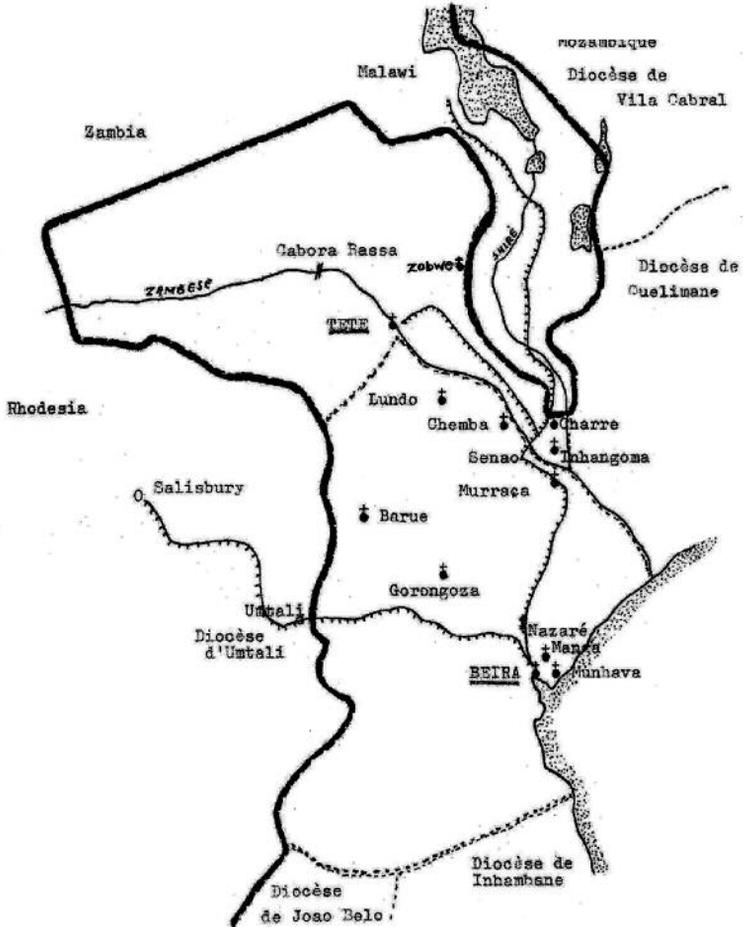


**THE DEPARTURE OF  
THE MISSIONARIES OF  
AFRICA  
(THE WHITE FATHERS)  
FROM MOZAMBIQUE  
IN 1971**

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Les Pères Elancs au Mozambique (1946-1971)  
 .....  
 dans les diocèses de Tete et Beira



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# Preface

The country of Mozambique is not familiar to the majority of Missionaries of Africa. It does not feature in the early history of our Society in the way that Algeria and Uganda do. It is not as large and imposing as the Congo and it is much further from Europe than the extensive missions of West Africa. Missionaries working in the former British colonies of East and Central Africa have many neighbourly connections with each other. Before independence Mozambique was relatively isolated from them. It did not share in the culture of France or of the Anglo-Saxon world. Its national language is still Portuguese, understood by a minority of members of our Society. Today, western Europe has less cultural influence in Mozambique than Brazil. While its heritage is different from its neighbours', the size of Mozambique and its strategic position make it important for international commerce. Its beaches lie along the Mozambique Channel for two thousand kilometres. Inland it is bordered by no fewer than six different countries – Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Swaziland. Four of those countries are landlocked and conduct the bulk of their trade with the outside world through the ports of Maputo and Beira. In the fifth, the railway built in 1895 to connect Pretoria with Maputo, is the shortest railway route from the Rand to the coast.

Portugal, although a small country on the western edge of the European continent, has had a determining influence on the distant Church in Mozambique. The term mission, in the religious sense of preaching the gospel to non-Christians, was originally a Portuguese term and dates back only to the end of the fifteenth century. The groups sent out to Africa by the Portuguese kings at that time were called missions whether military, commercial or religious. Only later did the term, in the religious sense of *mission to the nations*, come to be adopted by the Church. The Portuguese therefore have a claim to be the first *missionaries*. For five centuries the Church in Mozambique was Portuguese in leadership, culture, habits of thought and social attitudes. During the fifty years following the accession to power of President Salazar, it lived in harmony with a narrow political system originating in the semi-fascist ideas of the nineteen-twenties. It was unreceptive to the sociological and theo-

logical developments which informed the Second Vatican Council during the nineteen-sixties, influenced as that Council was by the ideals of democracy, social justice and civil liberty current in those parts of the world where the majority of Bishops originated. The Portuguese Bishops in Mozambique came from a background quite different from that shared by the international White Father missionaries, none of whom were Portuguese. The Bishops had all been born and ordained in metropolitan Portugal. They were aware of the long tradition of Portuguese Christianity in Mozambique and saw it as their duty to preserve it. For this reason some knowledge of the history of Mozambique is necessary to understand the mentality of the Mozambique Bishops and the conflicts which arose in the Mozambican Church during the period before decolonisation.

In April 1971, all of the thirty-four White Fathers <sup>1</sup> working in Mozambique met at Beira under the leadership of the Superior General, Fr Theo van Asten. They decided to withdraw their services from the country. To the Bishops, it seemed a betrayal of their pastoral responsibilities, an unjustified abandonment of their flock. To many other missionaries in Africa, it was seen as a prophetic gesture, a protest against the selective repression of Christian teaching. The withdrawal made headline news in across the world and aroused fierce debate in Catholic and Protestant circles. At a time when the majority of countries in Africa had recently achieved independence, it drew attention to the continuing colonial status of Portuguese territories and the violent means used to keep their indigenous peoples in subjection. It was not intended as a political act but many saw it as such. The previous year, President Nyerere of Tanzania had complained at the General Chapter of the Maryknoll Sisters, *In the Portuguese colonies of Africa... for centuries the Church has, without protest, accepted forced labour, torture, exploitation and alien domination. Even now the Church refuses to speak up against the colonialism and oppression in Mozambique... Unless it is followed up by open speech and action, the identification of the Catholic Church with Portuguese tyranny will continue.*

The political ramifications went beyond Mozambique itself. Three years later, in 1974, the Carnation Revolution took place. The undemocratic government of Portugal was overthrown after ruling for

more than forty years. Mario Soares who was colonial minister when Mozambique became independent, prime minister after the first democratic general election and finally President of Portugal, praised the White Fathers as *the first ones who dared confront the dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano*.

More than forty years have passed since these events took place. It is possible to look at them from a different perspective than that of their contemporaries. At the time, neither party, episcopal or missionary, had a sympathetic understanding of the other's point of view. Portuguese and African nationalism, conflicting ideologies, violence in the pursuit of rights, zeal for what was perceived as justice, all were seen differently by opposing sides. This brief study will attempt to record the facts and define the issues without being judgemental. On the decision to leave Mozambique, a final verdict is left to the reader.

The first two chapters will trace the origin and nature of the Portuguese presence in Mozambique, their relations to the Portuguese government, and their expectations of the missionaries. Then the arrival of the White Fathers in Mozambique the character of their work will be described. There follows an account of the conflict with the hierarchy which inevitably resulted. After the departure and the subsequent reactions have been explained, the aftermath and subsequent events in Mozambique conclude this brief study.

# Chapter one

## The historical background to the missions in Mozambique

### The Origins of Portuguese claims to Mozambique

Unlike the short lived colonies of France, Britain and Belgium, most of which had a lifespan of only some sixty-five years, the Portuguese established claims to African territories as far back as the fifteenth century. Previously, Western Europe had been isolated from Asia and Africa by a wall of Moslem countries stretching from Morocco across North Africa to the Middle East. Yet the luxuries of Asian silks and spices were in great demand. The Italian City states controlled the eastern Mediterranean and prospered on the trade but even they depended for supplies on middlemen in Turkey and Arabia. Far away on the Atlantic coast, Portugal was remote from the trade routes. In 1415 King John of Portugal captured the port of Ceuta in northern Morocco. His third son, Henry, nicknamed the Navigator, began to send small expeditions to explore the west coast of Africa. His first aim was to prevent attacks on the Portuguese coast by the Barbary pirates who depopulated villages, selling their inhabitants in the African slave market. A second objective was to find the source of the trans-Saharan gold trade and connect with the legendary Christian kingdom of Prester John which was reported to exist beyond Moslem North Africa.

The ships of the Mediterranean were too heavy and slow for these voyages so a lighter ship was developed, the caravel, more manoeuvrable and able to sail in both shallow coastal waters and the open ocean. The exploration of the coast proceeded slowly for to navigate the uncharted winds and currents required great skill and caution. Overnight the ships anchored close to the shore. The Atlantic coast of Africa, more than ten thousand kilometres long, was mapped in stages during a period of seventy years<sup>0</sup>. Successful expeditions southwards fed the ambition to round Africa and reach the sources of trade goods

in Asia. Once the Cape of Good Hope had been reached by Bartholomew Dias in 1488 a new route to East Africa and India was open.

The south east of Africa was not empty land. It had a long history before the arrival of the Portuguese. Archaeologists have discovered traces of hunter gatherers living in Mozambique a hundred thousand years ago. They used wild cereals and roots as staple parts of their diet. Nowhere else in the world has been found evidence of such an ancient practice. From at least the 3rd century AD, it was being populated by Bantu speaking people migrating from west-central Africa to the south and east of the continent. These immigrants practiced agriculture and the herding of cattle. They mastered the techniques of copper and iron extraction and also mined gold. Their gold ornaments, and the ivory they hunted, attracted Arab and Persian traders from across the Indian Ocean who built a string of trading towns along the eastern seaboard of Africa from the horn of Africa to the coastal town of Inhambane (about six hundred kilometers south of the River Zambezi).

A threat to the ancient pattern of trade appeared when, on 1st March 1498, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, with a squadron of four ships, arrived at a small coral island two kilometres from the coast at the southernmost Arab settlement. He found a collection of mud huts roofed with palm leaves dominated by two stone-built buildings, a mosque and a white residence belonging to the local Sheikh. In the harbour were a number of vessels, some equipped with compass, quadrant and charts. The island was the base of an Arab trader *Mussa ben Mbiki* who is remembered in the name of the later Portuguese settlement there – *Moçambique*. The island measuring only two and a half kilometres by one kilometre was quite diminutive. Nevertheless, after the construction of a fort by the Portuguese, named after San Sebastian, it became the capital of their authority on the coast until the end of the nineteenth century. The name Mozambique was extended to Portuguese territory on the mainland opposite.

Da Gama remained only a few days before departing for India but his arrival was to have profound effects. The legal relationship between countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe had only recently been de-

fined. The question had arisen about the right of Portugal and Spain (the only other power in Europe with ocean going ships) to acquire “pagan” territories. Moreover, assuming they had been acquired, by what authority might the indigenous peoples be ruled? It was a new situation for Christian Europe. Not since the Roman Empire, more than a thousand years previously, had any European nation acquired overseas colonies. By the *Treaty of Alcácovas* between Spain and Portugal in 1479, it was agreed that Portugal be granted hegemony in the Atlantic while Spanish interests (apart from the Canary Islands) were to be diverted westwards towards the still unknown American continent. The papal bull *Aeterni regis* issued in June 1481 by Pope Sixtus IV confirmed the substance of the treaty, the consequences of which were the Spanish possession of most of South America except for Brazil, and all future acquisitions in Africa and Asia being subject to Portugal.<sup>2</sup> For governments and lawyers, this treaty is a landmark in the history of colonialism. For the first time, an international treaty, backed by Papal authority, formally recognised the right of European powers to divide the rest of the non-Christian world into spheres of influence<sup>3</sup> and colonise territories within those spheres, without the consent of the peoples living there. It defined the political theory and practice of European powers in relation to Africa and Asia until the middle of the twentieth century. A striking application of these principles was made at the 1884 Conference of Berlin at which a group of European and American nations assumed they had the authority to divide Africa into colonial spheres of influence. More recent examples of this law or practice are the mandating of the former German colonies to the imperial rule of France, Belgium and Britain by the League of Nations in 1922 and the maintenance of that relationship by the United Nations in 1945.

