independence⁵—the widespread incidence of debilitating diseases, a high infant mortality rate, and the absence of internal transportation and communications networks.

FIGURE 1.2 Ethnic Groups in Mozambique



Source: Thomas H. Henriksen, *Mozambique: A History* (London, 1978).

TABLE 1.1
Population, 1980 and 1981

Province	Area (sq km)	August 1, 1980			December 31, 1981 (estimated)			Population Density (per sq km)
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	
Niassa	129,056	246,300	267,800	514,100	256,152	278,512	534,664	4.1
Cabo Delgado	82,625	445,300	494,700	940,000	463,112	514,488	977,600	11.8
Nampula	81,606	1,189,200	1,213,500	2,402,700	1,236,768	1,262,040	2,498,808	30.6
Zambezia	105,008	1,224,600	1,275,600	2,500,200	1,273,584	1,326,624	2,600,208	24.8
Tete	100,724	393,100	437,400	831,000	408,824	454,896	864,240	8.6
Manica	61,661	307,200	334,000	641,200	319,488	347,360	666,848	10.8
Sofala	68,018	535,200	530,000	1,065,200	556,608	551,200	1,107,808	16.3
Inhambane	68,615	458,100	539,500	997,600	476,424	561,080	1,037,504	15.1
Gaza	75,709	469,300	521,600	990,900	488,072	524,464	1,030,536	13.6
Province of Maputo	25,756	235,700	256,100	491,800	245,128	266,344	511,472	19.6
City of Maputo	602	404,000	351,300	755,300	420,160	365,352	785,512	1,304.8
Total	799,380	5,908,500	6,221,500	12,130,000	6,144,480	6,470,360	13,615,200	15.8

Source: Comissão Nacional do Plano, Mocambique: Informação Estatística 1980/81 (Maputo, 1982), p. 290.