As Portuguese trade began to develop with India, the advantages of having staging posts on the East Africa coast became clear. There was a need for fresh water and provisions, harbours and locally produced timber for repairs. Ports in East Africa would provide safe havens where ships could wait for the south-west winds of July to September to propel them across the ocean to India. In 1505 King Manuel I of Portugal appointed Francisco de Almeida to be the first viceroy of Portuguese India. He was instructed to bring the spice trade under Por-

tuguese control, to construct forts along the East African and Indian coasts and to further Portuguese trade through alliances with local chieftains. King Manuel was a religious man and invested a large sum in sponsoring missionaries to the new colonies. He instructed Almeida *You will do no harm to the native Africans, either to their persons or their possessions, and you will explain to them that we have taken over from the Moors because they are the enemies of our holy faith and we will always make war on them.* However, officially peaceful intentions were belied by Almeida's armada of twenty-two ships carrying fifteen hundred soldiers. Travelling up the East African coast he sacked the principal Arab bases of Kilwa and Mombasa. A series of forts were built at Mozambique, Sofala, Kilwa, Zanzibar and Mombasa which would enable the Portuguese to maintain control of the Indian Ocean trade routes for the next two centuries.

## **Missionary enterprise**

From the outset, the Portuguese colonizers were not concerned simply with commerce; trade went hand in hand with missionary enterprise. The nation had been born in a crusade against the Moslem Moors from North Africa who had occupied a large part of the Iberian peninsula for seven hundred years. The reinforcement of Christianity was an essential element of the reconquest. As the Portuguese explorers ventured out of Europe, the responsibility of carrying Portuguese civilisation to foreign lands, and Christianity with it, was seen as a national vocation. The second Portuguese expedition to East Africa and India carried seventeen religious instructed to convert the *idolatrous Moors*. Coastal forts were garrisoned not only by soldiers but also with a parish priest and curate. Francis Xavier spent a few months at Mozambique on his way to Goa. He failed to convert any Moslems and is said to have vigorously shaken the dust off his sandals when leaving. The Dominican Father John dos Santos was more successful: he had six hundred Christians at Mombasa by the year 1600. But these appear to have originated mainly from among the indigenous people rather than from among the Moslem Arab and Swahili merchants who remained generally hostile to the Portuguese presence.

## Padroado Real

The citizens of Portugal, aware that theirs was only a small nation in Europe, took pride in their far flung commercial empire consisting of many territorial enclaves scattered around the coasts of Africa and Asia. Their imperial ambitions included the spread of Christianity in a specifically Portuguese form. For their subjects to accept Portuguese rule meant to embrace the Christian faith and with it the whole range of the Portuguese way of life: language, housing, dress, family names, and religious customs.

A special characteristic of the Portuguese Church was the *Padroado Real* – *Royal Patronage*. Dating back to the middle of the fifteenth century and confirmed by Pope Leo X in 1514, it gave the King of Portugal the right to nominate Bishops and pastors in Portugal and in their overseas territories. With it was the corresponding duty to build Churches and finance Church personnel. In three centuries a score of dioceses were created around the coast of Africa and in China, Japan and South America. This close alliance with the state reinforced the national character of the colonial Church which depended on the civil authority both financially and for its choice of leaders. Inevitably, the Bishops always came from the home country. Only later, in 1622, did Pope Gregory XV institute the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (SCPF) in an attempt to win back control of missionary work worldwide. He resurrected the ancient system of vicars apostolic from the early years of Christianity who, unlike diocesan Bishops, officiated in the name of the Pope to whom they had to send regular reports and who were expected to create a native clergy. But the jurisdiction of the SCPF was never accepted in Portuguese colonies. When the first missionaries of the Paris Foreign Missions Society left for the Far East, colonial officials had orders to arrest them and send them to Lisbon if they entered Portuguese territory. In Mozambique the tradition of a Church linked to the authority of the state remained constant, even after the expiration of the monarchy in 1910.

## Missions on the mainland

After the Portuguese settled along the coast, some made their way into the hinterland as *sertanejos* (backwoodsmen). These *sertanejos*

lived alongside Swahili traders and even took up service among Shona kings as interpreters and political advisors. They made contact with a large Shona kingdom of Monomatapa<sup>4</sup> which is shown on all the early Portuguese maps. It covered most of what is now the southern interior of Mozambique and Zimbabwe but did not reach the coast. Initially rich in gold, it remained wealthy through its resources of copper and ivory. In 1560 the former Jesuit superior of India, Goncalo da Silveira, was sent to Mozambique where he set out to evangelize the interior in what can only be described as a whirlwind tour.

Landing at Sofala on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1560, da Silveira proceeded inland first to the chiefdom of Makaranga. During his stay of seven weeks, he instructed and baptized the chief, Gamba, (whom he hopefully named Constantine) and the four hundred and fifty people living in his kraal. From this base, da Silveira set off up the Zambezi River to the capital of the Mutapa, arriving there in December 1560 where he preached fervently for a month. He got results: the King, his mother and three hundred members of the royal court were baptised. But da Silveira's welcome was short-lived. Moslem traders persuaded the King that he was a Portuguese sorcerer, sent to prepare the way for the conquest of his kingdom. According to one account he was hanged in his cassock. Another asserts that he was strangled in his hut. His four companions were killed also, their dead bodies being disposed of in the nearby river Mutate. In revenge for the death of the Jesuits (and to look for the gold mines) an expedition of a thousand men under Barreto set out for the Mutapa empire but so many died from illness on the way (including their leader) that it did not get past Sena in the Zambezi valley from where the survivors returned to the island of Mozambique. A Jesuit Monclaros who had accompanied the expedition wrote a dismal report about the baptised Christians whom he met. He said they knew nothing and were, moreover, polygamous liars and thieves who thought that to be a Christian meant simply to be a friend of the Portuguese. Meanwhile his Jesuit confreres at the Makaranga chiefdom, fearing a similar fate to da Silveira, withdrew to Goa bringing this first Jesuit project to an end. Yet among the officials and soldiers the hope remained of finding gold mines and thus rivalling the fabulous Inca riches secured by the Spanish in South America. In 1628 divisions at the court in the Mutapa capital gave an opportunity for the Portuguese

to intervene and defeat the ruler Capranzine. They replaced him with a client king Mavura Mhande who became a Christian. He ceded control of the gold mines to the Portuguese but by now the quantity being produced was disappointingly small. A Portuguese garrison remained at the court until a rival faction called in the powerful Lozwi to drive them out.

After the departure to Goa of the Jesuits came the Dominicans. By 1600 they had built forty chapels on the coast and in the Zambezi valley. They were more severe in admitting to baptism. Over some fifty years, they counted more than twenty thousand baptisms. Statistics are few and of limited reliability. But it was reported in 1600 that at Sena (their principal residence), Sofala and Tete the number making their Easter duties reached 800, 600 and 600 respectively. The Jesuits meanwhile returned to Mozambique and established bases on the coast at Quelimane, on the island of Mozambique (where they built a hospital and school) and also in the Zambezi valley. There appears to have been a conflict between the two orders. In any case, the Dominicans appealed (unsuccessfully) to the King for the Jesuits' removal. Altogether, the modest progress in evangelisation justified the issue of a papal bull in 1612, *In super eminenti*, which made Mozambique a separate jurisdiction from Goa. A Dominican administrator was appointed by the King of Portugal in the traditional exercise of the *padroado*. In theory, the administrator's jurisdiction extended from the Somali coast all the way down to the Cape of Good Hope.

This period in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the high water mark of missionary activity before the modern era. Apart from a score of Dominicans and a dozen Jesuits, there came a dozen secular priests and eight religious of St John of God who took over the Jesuit hospital in 1681. Several Capuchins came in the 1630's but unfortunately these last-named suffered from poor health and their activities were limited. Several Africans joined the Dominicans but seminaries founded at Mozambique and Sena failed to produce any priests. Catechisms in two local languages were composed. A number of ethnographic works were produced and one Jesuit explored the land, being the first European to set his eyes on Lake Nyasa and send reports to Europe. Another Jesuit drew up the first grammar in the Chisena language, printed in 1680 and later used by SVD missionaries who reprinted it in 1919.

## Decline

Portuguese power was declining in the 18th century. The monopoly of Portuguese trade in the Indian Ocean was challenged by the Dutch who seized Portuguese bases in Ceylon and Indonesia. Zanzibar with all the bases north of Mozambique was lost to the Omani Sultanate in the Persian Gulf. Fort Jesus in Mombasa fell in 1698 after a three year long siege. In 1720, operating from Cape Colony in South Africa, the Dutch East India Company built a fort on the site of the future Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), and for ten years maintained a trading base. After their departure, the Portuguese returned to trade there and constructed some small forts. But their control did not extend over the adjoining chiefdoms.

The political decline was paralleled in the Church. The impermanence of the Christian communities created by the early missionaries is shown by the lack of any physical remains of the churches they built.<sup>5</sup> The missionaries became fewer in numbers and quality. No local clergy had been produced by the seminaries nor did any more personnel come from Portugal. Only troublesome and incorrigible religious were sent from Goa. They had slaves working in the mines and even resorted to slave trading. According to an official report of the Governor in 1766 the few good religious were either killed or poisoned.

Contemporaneously, the anticlerical government of Pombal<sup>6</sup> at Lisbon dissolved the Society of Jesus throughout the Portuguese empire. Only nine Jesuits remained in Mozambique: they were arrested and deported to Goa. After Pombal fell from power, the ecclesiastical administrator became a Prelate Nullius and was elevated to episcopal orders. But it made little difference. Christianity declined in the interior and the first prelate, Maria José a Santo Tomas, O.P. moved from Sena in the Zambezi valley to the island of Mozambique. Then in 1834 the suppression of all the religious orders was decreed. Five years later the last missionary died at Tete.

## Settlement on the mainland

By the 1530s small groups of Portuguese had worked their way up the Zambezi valley where the climate was cooler and the land suitable

for farming. Garrisons and trading posts were set up at Sena and Tete (sites of later WF missions). To consolidate their trade and settlement, land grants (*prazos*) were made by the Portuguese crown. The purpose of the scheme was to create a substantial settler population of Portuguese descent. But the system never achieved this as the settlers intermarried with local population. Many of the hundred and twelve *prazos* were amalgamated and came under the control of a few autonomous warlords who used their private slave armies known as *Chikunda* to consolidate fiefdoms untrammelled by the authority of the Crown. The system failed to encourage economic development. The owners were accused of abusing their power by extracting tribute from the local people and engaging in the slave trade. Most *prazos* had declined due to severe droughts and locust infestation, but several of them survived and with their slave armies strongly resisted rule by the officials at the capital, Mozambique, until the mid-19th century. Descendants of some of these early settlers were still active farmers when the White Fathers arrived.

## Portuguese possessions on the eve of the Scramble

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the eve of the so-called scramble for Africa, Portugal ruled over only a small part of what would become the colonial territory of Mozambique. The north of it was dominated by the Yao. Traditionally ironsmiths in their homeland at the north of Lake Nyasa, they had turned to commerce in ivory and slaves. From 1700 they controlled the trade route to the coast through the north of Mozambique where Yao became the commercial language. Emulating the Swahili, they adopted Islam, built mosques and *madarasa* (koranic schools), and imitated the Swahili way of life, dress and culture. Southwards along the coast the limited resources of Portugal in capital and manpower confined it to a few isolated enclaves, the more significant being the port towns at Sofala and Inhambane. A number of smaller Muslim coastal towns were still independent at the start of the 19th century: in the 1820's Quelimane was still exporting twelve to fifteen thousand slaves a year. By the middle of the 19th century, the slave trade in the Indian Ocean was coming to an end due to British consular

pressure exerted on the Sultan of Zanzibar and the activities of the British navy patrolling the Indian Ocean. Portugal outlawed the slave trade in 1836 and the military finally occupied the offending coastal ports in 1860 and 1861, slavery itself becoming illegal in 1869.

From 1840, In the valley of the Zambezi, the Portuguese government embarked on a series of military campaigns to bring the *prazos* under royal authority. After some setbacks, the last of the *prazos* was forced to submit in 1869. Thus Portugal could maintain a claim to the lower valley of the Zambezi. Further south, the Nguni, originating in South Africa had created the Gaza Empire. They replaced the old kingdom of Monomatapa and dominated all of southern Mozambique apart from the two Portuguese bases at Inhambane and Lourenço Marques. Their empire did not remain independent for long. It was seen as a threat to the railway being built from Maputo to Pretoria so was subjugated by the Portuguese army which defeated the ruler Ng'ungunhana, in spite of his fierce resistance, in 1895. Having undisputed possession of the south of Mozambique, Portugal asserted its authority elsewhere and during the following two decades forced the rest of the chiefdoms in Mozambique to recognise Portuguese authority. The extensive territory of Mozambique was thus created and subjugated between 1840 and 1914. The ancient claims of Portugal extended to only a very tiny proportion of the whole.

## **The capital - Lourenço Marques**

Delagoa Bay was the southern extremity of Portuguese rule. It was the site of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) which was to become the capital, replacing Mozambique Island in 1898. Even here, Portuguese occupation had not been continuous throughout the centuries. Forts and trading stations had been established, abandoned and reoccupied on more than one occasion. As mentioned above, in 1720 the Dutch East India Company built a fort and factory close by as an arm of the Dutch Cape Colony. Their rule was interrupted by an English pirate, Taylor, who occupied their base for several months in 1722. The difficulty of defending it impelled the Dutch to abandon it in December 1730. Thereafter a Portuguese presence at trading stations was resumed—intermittently. There was a raid on it by the French during the Napoleonic wars

but no long term occupation by them. The trading stations were incapable, of withstanding attacks by the local chiefs, especially in conflict with the Nguni people of the Gaza empire. The main settlement was completely destroyed towards the middle of the 19th century after which a strong fort was built. It offered modest but sufficient protection and security for the town of Lourenço Marques to develop around it. It was described at the time as having narrow streets between flat-roofed houses and grass huts, decayed fortifications, and a rusty cannon, all enclosed by a wall only 1.8 metres high.

In 1861, Portuguese possession was challenged when a British naval captain, Bickford, declared as British territory Inhaca and Elephant islands which lay offshore at the mouth of the bay. The Lisbon authorities protested that the islands were theirs and the case was eventually submitted to the arbitration of Adolphe Thiers, the French president. It was his successor, Marshal MacMahon, who declared in favor of the Portuguese (President MacMahon was the man who, as Governor of Algiers, had had a stormy relationship with Cardinal Lavignerie at the time of the Algerian famine). In honour of that decision one of the beers brewed in Maputo was (and is) named Dois M (Two M) after MacMahon. The final confrontation was with the Boers of the Transvaal who, after the Great Trek, attempted to create a settlement at the Bay in 1868. Their President, Marthinus Pretorius, claimed all the land next to the river Maputo down to the sea. Fortunately, there was no armed conflict. He withdrew his claim the following year and recognised the sovereignty of Portugal. The growing importance of the Transvaal and its trade through the port of Lourenço Marques led to greater interest being taken by Portugal. A commission was sent by the Portuguese government in 1876 to drain the marshy land near the settlement, to plant eucalyptus trees and to build a hospital and a church. Lourenço Marques superseded the Island of Mozambique as the capital in 1898. By then a railway had been constructed to Pretoria in South Africa and the population was growing rapidly.

## **Beira**

The second city of Beira developed in quite different circumstances. South of Mozambique Island lay the ancient port of Sofala connected

by the Buzi River to the internal market town of Manica. Before the Portuguese arrival, trade routes reached the goldfields of Great Zimbabwe. From being a small trading post in the tenth century, Sofala had emerged as the principal entrepôt of the Monomatapa gold trade. It was known to the Portuguese crown several years before the voyage of da Gama. The Portuguese explorer Per da Caviha, travelling as an Arab merchant from Cairo and Aden and thence down the East African Coast, reached Sofala from where he sent a report back to the king of Portugal describing it in fulsome terms. When Pero de Anaia arrived with a fleet in 1505 he was permitted by the Sheikh Isuf to erect a fortress on higher ground near the port. However, the garrison did not stay for long. It was decimated by malaria and transferred to Mozambique Island. The gold trade proved to be a disappointment - the old goldfields were largely exhausted by the time the Portuguese arrived. The harbour of Sofala, once reputed to be capable of holding a hundred vessels, silted up as the banks of the river were deforested and the topsoil was deposited into the bay. Nonetheless, colonial Governors of Portuguese Mozambique would continue to bear as their primary official title 'Captain of Sofala'.

Sofala was sacked during a local war in 1835. Thirty-five kilometres to the north, at the mouth of the Pungue river, Sofala had a satellite settlement called Chiveve. Commercial activity was transferred there. Between 1891 and 1900, a railway was built to Southern Rhodesia, causing the new site to develop into the second largest port in Mozambique. In 1907 it was visited by the Portuguese Crown Prince, Dom Luis Filipe. He was the first member of the Portuguese royal family to visit Mozambique. By tradition he also held the title of Prince of Beira (a province in Portugal). In his honour and in memory of his visit, the name Beira was given to the newly thriving town. The old Portuguese fortress of Sofala had been constructed with stones imported from Europe. They were re-used to build a cathedral at Beira which became a diocese in 1940, its first Bishop being Bishop Sebastian Soares de Resende. It was he who invited the White Fathers to open missions in Mozambique.

## Portuguese vulnerability

On the eve of the scramble, the part of the East African coast under Portuguese rule was a colony of minimal value in economic terms. The quality of the colonial administrators was mediocre, the distance from Portugal making proper supervision difficult. One Angolan settler told Livingstone, *These Lisbon-born law are very stringent, but somehow, possibly from the heat of the climate, they lose all their force here*. Livingstone painted an unflattering picture of officials in Angola and the personnel in Mozambique cannot have been very different. Even allowing for a measure of prejudice in Livingstone's judgement <sup>7</sup>, the officials seem to have lacked the drive and ambition of the enthusiastic agents of imperial expansion beginning to emerge from other countries in western Europe. In the few industrialised countries, surplus capital had been created and was searching for opportunities of investment abroad. Factory owners looked for new empires to provide raw materials and markets. The extraordinary self-confidence of the new imperialists was underpinned by naval and military might. Steam power and mass production enabled iron ships to dominate the seas with newfound mobility and long range gunnery. On the ground, military supremacy came from sophisticated firearms and the invention of high explosive. <sup>8</sup> Yet Portugal had not shared in the economic leap forward of the industrial revolution. It was a country with a small population having little military or naval power and, consequently, little diplomatic weight.

## Portuguese claims on the mainland

Portugal did, however, have long historical links with its colonies and unique and undisputed claims to parts of the African coastline and the lower Zambezi valley. Attempts were made to extend this area, firstly through some prazo owners who had employed Afro-Portuguese traders to penetrate up the Zambezi valley as far as Kazembe in search of ivory and copper. But these ventures were merely trading expeditions and were not a recognised basis for territorial claims. Then Dr Francisco de Lacerda, led an expedition from Tete to the far interior in 1798 also hoping to reach Kazembe, but he died en route. Lacerda had official government recognition but since his aim also was largely commercial in purpose, Portuguese claims to the lands he reached were

tenuous in the extreme. In 1831, Antonio Gamito tried to establish commercial relations with Kazembe and peoples in the upper Zambezi valley, but without success.

The problem for Portugal was to substantiate these claims to the interior by occupation and then to secure recognition by other nations. Portugal was not unaware of the growing popular interest in Africa shown elsewhere in Europe, an interest stimulated by the spectacular travels for thousands of kilometres in Central and West Africa by British and French explorers. In emulation, the old Portuguese spirit of adventure was revived in the persons of Serpa Pinto, Hermenegildo de Brito Capelo and Roberto Ivens. Under the auspices of the newly founded Lisbon Geographic Society, they undertook expeditions with the ultimate aim of establishing a single Portuguese territory stretching across Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. They crossed Africa from Angola to the East Coast, mapped the interior, studied the flow and drainage patterns of the Zambezi, and recorded information about the ethnographic and the linguistic characters of the people they encountered.

## **The Conference of Berlin 1884-1885**

The Berlin conference of 1884-5 stymied Portuguese plans. According to article 35 of the concluding Act, a country could claim uncolonised lands only if it had the executive authority on the ground to administer and police them while protecting freedom of trade. To meet this condition, treaties with local rulers had to have been arranged. The Portuguese minister for overseas territories, Barros Gomes, published what is called the rose-coloured Map. It portrayed (in rose-pink) a belt of land ranging right across Africa from the coast of Mozambique to Angola to which Portugal claimed sovereignty. It included most of the territory which now makes up Zambia and Zimbabwe. To secure French and German acquiescence he made concessions to the frontiers of their colonies bordering on Portuguese territory in East and West Africa. But he failed to accommodate the British government. While Portuguese presence on both coasts was indisputable, Britain refused to recognise claims to the far interior. The Scottish Protestant missionaries near Lake Nyasa and the African Lakes Company vigorously op-

posed any recognition of Portuguese claims to the Shire Highlands. Eventually, after some high-handed actions by British officials in what is now Malawi, Salisbury, the Prime Minister, issued an ultimatum demanding a withdrawal of Portuguese military forces in the territory between Angola and Mozambique.

The Portuguese Crown was heavily in debt to British financiers and could not match Britain's military resources in southern Africa. King Carlos yielded, arousing a domestic outcry. The following year Portugal had no alternative but to sign a treaty which imposed a settlement unfavourable to Portuguese aspirations. While Mozambique and Angola were enlarged, Britain annexed the country lying between them to form Northern and Southern Rhodesia.<sup>9</sup> The dream of a trans-Africa colony had to be given up. It was a national humiliation, so unpopular that the government in Lisbon fell. A well-known explorer, Silva Porto, wrapped himself in a Portuguese flag and, in protest, blew himself up with a dozen kegs of gunpowder. There was a military mutiny in the city of Porto. A popular song *A Portuguesa* was written against the ultimatum which later became the national anthem. It referred to a happy land kissed by the ocean and commemorated the nations' heroic forefathers. In the chorus was a rousing call to arms against the British.<sup>10</sup> The prestige of the monarchy was irretrievably damaged. King Carlos survived until 1908 and was then assassinated with his heir, Prince Luis Filipe, in the middle of Lisbon. There followed two years of increasing political instability until a Republic was declared in October 1910, after a coup by anticlerical republicans.

During the thirty years that followed the international recognition of Mozambique's borders at the Conference of Berlin, Portuguese rule was imposed on traditional chiefdoms throughout the region by the same military means as those used by other colonial powers. However, the administration of a large part of the interior was at that time beyond the resources of the Portuguese government. It therefore conceded large tracts of land to chartered companies. The largest was the Mozambique Company which was established in 1891 with international capital subscribed by British, French and German financiers. It took control of the Zambezi valley, making its headquarters at Beira. Using what was, in practice, forced labour, it developed mines, sugar and copra planta-

tions and constructed railways to Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Resistance to the forced labour regime was a major cause of unsuccessful rebellions against the Company in 1902 and 1917. They were put down by Portuguese armed forces. Beira was developed as a port, the first deep water wharf being completed in 1929. Its population reached 26,000 in 1940. The Company's concession was for fifty years and when it lapsed, its territory was merged with the rest of the colony.

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Portugal had long standing historical claims only to a few ports along the coast and an extensive part of the Zambezi valley. To the majority of the peoples living in Mozambique at the beginning of the twentieth century, colonial rule was as much a novelty as it was in the German and British territories of East and Central Africa.

## **The Missions during the last years of the Monarchy**

Parallel to the revival of imperial interest in the overseas territories at the time of the Scramble was an awakening of the missions in Mozambique. Between 1828 and 1883 there had been no Prelates appointed. During the next twenty-one years there was a succession of seven. Six remained for short periods only, before being assigned to dioceses in other Portuguese territories. But the fourth of them, Antonio Barroso, remained six years and a half (1891-1897). On his arrival, he described Mozambique as the most abandoned of all the overseas territories. He found only twenty-one priests. Twelve of them were secular clergy and nine were Jesuits who had returned in 1881, refounding Sena and other missions along the Zambezi. Most of the secular priests were from the *Colégio das Missões Ultramarinas de Sernache do Bonjardim*, reopened in 1885 under the patronage of the Ministry of Colonies. Barroso reported that they were so poor they used table glasses as chalices and bottles as candlesticks. He made some improvements and the number of priests increased, ninety coming from the Colégio before 1910. They were joined by the Franciscans at Beira in 1898 and by several SVD missionaries in 1910. Progress was sustained by Bishop Francisco da Silva, the Prelate from 1904 to 1920.

## The White Fathers at Mponda's

It was during this period that Cardinal Lavigerie planned to send White Fathers to found a mission near the Shire River. It was in territory outside the four great pro-vicariates which he had mapped in the Secret Memorandum. The valley of the Shire River was claimed by Portugal and on that country's initiative, the Portuguese ambassador at Rome met Lavigerie in December 1888. A contract was signed the following June. The missionaries would build churches and schools, engage in agricultural projects and help to suppress the slave trade. The language used in their work should be Portuguese. To support the project, the Portuguese government would provide a generous allowance of 50,000 francs initially and then a regular annual grant of 20,000 francs. These were very generous allowances, 50,000 francs being equivalent to \$10,000 dollars at that time or, at today's value, \$300,000.

As it happened, Fr Deguerry had already been sent to investigate a Nyasa route to the missions around Lake Tanganyika as the Bushiri rising had made the traditional way from Bagamoyo through Tabora and Ujiji unsafe. Once his favourable report had been received, a party was chosen consisting of Fathers Lechaptois, Mercui and Heurtebise accompanied by Brothers Chrétien and Antoine. On June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1889, a farewell ceremony was held in the basilica or Notre Dame d'Afrique in Algiers the highlight of which was the singing of the Portuguese national anthem. In his homily the Cardinal heaped extravagant praise on the glorious past of Portuguese navigators, their role in suppressing the slave trade, and expressed his gratitude to its government for nobly opening its doors to spread the light of civilisation to its furthest domains. Then the party left for the newly created Provicariate of Nyassa.

At Zanzibar Brother Chrétien died after a fall, probably caused by a stroke. The survivors proceeded via the French island of Mayotte in the Comoros to Mozambique Island. There, at what was the capital of the territory, the European quarter had well laid out roads and fine looking houses, rather different from the Africans' huts, crowded close together. The diary describes the offices, police station, customs house, bank and Governor's palace to be all of an opulence that spoke of past



Standing, Brother  
Chrétien and  
Father Heurtebise

glories rather than of current realities (The Governor’s residence had been built in 1610 as a Jesuit College). They found a well-equipped printing press and a multiracial craft school in which the pupils were all Christian. The Bishop had the title of ecclesiastical governor and took his place on the occasions of the civil governor’s absence. The missionaries visited the Bishop’s Church, the governor’s private chapel and chapels for the hospital and cemeteries. All were virtually abandoned and they were surprised to find that nobody attended services even on 15<sup>th</sup> August. After enquiring about the missionaries’ plans, some Africans asked Lechaptois why they should need religion more than the Europeans. Crossing to the mainland they found Quelimane had beautiful houses, paved streets with lamp posts. They were told that it was a town of the future as the Zambezi valley was vast and rich. A railway was being planned to the Zambezi. From there Lechaptois and his companions set off on foot, arriving at Mponda’s near the Shire river in December 1889.

Mponda’s capital consisted of some fifteen hundred huts. The Yao were mostly Moslem and the King, Mponda, owed his wealth to slave trading. With his hundred wives, he was not inclined to favour the newcomers’ religion. Lechaptois counted twelve *Medresseh* or koranic schools. All the same, the Fathers succeeded in attracting fifty, and eventually eighty, children to catechism classes. The rest of their time was taken up with visiting the sick and learning the local language. In the meantime Brother Antoine was constructing a chapel. It was dedi-

cated to St Louis, the patron saint of the King of Portugal, although unknown to the missionaries, he had died a few weeks previously during their overland safari. The mission was short-lived. Already before leaving Quelimane, Lechaptois had learnt that the possession of the Shire valley was being disputed by Britain. Once the boundaries of Mozambique had been defined by treaty in June 1891, the contract with the Portuguese government ceased to have any force: Mponda's had become part of Nyasaland. The same month, Lechaptois received instructions from the Algiers to move to Tanganyika. Mercui had already returned to North Africa so the remaining three missionaries left and set off for Mambwe in what is now Zambia. Mponda, in southern Malawi, eventually became the responsibility of the de Montfort Fathers.

## The route to Nyassa

The Mponda enterprise did not conclude even temporarily White Fathers' encounter with Mozambique which provided the shortest and best route to the vicariates of Nyasa and Bangweolo. It also provided the final resting place of the young Fr Joseph Langis, less than a year after his ordination. At that time Canadians, after completing their studies in North Africa with ordination, did not return home setting off to a vicariate to take up a missionary appointment. Setting out in the annual caravan for Bangweolo in May 1913, he was afflicted by a serious skin infection during the sea voyage. He was hospitalised at Beira but, in an age before antibiotics,

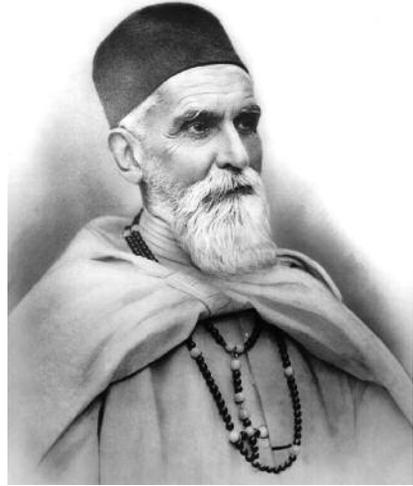


1913-05-13. Caravan to Bangweolo.  
Father Joseph Langis is the 1<sup>st</sup> one on the right.

the doctors were unable to prevent the illness becoming mortal. Buried in the Catholic part of the cemetery, his tomb was to become a place of pilgrimage for later missionaries passing through en route to Bangweolo.

Over the years, the means of travel had

improved in convenience and speed and a number of missionary caravans used the route to reach the vicariate of Nyassa. At Beira, Father Voillard began his great tour of Central and East Africa in July 1927. Setting out by train from Beira at 8.15am, he arrived at the Zambezi in the evening. The next morning, at 7 am, he crossed “this strange river” in a steamer. After rounding several islands and getting stuck on numerous sandbanks, the vessel reach the northern bank of the river and he was able to catch a Portuguese train at 9 am. It transported him across the border into Nyasaland. He arrived at Limbe, a few kilometres from Blantyre, s the sun was setting.



In July 1927, Father Paul Voillard started in Beira his long journey in Central and Eastern Africa.

## The First Republic

The overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic in 1910 was the start of a virulent campaign against the Church. Religious holidays were abrogated, Church property and assets seized, and the wearing of the cassock banned. The leader of the Portuguese Republican Party and Minister for Justice, Alfonso Costa, reinstated the 18th century Marquess of Pombal's laws against the Jesuits who had to give up their Portuguese citizenship and withdraw from their missions. Thirty-one religious orders were expelled from the country. Religious education was prohibited in junior and senior schools. In the University of Coimbra (Portugal's oldest and most prestigious centre of learning), the study of theology and canon law was curtailed and religious elements in its statutes eliminated. Junior seminaries were closed and only two senior seminaries permitted to remain open, their professors being appointed by the state and their programmes subjected to government approval. The *Colégio das Missões Ultramarinas* was

laicised becoming an institution for producing *agents of civilisation* instead of missionaries. A pastoral letter of the Bishops defending the Church was prohibited. When the Bishop of Porto, António Barroso (formerly a prelate in Mozambique) ordered it to be read in his parishes, he was arrested by the government, his see declared vacant and his personal property appropriated.<sup>12</sup> Costa confidently predicted that the Catholic faith would disappear in three generations. The thousands of Catholic peasants and townspeople who travelled to Fatima in 1917 were a huge embarrassment for the government.<sup>13</sup>

The anticlerical measures affected Mozambique to a lesser degree as the Governor General of Mozambique refused to apply some of the decrees. The Divine Word Fathers stayed for a time until Portugal became involved in the First World War. Then all sixteen were interned. They were later banished in the mistaken belief that they were all of German nationality. They were allowed to return after the end of the war. Other missionaries remained, including the Franciscans. In 1919 there was some relaxation of the laws: Jesuits, Franciscans and secular priests in overseas territories were formally recognised. A decree on 24th December 1919 recognised the value of missions, agreed to finance (Portuguese) missionaries as civil employees, but only in so far as their activities were civilising and nationalising, that is converting the Africans into Portuguese.

However, in the day to day governing of Portugal itself, the Republican leaders failed to function effectively. The record of the Republic between 1910 and 1926 may be summarized in a few facts and figures. During those sixteen years there were eight Presidents of the Republic and so many different ministries that historians cannot determine if there were forty-three or forty-five. The first Government of the Republic remained in office for ten weeks; the longest ministry lasted a little over a year. The effect of all these changes on the economy was disastrous. The cost of living increased twenty-fivefold and the value of the escudo fell to three per cent of its previous value. A number of politicians were assassinated including the fourth President (Sidonio Pais) in December 1918 and a Prime Minister (Granjo) in 1921. There was a brief civil war in 1918. Between 1920 and 1925, according to official police figures, three hundred and twenty-five bombs exploded

in the streets of Lisbon. Entry into the First World War in 1916 had proved extremely unpopular with the army which finally, impatient with the economic incompetence and political disorder, in alliance with conservative politicians, carried out a coup d'état in May 1926. This opened the way for Antonio Salazar to come to power. He was to create what he called the Estado Novo (New State) in 1933.

As long as his rule lasted, Church would be in a protected and privileged position and in return he could rely on the loyal support of the Bishops.

# Chapter two

## Salazar and the Bishops

### António de Oliveira Salazar

In a poll organised by the broadcasting station RTP in 2007, the Portuguese public were asked to decide who was the greatest citizen in their history. António de Oliveira Salazar, the prime minister of Portugal between 1932 and 1968, received the most votes.

Salazar came from a modest village background where his father was a farm manager. An ex-seminarian, he studied law at the University of Coimbra where he developed a particular interest in finance. Having graduated in 1914 he became an assistant professor teaching economic policy. Salazar had a quiet undemonstrative character but would impress a number of international observers as having an exceptionally brilliant mind. In 1921, his friends persuaded him to stand for parliament. During his one appearance in the National Assembly he was so shocked by the disorder that he refused to attend another session. The experience led him to believe that democracy and liberalism had no place in the Portuguese constitution. After a coup d'état in May 1926, Salazar was invited to join the government as Minister of Finance but failing to get the authority to control spending in all the other ministries as well as his own, he refused the position. Only when, two years later, his power to veto any government expenditure was agreed to, did he accept the post. By cutting waste and enforcing austerity he



balanced the budget for the first time in living memory. His success with financial controls caused the President to appoint him Prime Minister in 1932. In this office he built up political alliances and eliminated opposition by censorship and repression, particularly targeting Communism and National Socialism. He based his social policies on the Papal encyclicals, with a concern for the urban and rural poor. Yet the right to free political association, a basic tenet of Catholic social doctrine, was not on his agenda. In 1933 he put forward a new constitution to establish what he called the Estado Novo (New State). It limited the powers of the National Assembly and vested wide powers in his own executive office. But memories of the chaos during the rule of his predecessors earned his proposal almost unanimous acceptance in a national plebiscite. Under his dictatorial administration there was notable progress in honesty and efficiency in the civil service and improvements in social services and public works. School attendance rose progressively from 33% in 1930 to 97% in 1960. A modest 3% economic growth was maintained even during the great depression of the 1930's.

During the Second World War Portugal remained neutral while making available the Azores to the Allies as a staging post. Salazar's position won him approval and respect in the West. In a flattering article of the American magazine *Life*, Salazar was called the greatest Portuguese since Prince Henry the Navigator. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law by the University of Oxford and received distinctions from other nations including France, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Romania and Spain. After the war, Portugal did not share the isolation experienced by Franco's Spain and became a founding member of NATO. The friendships forged during the War caused the other members of the alliance to turn a blind eye to Portugal's undemocratic character and value Salazar as an ally against communism.<sup>14</sup>

Salazar was no liberal. He created the State Defense and Surveillance Police (PIDE), modelled on the Gestapo, in 1933. In theory, its purpose was to guard national security but in practice it was used to eliminate opposition, communist or democratic. After the outbreak of the civil war in Portugal's neighbour Spain, censorship was severely tightened and every government official was obliged to swear an oath repudiating communism. The PIDE (Polícia Internacionale de Defesa do Estado)

replaced the PVDE in 1945. Its remit was extended to Mozambique in 1954 due to the fear of communist influence there. Although based on more orthodox police models, it did not refrain from confining suspects without trial in the prison at Tarrafal in the Cape Verde Islands. Its victims were subjected to the refined torture methods developed by the CIA. It set up networks of informers known as bufos who were often well-meaning citizens encouraged to denounce suspicious activities for monetary gain. Its victims included opponents of the Estado Novo and anti-colonial agitators. Humberto Delgado, a prominent opposition leader, is generally believed to have been assassinated by agents of PIDE. It was extended to Mozambique in 1954 and so it was active during the time the White Fathers were in Mozambique. The organisation took a new name - the DGS (*General Security Directorate*) - under Caetano, Salazar's successor.

## Salazar and the oversea territories

The population of Mozambique (7,250,000 in 1971) was only a little less than that of Portugal itself. By 1973 there were a quarter of a million settlers, most of whom had arrived between 1950 and 1970, drawn by land grants for farming and preferential wages and salaries if they worked in industry or for the government. Section two of the Colonial Act of 1930 stated: *It is in keeping with the organic nature of the Portuguese nation to fulfil its historical function of possessing and colonising overseas territories and civilising the native populations thereof.* An African could acquire the same rights as a native born Portuguese if he had sufficient education, spoke Portuguese, was a Christian and adopted a totally Portuguese way of life. The *Assimilado* had to totally abandon his traditional language and culture. He or she would then qualify for a minor position in the administration such as clerk or nurse. It was hoped that they would set an example to their fellow countrymen to adopt the Portuguese kind of civilisation. However, the opportunities were limited by the lack of educational facilities. In 1961 when the system was abolished *Assimilados* amounted to only two or three thousand. A second element of Mozambique were people of mixed race who were more numerous than in the neighbouring colonies. There were no laws against miscegenation

on the South Africa model and the missionaries found that it was common for Portuguese men to have an African mistress. Later in life they usually took Portuguese wives who were expected to raise the children their husbands had had with African women. There was no colour bar and far less racial prejudice than in the neighbouring British colonies. But the laws and rights of settlers and the indigenous people, the great majority, were very different. One consequence of the Colonial Act was the obligation of all African men to pay a tax in Portuguese currency. The only way they could acquire it was by spending six months of the year working either for the government on, for example road building, or on the farms of settlers - a system which easily led to abuse.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the "contract" half the wages had to be paid in taxes. Meanwhile each African woman had to cultivate a hectare of cotton for which she received a very low price. The system was denounced by Henrique Galvao, a member of the National Assembly, in a Report on Native Problems in the Portuguese Colonies. He alleged that Africans were treated simply as beasts of burden. The report was ignored by the government and forced labour was maintained. For his pains, Galvao was arrested and forced to give up his military career.

South African mining companies had unrestricted rights to recruit labour in the south of Mozambique. In 1971 there were 370,000 men working outside their country. According to an agreement of 1928, the companies paid their wages in gold to the Mozambique administration which then paid the miners in escudos, less tax, on their return. Thus, the cornerstone of Portuguese economic policy was to put the indigenous Mozambicans Africans to profitable use. The resulting resentment was to fuel the Independence movement.

In February 1960 the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan made his widely publicised wind of change speech to the South African Parliament in Cape Town. *The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.* The moves towards constitutional independence were already progressing in both British and French African colonies and soon afterwards in the Belgian Congo. Salazar had no intention of Portugal following their lead. He believed the overseas territories shared the national identity. *Proudly alone* became his motto. *We will not sell,*

*we will not cede, we will not surrender, we will not share... the smallest part of our sovereignty.* He adopted the idea of Lusotropicalism,<sup>16</sup> according to which Portugal was a nation which had been a pluricontinental, multicultural, and multiracial nation since the 15th century and should remain so. By a law of 1951, Mozambique had become a province of the metropolitan country. For this reason, Salazar refused to countenance interference by the United Nations Decolonisation Committee on the grounds that Mozambique and the other extraterritorial provinces were not colonies but integral parts of the Portuguese state.

## Salazar and the Church

Salazar remained a practicing Catholic all his life. He rid Portugal of freemasonry. Under his government, religious instruction was restored to all state schools, every classroom having to display a crucifix. His legislation recognised canonical marriage so that ninety-one percent of weddings in 1970 were Church marriages. In 1937 an attempt was made to assassinate Salazar. On his way to attend Mass a bomb exploded three metres from him. His escape from injury seemed miraculous and in a letter of the Hierarchy, the Portuguese Bishops stated that its failure was an act of God. He remained in office for two decades until he suffered a debilitating stroke in 1968. He was then succeeded by Marcello Caetano and died two years later.

## The Concordat

In May 1940 a Concordat was signed with the Holy See to regulate the relationship between Church and State. The first republican government had passed a law separating Church and State and imposed many limitations on the activity of the church. Although the Concordat did not restore all the privileges which the Church had enjoyed in the time of the monarchy, it recognised the *free exercise of its authority, within its sphere of competence*. Twenty-five articles defined the Church's rights: to own property, to exercise pastoral care in hospitals, prisons and the army, to maintain schools, to have freedom of communication within Portugal and with the Holy See. Religious teaching would be provided in state schools to pupils whose parents did not request ex-

emption. Divorce was not allowed for people who had a Church marriage (this was modified by a protocol in 1975). Three articles, numbers XXVI-XXVIII, concerned the rights of the state and imposed some limits on the Church, especially affecting the missions in the overseas provinces.

The meaning and implications of these missionary articles were spelt out in a separate document called the Missionary Accord. It was signed on the same date as the Concordat, 7th May 1940. Foreign missions might be admitted to the country where there were insufficient Portuguese missionaries, on condition that they submitted to Portuguese laws. The White Fathers had to make a formal declaration in writing before a notary renouncing their loyalty to their own nation. Only Portuguese nationals might become Bishops. (In the neighbouring colonies, Bishops were of Dutch, French, Irish, German and Swiss nationalities). Three dioceses were to be established in Mozambique – an Archbishopric at Lourenço Marques with suffragan dioceses at Beira and Nam-pula, their boundaries to coincide with those of civil divisions. Before appointing a Bishop, the name of the person proposed by the Pope had to be communicated to the Portuguese Government who might object to his appointment. This implied agreement by the Vatican to the modified exercise of the traditional *Padroado* - a right originally conceded to the Kings of Portugal to choose Bishops in their realm and had been maintained by the republican government after the downfall of the monarchy. Financially, the government was to give generous support to the missions – far in excess of the support provided by colonial governments elsewhere in Africa. Land would be donated freely for the foundation and development of new missions. Schools, including seminaries for the indigenous clergy, were to be subsidised. The Bishops were to receive a salary equivalent to that of a provincial governor.<sup>17</sup> Pensions would be provided for the secular clergy. Travel to and from the mission territories would be paid by the government. Mission assets would be tax free and liturgical goods exempt from customs duties. There were obligations also: indigenous languages might be used for religious teaching but in schools the language medium must be Portuguese. Bishops and missionary superiors were subject to state supervision and had to present annual reports to the civil government describing their activities and movement.

A month after the Concordat was signed, Pope Pius the twelfth issued an encyclical letter *Saeculo exeunte octavo* which, in grandiloquent language, celebrated the eighth centenary of the independence of Portugal from the Moors. Referring to the early missions, he praised the Christian wisdom and prudence of its historic leaders. *The whole world admired your nation for its outstanding labours to humanise barbarous lands.* He called on present day citizens to emulate them. In fact, Portuguese missionaries were then too few to evangelise their overseas territories by themselves.

## The Missionary context

Following the Concordat, the dioceses of Beira and Nampula were created in 1940 as suffragans of Lourenço Marques. It was three years before a Bishop was appointed to Beira. This was Don Sebastião Soares de Resende. Born in 1906 in northern Portugal, he had entered the diocesan seminary of Vilar at the age of seventeen. After his ordination in 1928 (still only twenty-two years old) he studied at the Gregorian in Rome for a doctorate in philosophy. He was first professor and later vice-rector of the major seminary of Oporto until he was nominated Bishop of Beira. He arrived in his diocese in December 1943 at the age of thirty-seven.

Beira covered a vast area in the centre of Mozambique occupying more than a third of the country. Apart from the low-lying hot and humid coastal plain, <sup>18</sup> only two hundred metres above sea level, and some higher ground to the west, the diocese included the valley of the Zambezi. The Zambezi is the fourth longest river in Africa and runs for nine hundred kilometres through Mozambique. For most of the year, the lower Zambezi flows gently in many shallow streams over a sandy bed between low banks fringed with reeds. During the rainy season the streams converge into one broad fast-flowing river from five to eight kilometres wide. The floods vary from year to year and one Father was to drown in them. As the Zambezi approaches the Indian Ocean, it splits up into a many streamed delta. Only one branch is navigable with an outlet at the shallow harbour of Chinde. The river has never been used for much more than local navigation. Instead,

railways run inland from Beira, one westward to Harare, another north to Malawi with a branch line following the valley in a north-west direction as far as Tete.

When the first White Fathers arrived, Bishop Resende assigned to them to an area of 47,000 square kilometres along the Zambezi valley. Previously the area had been served by Franciscans. It comprised the five civil areas of Sena, Chemba, Gorongoza, Barue and Mutarara. During the next few years a mission would be built in each one. In it dwelt a population of 280,000, most of whom spoke Chisena; 90% were illiterate. The Christians numbered several hundred but most of the adults were living in irregular marriage situations. Fr Perez has described the impression made on the first groups of white Fathers as Bishop Resende showed them a map of the territory entrusted to them – *their wide open eyes observing the rivers and the immense forests in which earth roads disappeared among the gigantic trees and sand dunes* <sup>19</sup>.

## The political context

Initially, the White Father newcomers were keen to learn the physical nature of the country and to meet its people. The political context had little apparent significance in the early years but would assume great importance later. The missionaries were entering a country quite unlike any other part of Africa. Mozambique was legally a part of Portugal which was a small country, economically poor, without much political or cultural influence. Maybe for that reason it was more defensive and more assertive of its identity in its overseas territories. Its system of government was at odds with the other western countries with their democratically elected governments and freedom of speech. Although not fascist in the strict sense, <sup>20</sup> Salazar's dictatorship and censorship necessarily inhibited artistic and cultural development and isolated the nation from the flow of ideas elsewhere. Placed geographically on the edge of Europe, Portugal's terrestrial borders were surrounded by the much larger country of Spain so the only way it could expand was overseas. The overseas provinces became a part of its national identity. It clung to them and made them as isolated as itself. As Salazar said, *We are a political and juridical unity.*

## Church and State in Mozambique

The Church was fully committed to maintain the unity of metropolitan and overseas Portugal. On the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1956, the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, Cardinal Cerejeira, addressed the clergy in the following terms. *I believe that the present period is among the greatest in our history... The protection granted by the State to our overseas catholic missions is a special case of this cooperation. This is a matter of honour and national interest. It is for the state to carry out its civilising mission, in fidelity to Portuguese tradition. One can say it is a question of making and keeping our overseas provinces Portuguese. This requires the loyal and frank collaboration of the two parties, Church and State.* The Church had responsibility for the schools; in them the collaboration took shape. Mgr Manuel de Medeiros (Bishop of Nampula from 1951 to 1966) told the pupils at the school in Bertulli's mission, *You must be good Portuguese to be good Christians.* The catechumenate for adults and young people who did not attend school was neglected in favour of the few pupils for whom education was a means of promoting Christianity and Portuguesisation in partnership. In 1942 the Franciscan provincial wrote: *the principal objective of the missionaries is to convert souls to Jesus Christ and prepare them to receive what I call the fruits of civilization... Our missionaries try to ensure that Christians from our colonies are also Portuguese.*

There had been two periods of virulent anti-clericalism in Portuguese history, the second quite recently during the 20th century. But now the Bishops felt secure within the Estado Novo. The ancient custom of *Padroado* – appointment of Bishops by the crown – continued to exist in a modified form after the Concordat. The Bishops and their missions benefited financially from the government's interest in their work. The Colonial Act of 1930, drafted by Salazar himself being Minister of the Colonies at that time, defined the role of the Church as *to Christianise and educate, to nationalise and civilise.* Article 2 stated that *Catholic Portuguese missions are considered to be institutions useful to the empire.* This clearly implied that the objectives of the missions were subordinated to those of the State. In 1960 the Under Secretary of State for Overseas Administration stated in a speech, Catholic missionary activity is inseparably linked to patriotism. Non-Portuguese

missionaries were permitted in Mozambique only as a concession but had to be personally approved by the civil administration. The Bishops were fully behind the civil government's policy of Portuguesisation in education and in evangelisation and would later fail to speak out against abuses and repression used to maintain this policy.<sup>21</sup> Financially the Bishops were quite dependent on the government. The state paid not only their salaries and transport, but it also provided for parish clergy, Church plots and equipment, schools and seminaries. No income could be expected from the faithful who had never been taught to support their pastors. Given the Bishops experience of the recent anticlerical administration which had preceded Salazar, they had no sympathy with any other political system and none, when it emerged, with the movement for independence from Portugal. But the partnership of the Bishops with the Estado Novo had a result they did not sufficiently appreciate. In collaborating with a totalitarian state, the Portuguese Church cut itself off from the rest of the Catholic family. There were now two worlds which did not understand each other and the separation was maintained by the state's control of information. In loyalty to it, the Bishops censored even papal documents publishing only a bowdlerised version of *Mater et Magister* in Portuguese.

The White Fathers entering Mozambique were moving into a narrow and restrictive context. Most of those who arrived in the nineteen forties do not seem to have been aware of this. Anyway, they did not object to it so long as the political system did not interfere with their apostolate. But Africa beyond Mozambique was changing in the two decades following the Second World War. Other colonies were moving towards independence and similar aspirations would develop in Mozambique itself. The missionary body itself in Mozambique was changing. Young missionaries entered and sometimes replaced their older confrères. They were more aware of how the world outside Mozambique was being reordered. A conflict would arise between the missionaries' adopted loyalty to Portugal and the future of the African flock committed to their care.

# Chapter three

## The arrival of the White Fathers in Mozambique

### The SVD in Mozambique

Thirty-five years before the arrival of the WFs in Mozambique, members of the Society of the Divine Word were invited to start missions there by the Secretary of State at the Vatican, Cardinal Merry del Val. Their reception and experiences as non-Portuguese missionaries throws some light on the reception which the White Fathers might expect. On arrival, they found that the usual practice was for adults to be baptised with very little instruction and babies without any guarantee of Christian upbringing. Gifts of rice were distributed to the people after Sunday Mass. The SVD Fathers suspended the distribution of presents, required a two year catechumenate before adults' baptism, and were more cautious in baptising infants. The result was opposition from the faithful and even their Bishop accused them of a lack of zeal. Among the Fathers were Yugoslavs, Czechs and Poles - some must have been legally German but not necessarily in sympathy with the Kaiser. (This was before the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 redrew the borders of Eastern Europe.)

But when Portugal entered the war in 1916, their pastoral activities were treated with suspicion and even their sermons spied on and reported. They were accused of German sympathies and, as a result, arrested and confined. The charges were dropped finally and they were released for fear of Protestants taking advantage of their absence to make inroads in the areas entrusted to their care. When Bishop Hinsley, during his long visitation of Africa in 1928, interviewed them in 1928, their treatment still rankled, particularly because, they said, the charges against them originated in other religious orders and were passed on to the government by the ecclesiastical authorities.

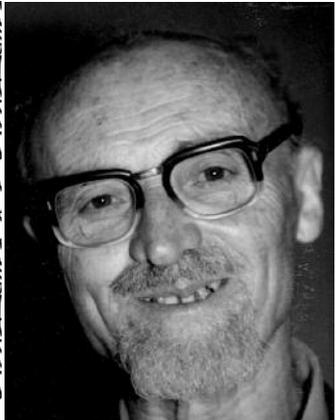
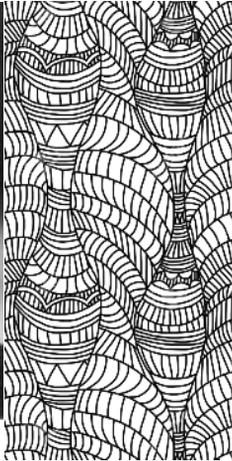
Don Sebastião Soares de Resende protected the White Fathers for many years from the problems experienced by their Divine Word predecessors. Their problems would start after the Bishop's death. On his arrival in Mozambique in 1943 he may have got to know the White Fathers and their methods from their work in the neighbouring country of Nyasaland. However, an incident took place in December 1943 which brought them to his notice again. A group of thirty Fathers and three Brothers were appointed to the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. They travelled from Lisbon to Banana Point on a Portuguese boat, the Quanza. On the way, they impressed some of their fellow passengers who continued their voyage round Africa to Beira and on arrival spoke of their impressions to the Bishop. Resende wrote to the Superior General, Bishop Birraux, asking for personnel and was met with a polite refusal on account of the many other commitments of the Society. Undeterred, Resende sent a request to the Papal Secretary of State explaining that he had only thirty priests to serve his immense diocese of two million people in an area of 300,000 square kilometres.

The request reached the Superior General, not from the Secretariat of State, but from Mgr Costantini, the Secretary of the Propaganda Fide, who wrote to Mgr Birraux in January 1945 asking initially for seven missionaries in 1946 and a few more in each of the following years. Perhaps he expected a negative response. Bishop Livinhac had turned down a request to send missionaries to Mozambique at the end of the First World War.<sup>22</sup> A request in 1933 from the Secretariat of State, prompted by the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Hinsley, was refused by the General Council as "absolutely impossible".<sup>23</sup> The first reaction of the General Council to Costantini's letter was to repeat the refusal. The reason was always the same, extensive commitments and a lack of sufficient personnel. But this time a new factor came in for consideration. *If, after the war (then drawing to a close) our German missionaries cannot return to the British Colonies, and the Portuguese government is ready to accept them, then they could find in Beira a field of the apostolate. The same would apply to Italian confrères.*<sup>24</sup> (Portugal had remained a neutral non-combatant during the Second World War). Appointments to Mozambique were made the following year. The Council, however, foresaw many difficulties if the proposal was accepted *for there would be hardly any chance of our having an autonomous mission.*

Elsewhere in Africa, the Society was entrusted with vicariates by the *jus commissionis*. The Vicars Apostolic and personnel were of the same Society. They were overseen by the Society's General Council and the S.C. Propaganda Fide between whom there was a harmonious relationship. The situation of working under Portuguese nationalist Bishops and the Secretariat of State would create new challenges. Twenty-five years later, the council's caution turned out to be a just prediction.



Father Albert Garin, Belgian



Father Charles Pollet, Belgian

At the end of 1945, the first four White Fathers were appointed to Mozambique, two were Belgian (Pollet and Garin) who already had mission experience in Rwanda and the Congo respectively. The appointment *fell on my head like a tile*, wrote Garin afterwards. Not yet knowing Portuguese they promised to learn it in order to qualify for a visa. Pollet had been born in Argentine. Having Spanish, he learnt it easily and quickly; it took Garin longer. Future missionaries appointed to Mozambique would spend a year in Lisbon before arrival. The two pioneers, having met at Bujumbura, travelled to Elizabethville (now Lubumbashi) then continued by train via Ndola, Lusaka, Salisbury and Umtali to Beira – a safari of two and a half days. The other two pioneers were Italians coming straight from Europe. In May 1946, Bertulli and Marostica disembarked at Beira to join them. They all received a warm reception from Bishop Resende who told them that he had asked for them precisely because of the Society's traditional methods of solid instruction before baptism in the medium of the local language.

## Other missionary Congregations

There were already a number of missionaries in the diocese, Jesuits, Franciscans and secular priests. The Jesuits had been expelled in 1910 but under Salazar were permitted to return in 1941. By 1964 there were forty of them in four parishes and seven missions – that is, four town parishes and seven rural parishes. A characteristic of their missions was the possession of large missions plots of up to four thousand hectares and were more involved in farming than in evangelising. One year the mission of Fonte Boa produced a hundred tons of potatoes. All of the Jesuits were Portuguese and were said to be very nationalist.<sup>25</sup> They had resisted the wish of their superiors in Rome to send colleagues of other nationalities. In Mozambique, they had no strategy to proselytize and some were opposed to local languages and culture. Their Provincial reported that they were reluctant to work at direct evangelization themselves, leaving that task to catechists with little training.<sup>26</sup> The Franciscans had no uniform method in the apostolate. In their missions they baptised rather indiscriminately and displayed no serious interest in African languages, preferring to concentrate their energies on boarding schools for boys (they had six in Beira alone)<sup>27</sup>. Very few girls were being educated. Nor was much evangelising done among the adults. The secular clergy (all Portuguese) had town parishes at Tete and Quelimane. In addition, Resende invited to his diocese a number of other international congregations, both of men and of women. They would send missionaries during the next few years.

## The first WF parishes

The first mission entrusted to Pollet and his three confrères was at Magagade, in the district of Sena, three hundred kilometres from Beira, in the lower Zambezi valley. After spending several days buying the material necessary for installation, paid for by the diocese, they took a train to within a few kilometres from the mission site. There they were met by a settler whose wagon carried all their baggage along a very wet and muddy road to the schoolroom which would serve as their residence. The next morning they divided the room into cubicles with curtains so they had a reception area, a refectory and a space for each Father. Beside their residence they constructed another school with bam-

boo and thatch; it also served as a chapel. The Fathers set about learning Chisena and visiting the people. Within two months, Pollet was said to be speaking Chisena fluently.<sup>28</sup> The following February, the mission was flooded so Pollet looked for a more suitable site. He found a dry and well populated sited at Murraça, eighteen kilometres away. By 1949, Brothers Hermann-Joseph and Moritz had built a Father's residence there, a school and a carpentry shop, all in brick with tiled roofs. Within the limits of the parish the indigenous population numbered a hundred and eighty thousand with a hundred Portuguese farmers and officials. Initially, the Fathers' only means of transport was a bicycle which they used to visit the local people, administering medicine to sick persons. During the first six months there were more than ten thousand consultancies. They found that the dying rarely refused baptism.

The Franciscan missionaries who had preceded them at Magagade had left a small number of Christians, almost all the adults among them living in irregular marriage situations. The level of practice was low. The Franciscan apostolate had been mainly through schools and their educational work was continued by the White Fathers at the insistence of the Bishop. During the first year monthly meetings were organised for the teachers and a three day retreat preached in Holy Week. Some boys began training as teachers spending three days weekly at the mission, where they were fed and clothed at the mission's expense, and then went for three days to teach in bush schools. School attendance, however, was very irregular. The Fathers wished to counterbalance the male preponderance among the Christians. They toured villages inviting the girls to catechism classes with limited success. Often the girls had obligatory labour such as road maintenance or cotton growing. Their parents told us, *You have taken our boys, at least leave the girls to work for us.*

When a second batch of missionaries arrived, in the persons of three young Italians, Pattavina, Marino and Mazera, a second parish was founded at Gorongosa on the edge of a game park inhabited by four thousand elephants and vast numbers of other game. A forested area, although fertile with rich soil, it was less developed for farming. Being at a lower altitude, the climate was hotter and malarial. But the River Nyandale provided a source of clean, fresh water. Later Brother Beda

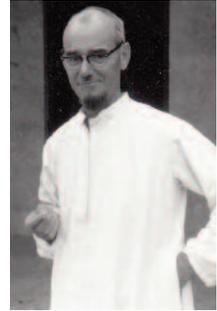
would install a ram (hydraulic pump) to provide water for the schools, convent and mission which were eventually built. Here at Gorongosa there were another hundred thousand people to minister to, plus a score of Portuguese settlers.



Fr. Marino Vincenzo



Gorongosa in 1968



Fr. Masera Ciro

The problems the missionaries met were those encountered in primary evangelisation elsewhere in sub-saharan Africa. Polygamy was common and superstitious practices were well established. A particular problem was caused by the absence of men. Many thousand went to work in the mines of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Those who remained were obliged by law to leave their homes for six months every year to work at Beira or on the Portuguese settlers' farms (This obligation of so-called contract labour lasted until 1961 when the law was repealed). Some had already started the catechumenate while at school before leaving for work elsewhere. On their return home, they had lost any inclination to attend religious instruction.

During each of the following years until 1950, a group of missionaries arrived making possible the foundation of new missions. In 1947, Chemba was founded on the bank of the Zambezi. Although two hundred and thirty kilometres from the river's mouth, it was less than two hundred metres above sea level and consequently hot and humid. In the dry season the soil was so rock hard that the digging of graves was almost impossible. The missionaries said they found the people equally hard in the beginning. Polygamy was an even bigger problem than elsewhere. The local chief Mulima had so many wives and children he did not know their number, never mind their names. But as time passed trust



Chemba in 1968

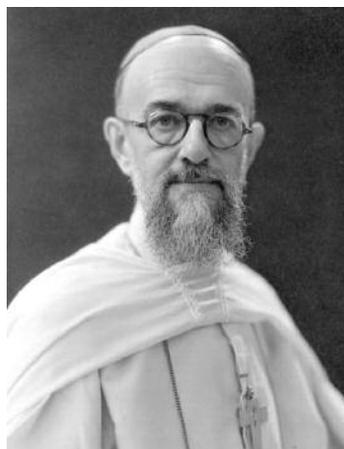
and friendly relations with the people became easier and the belief that Christianity was white man's religion was overcome. In 1950, a young man told a Father that he planned to take a second wife because his first had borne no children.

*Who will weep when I die?* he said. The Father replied, *What about us Fathers? We have no children to mourn for us.* *Oh,* said the young man, *You are different. When you die all the people here will weep. The forest itself will shed tears.*

In 1948, Barue was founded on higher ground near the southern Rhodesian border. It was a vast and fertile area of twenty-two thousand square kilometres. The people had been very resistant to Portuguese rule and revolted several times, lastly in 1917. In the consequent repression, many had migrated to Southern Rhodesia. It was a favourite place for Portuguese settlers who displaced the local farmers. The people who remained were described by the Fathers as very pagan, much given to the wearing of amulets, but *respectable, obedient and hard-working*. They lived in scattered households and small villages but better means of transport were available and two Fathers had motorbikes. The parish priest, Morte, still preferred to travel by bicycle or sometimes hitched lifts with the settlers.

## A Visitation

Later that same year, the Superior General, Bishop Durrieu, arrived for a visitation of the first four missions. Crossing the Malawi border, via the road from Blantyre towards Salisbury (Harare), he and his companion Fr Mazé drove two hundred and sixty kilometres to Barue overnight to arrive at five o'clock in the morning. They found the Brother running a farm and herding cows, goats and pigs and the missionaries living like hermits in three cell-



Mgr. Durrieu Louis

like rooms without doors or windows. The only furniture was a table 50 cm high, a chair and a single camp bed, the others sleeping on the ground. Durrieu was impressed by the poverty in which the missionaries were living and decided to add to it. In one mission was a paraffin refrigerator which had been donated by the Bishop. The Superior General told the Fathers its use was a luxury and they should return it. Fortunately, Bishop Resende had more sympathy with his missionaries and a better understanding of the climate. He refused to take it back, so it stayed at the mission.

At Beira the visitors met Bishop Resende whom they described as very young, extremely affable, pious, well informed and very cultivated. *He was*, said Fr Mazé in his report, *animated by an ardent zeal for the propagation of the faith*. Don Sebastião explained that he had invited the White Fathers because of their traditional methods which should serve as a model for all the workers in his diocese. He did not want them to be influenced by other missions which based their apostolate on baptisms of schoolchildren. Rather they should build up Christian families and have a long, serious catechumenate.

Fr Mazé described their passing hundreds of kilometres of unpopulated forests unlike anything else in Africa. They had traversed marshes without bridges or roads, crossed rivers on raft by day and night, avoided bogs and mud holes. Apart from the farms and settlements on the colonists, Fr Mazé said they saw almost no traces of human life near the main roads, lots of antelopes and other game but only one leopard. The jeep they were travelling in, he said, overheated every 50 metres in some parts and sometimes took an hour to cover a kilometre. They suffered from punctures and broken springs. When stuck in the mud, they had to push their vehicle on its way. Between Chemba and Garongoza, a broken bridge required a two hundred kilometre detour to reach a destination thirty kilometres away. There were riverside picnics and long delays while Mgr Durrieu cooked sausages and his companion in overalls repaired the jeep. Having completed their tour of the four missions, the visitors went to visit a sick Brother in Salisbury (now Harare).

The description of the visitation which appeared in the *Petit Echo* did not please the Fathers. In the following year, the report from

Mozambique criticised the description of unpopulated forests full of animals. It might be like that near Barue, it noted, but, at the other missions, the missionaries had problems getting firewood and they wondered where all the animals were.

## Continued expansion

In 1949, the first group of Germans arrived, nine in all. It was the first caravan of White Fathers to leave Germany for the missions since 1938 and was given a great send off at a feast of two and a half thousand people. Some of the new arrivals such as Schmitt and Mortier were army veterans who had spent years as prisoners of war in Russia, others like Prein and Brothers Hermann-Josef and Eulogius had been interned in British colonies at the outbreak of war but allowed to work within the confines of a mission. They all spent three months at Lisbon to learn Portuguese, not an easy task for the elder ones. Wickenmann was forty years old and found it particularly difficult but his obituary stated he had a heart of gold and was greatly loved by the people. Their arrival made possible a foundation at Mutarara (later moved to Inhangoma) near the confluence of the Shire and the Zambezi. It was an area outside the control of the government – a refuge for escaped prisoners, tax dodgers, and fugitives from justice. But the neophytes there were to make model Christian communities. Two years later there were gigantic floods along the Zambezi valley. Many people sought refuge at the mission where food soon ran short. Father Karl Schmitt, who had experienced hunger as a prisoner of the Russians, volunteered to join some men in a canoe to fetch food for the people. Unfortunately, where the great rivers met, turbulence overturned the boat. Unlike his companions, he could not swim and, encumbered by a gandoura and heavy wellington boots, he was drowned. His body was never recovered.



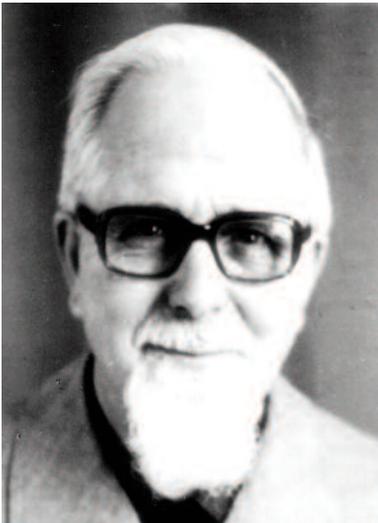
Brother Elogius, Franz Götten.

There were even worse floods in 1958 when many villages were wiped out. The most badly affected mission was Mutarara where people from the surrounding district took refuge. Three quarters of the 120,000 people lost their homes. Inside the mission the water was thirty centimetres deep and the Fathers slept on tables. The harvest was destroyed in the surrounding area but people were helped by the Portuguese Caritas and the Red Cross which provided clothes, food, seeds and medicine.



Br.Herman, Altmeyer Peter and Fr. Neven Waly in 1968.

There were still no Mozambican priests in the diocese. <sup>29</sup> The arrival of Prein and his confrères made it possible for Resende to realise his plan to found a junior seminary at Zobwe near the border with Nyasaland. The construction was put in the hands of Brothers Eulogius and Eucharius. Apart from the building, they installed electricity and running water, a large carpentry shop and a dairy. Prein, who had been first a teacher then superior at Ujiji Seminary in Tanzania, was appointed to head the staff at Zobwe which consisted entirely of



Fr. Prein Theodor .

White Fathers. There were eventually nine in the community, one of whom was engaged mainly in the parish founded there. The first students were admitted in 1950 among whom three eventually were ordained in 1961. Entrants came from other neighbouring dioceses as well as from missions confided to other congregations. The level of studies was similar to that of Portuguese *lycées*. The discipline in the seminary was left largely to the boys themselves who, desperate for education, wanted to keep good order at all times. Little supervision by the staff was needed, only an oversight by the

rector. The pupils had a council headed by a chief and sub-chief. Discipline was dealt with at a weekly tribunal at which even the smallest boy had the right to speak. No member of staff took part; the rector received only a summary of matters without names being mentioned. The system had a special significance in that there was no Portuguese presence and the students saw themselves as trailblazers, preparing for the future leadership of Mozambique.

## Consolidation

The early posts were all in the countryside but in 1948 an urban parish, San Benedito, Manga, a few kilometres from the centre of Beira, was entrusted to the White Fathers. Bishop Resende wanted each of the missionary societies to take a parish in the city to promote communication among themselves and with himself. The house also became the base of the regional superior and served as a procure both supplying materials for missions in the interior and providing a *pied à terre* for missionaries visiting Beira or in transit. It was in a poorer part of the town, the people representing a mosaic of languages and races, many being immigrants from up country, others originating in India, China<sup>30</sup> and Portugal. As well as three and a half thousand Christians, there were adherents of traditional religion, Moslems, Hindus and Buddhists. Bertulli was put in charge of it after the first year.



Church of Manga

He replaced the small chapel with a fine Church where colourful liturgical feasts were celebrated, characterised by the enthusiastic singing of hymns with traditional tunes accompanied by drums and hand clapping. The writer of his obituary went so far as to liken them to the rallies of Mussolini, surely a far-fetched comparison. The activities proper to any zealous parish were promoted – teaching catechism in the seven schools, Catholic Action, a campaign for rosary in the family, the Better World Movement, a census of the Christians to help build up families. Bertulli was not a catechist but he was an energetic man of action. He had his own ideas of the meaning of integral evangelisation which included train-

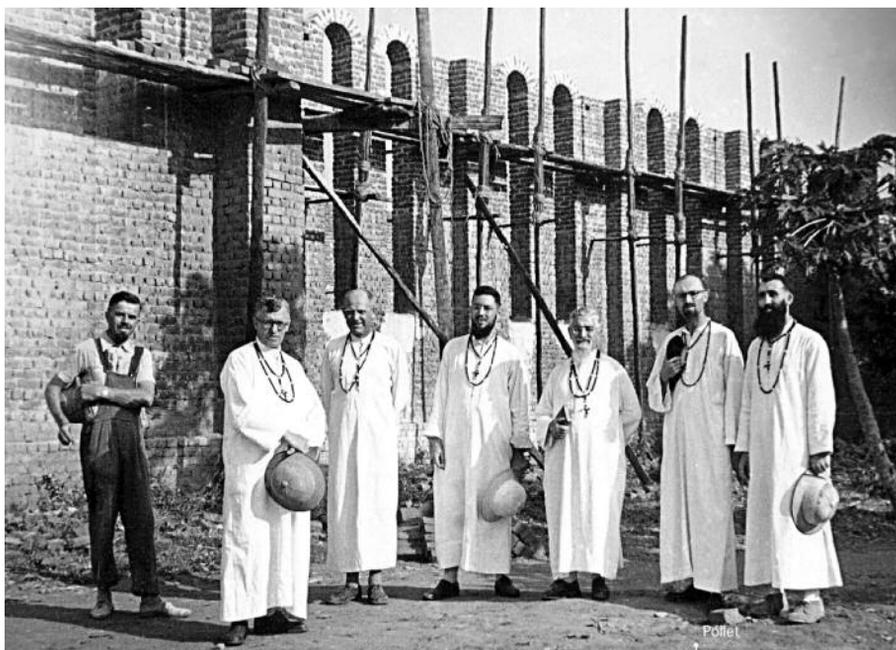
ing in leadership and organisation, imparting information and sharing responsibility. The parish centre had air-conditioned meeting rooms. Literacy was encouraged by a library with three thousand volumes and a bookshop. A cinema with five hundred seats was constructed for films procured from other countries in Africa. For the Europeans he gave lectures and organised conferences on African culture. There was a health centre, a maternity clinic and boarding schools for both boys and girls for which he had begged money from shops, factories and traders as well as having fund-raising events at the parish. No other parish in Mozambique provided such services. Bishop Resende was fond of showing off Manga to visitors.

The most visible enterprise was Bertulli's football club. He built a stadium with 6,000 seats fitted with lighting and showers in the dressing rooms. He had nine teams in his top division, six in the second and four teams for reserves. Every Sunday afternoon they played in front of a vociferous and appreciative crowd. Bertulli's aim was not to provide sporting opportunities only, but in the long term to prepare his people



for the responsibilities of eventual independence. Each team had its own president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. This was well understood by the administration which looked askance at his teams and would never agree to them entering the official town (Portuguese) league.

A quite different parish was that of Murraça, way up in the Zambezi valley, the continuation of the first post Magagade. The superior for twenty years, from 1946 to 1966, was Pollet, nicknamed Dzongwe (the cock) for his shrill voice. A confrère has described him *as a dynamic character with a prophetic vision who followed minutely changes in the evolution of Africa*. He spent much time with the people in the villages, visiting them on his bicycle with a can of boiled water and a Mass kit.



Murraça Mission, in Zambezi upper valley. Fr. Pollet will remain superior there during 20 years. From left to right: Br. Moritz Stieger, Fr. Franz Lambert (Inhangona), Fr. Alfons Weckenmann, Fr. Walter van den Hout, Fr. Anton Diener, Fr. Charles Pollet, and Fr. Pedro Perez Gadea.

He spent long periods every day in prayer in front of the tabernacle and still found many hours to teach the catechumens himself, often using hymns which he had composed himself. If statistics are any guide, he was the most successful of the missionaries in drawing people to the faith. In his diary, Bishop Resende wrote, *I received Fr Pollet, the best of the White Father missionaries in Mozambique... If there were a dozen like him in the diocese, they would, in a short time, revolutionise it.*<sup>31</sup> After ten years he had established fourteen outstations for the three hundred Christians, ninety-eight catechumens and two thousand one hundred postulants. All the White Father newcomers were sent to spend their first months at Murraça for initiation into the language and customs of the Sena (It is unfortunate that most of his written studies were lost in the later civil war). He was often highly critical of the civil administration and spoke freely in the belief that none of his people would report him to the PIDE. However, in the archives of the PIDE which are now

open, regular reports were made about and his Mozambican assistant priest, Mateo Gwenjere, who joined him after a few years. The latter, it is believed, was later assassinated by Frelimo.<sup>32</sup>

## The apostolate

Two particular characteristics of the White Fathers apostolate, learning the local languages and a long period of instruction in the catechumenate, were put in place from the beginning. Before their arrival, few if any missionaries in Mozambique were familiar with local languages and used only Portuguese in the liturgy. Bishop Resende hoped the White Fathers would be an example to the others. He had invited a number of missionary Societies to join his Franciscan, Jesuits and secular priests. Apart from the White Fathers, Picpus, Capuchin, Sacred Heart (St Quentin) and Burgos missionaries responded to his call. They enabled him to found forty-three parishes characterised by a variety of apostolic practices.

So in 1953 he convoked a meeting to attempt to unify the pastoral methods in the diocese. During a period of five days, a comprehensive range of topics was discussed including the organisation of schools (national policy had placed them in the hands of the Church), the press, traditional marriage, polygamy, local customs and languages, obligatory work, taxes, relations with Moslems and Protestants, and so on. One of the Fathers was designated to introduce a topic and then the floor was open for anyone to speak about it. Prein spoke about the need and training of local clergy and his recommendation to open a pre-seminary to raise the standard of entrants to Zobwe was accepted. Pollet spoke on the catechumenate. A whole morning was spent discussing its length, the Bishop favouring the White Fathers' tradition of four years. In the end, a compromise was reached, a minimum of three years but four years in White Fathers'



Fr. Pampalk Josef.

parishes. The principal need remaining was for a Catechist School. Nazaré on the outskirts of Beira was founded in 1968 and put in the charge of Pampalk, an Austrian White Father, a born teacher.

## **The situation in 1967**

By the beginning of 1967, after the arrival of a number of younger Fathers and Brothers, three more parishes had been opened: Charre (1957), Lundo (1962) and Munhava in Beira (1965) bringing the total in the charge of the White Fathers to ten, apart from the junior seminary at Zobwe. As well as Portuguese nuns, Resende had invited Spanish congregations to send Sisters to his diocese. So he was able to found convents at Murraca, Gorongosa, Manga and Barue. In the meantime, the vast diocese of Beira had been divided. First, the northern part was cut off to form the diocese of Quelimane. Secondly, in May 1962, the upper Zambezi valley was separated to form the diocese of Tete. This change affected the White Fathers as Tete included the junior seminary at Zobwe and the two posts of Charre and Inhangoma.

Although a reason for accepting the Mozambique mission was to provide a field for German and Italian missionaries, the communities were just as international as elsewhere in East Africa. By 1971, seven were composed of missionaries of four different nationalities. Only six Italians had been appointed to Mozambique and, of them, four remained. The Germans constituted the largest number, fourteen, just less than a third of the total of forty-six. The next largest groups were Belgians, nine, and Spanish eight. For the rest, there were smaller numbers of Dutch, Canadian, Swiss, French and Austrian.

While many of the Fathers stayed for years in the same post, the work of the Brothers required them to move often from one mission to another as they were needed. The missions could not have developed without their skills and industry. They built schools, hospitals, maternity clinics, boarding and day schools, workshops of all kinds, dug wells and, where needed, produced food from their fields and flocks. They usually had to accomplish all this on very tight budgets. Working with local craftsmen and labourers they gave an example of

assiduous and honest hard work. In a number of cases, these fellow workers showed their appreciation of the Brothers by naming their children after them.

Over the years, the atmosphere and attitudes to the faith in many missions had changed. Initially Gorongosa, for example, had been considered a difficult mission; The Fathers were regarded with suspicion by the people. But they travelled on foot or by bicycle to sow the good news, teaching under a tree to anyone who cared to listen. Supporting them was a group of twenty-five devoted catechists, trained during monthly reunions at the mission. Gradually, these rudes montagnards were won over and after ten years showed a real appetite for instruction in the gospel. At Manga, in the beginning, there were three thousand baptised Christians but almost no one attended Sunday Mass. Within a few years the Regional Cras reported that six hundred and fifty had made their Easter duties. The Christians had meanwhile developed a new attitude of freedom from the old paternalism. They were helping with building saying, It is our Church and they were joined by an increasing number of catechumens. At Manga, the Sisters opened a postulate for African girls.

## **Bishop Sebastião Soares de Resende** **April 1943 - Jan 1967**

When Bishop Resende arrived in Mozambique he shared the same romantic ideas of Portuguese colonialism as his compatriots. In a pastoral letter of December 1946 he spoke *of the restless and generous manifestation of the exciting life of a people who, after having conquered, pacified and organised its own portion of the continent where it lives, throws itself into the encounter of a new continent to infuse other people, its Brothers, with the benefits of its overflowing chest... It is a beautiful ideal, all made of love and sacrifice, of sanctity and heroism. It adorns the sky of Portugal with glorious constellations and embellishes the most glorious chapters of our history with the perfume of flowers.*<sup>33</sup>

But it did not take long for his experience of the reality of colonialism to change his outlook radically. His death at the relatively early age of sixty-one was a severe blow to his missionaries and diocese. Along with

Bishop Pinto of Nampula, he became severely critical of government's policies, its blind faith in permanent colonisation and the unjust treatment of his African flock. In theory, there was no discrimination in Mozambique and no legal basis for it. But to have equal status with a Portuguese settler an African had to become an *assimilado* adapting totally to a Portuguese way of life. Otherwise he was paid less for doing the same job as a settler and subject to a variety of oppressive laws. In his pastoral letters Bishop Resende spoke against the abuse of contract labour by the government and settlers. He denounced the forced cultivation of cotton and rice for sale at very low prices. In the absence of the men, the burden fell on the women in spite of their work as housewives, their pregnancies and illness.<sup>34</sup> He called it *barbarism* in a pastoral letter of December 1949 and blamed it for *the black spectre of hunger which for six months reaped the lives of the inhabitants in one region of my diocese*. The authorities prevented the letter from being circulated. In another pastoral letter, he compared such abuses with the policies in the time of slavery. The nuncio, Cardinal Cento, was sent to make him retract them but he refused to do so. In reply to the Nuncio Resende stated categorically that he could not stop *speaking out when it is a duty imposed upon him by his conscience*.<sup>35</sup>

At the Vatican Council he proposed that in the final document, the Council *should condemn regimes which oppress citizens when they disagree with the established political, economic or social order, or even when they refuse to acknowledge the present order as the best possible*. This caused a sensation in Mozambique. On his house were written the words, *Death to the traitor*. He came under increased surveillance by PIDE which regularly opened his mail. In his diocese, he founded and sponsored the only uncensored newspaper in the territory, the *Diário de Moçambique* which frequently criticised the socio-economic structure of colonialism. Its significance to Resende is shown in an entry to his diary in which he observed, *A journal is more important than three or four missions*. It was suspended several times because of its criticism of government policies.

According to the terms of the Concordat Resende had to present an annual report on diocesan works to the Governor each year. These reports showed his view of education was not to be mere instruction but neces-

sary for the integral formation of his African faithful. Looking towards eventual independence he insisted to the clergy that they made schools a priority. In his diary on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1958, he wrote, *The Accra conference has shown the way to follow: Liberty is independence. This is how it is and they are right. Slavery has already finished.* In a pastoral letter of the same year entitled *Mozambique at the Crossroads*, he proposed the preparation of a Catholic African élite to university level in view of the future government of the country. In all these ideas, he was out of step not only with the government but with the other members of the hierarchy.

To support his programmes, he invited a number of like-minded Portuguese secular priests from among his former seminarians and his relatives. They were forced to return to Portugal by his successor.

On the other hand, he did not want his missionaries to be involved in anything which could be construed as political. During the cold war, fear of communism was rife in all African colonies, not only in those controlled by the Portuguese. Russia and China encouraged independence movements. Many of the early leaders elsewhere in Africa aroused the suspicion of the colonial powers and spent time in prison. The Portuguese government was particularly apprehensive and repressive. The secret police, PIDE,<sup>36</sup> which had been introduced into Mozambique in 1954, was increasingly suspicious of missionaries who were not of Portuguese origin. Resende warned his missionaries to be extremely careful. In a letter written on the feast of the Epiphany 1964 he reminded the Fathers that a priest was ordained not for politics rather *ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis* – that he might offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He quoted a pastoral letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of Tanganyika which reminded expatriate missionaries particularly that they should not involve themselves in party politics. Bishop Resende went further and referred to actions that might, in the circumstances of that time, have a political aspect. Specifically, he referred to any help given to young people leaving the country for education abroad. Such support, he said, would not only be an abuse of their position as missionaries but, if known to government officials, would create a serious prejudice against the missionaries as a whole and be an obstacle to apostolic work. This advice was not heeded by some of the White Fathers who regarded helping their for-

mer seminarians to leave the country for studies abroad as a justifiable and politically innocent activity (The Portuguese government was anxious to control all such emigration and permitted it in a few rare instances only. Bishop Resende himself, meanwhile, did aid a number of ex-seminarians to pursue studies abroad).

Resende inspired great admiration and affection among his missionaries. When Garin and Pollet met Resende on their arrival, Garin wrote that he was enchanted by the Bishop: *He was so kind, understanding and Fatherly*. The Regional Superior, Cras, described Resende *as very intelligent, a true ascetic devoted to his work, ... unconcerned with criticism and public opinion, having a devouring and enlightened zeal. He is at the same time simple, cordial and friendly.*<sup>37</sup>

His missionaries appreciated his simple way of life. At the Vatican Council, Resende had spoken not only in favour of a church for the poor, but for a poor Church, and questioned the value of gold, bejewelled rings and pectoral crosses, cappa magna and other forms of expensive ostentation (These opinions were expressed in front of some three thousand elaborately dressed Bishops). On his first visit to Magagade, he travelled by railway to a station five kilometres from the mission and then refused to be carried in a “push car” which was waiting for him, electing to go on foot. At the end of his visit, he returned to the station on the back of a motor bike. He particularly enjoyed sharing evening recreation with the missionaries he visited.

In 1950, the government banned Dutch, German and Italian missionaries. Resende persuaded the government to soften the ban. It was still difficult for White Fathers to secure entry permission so he invited Burgos Fathers from Spain. Most had grown up in Francoist Spain and were radically opposed to a totalitarian and colonial government. Some later joined Frelimo. So their arrival did not favour the administration. In the meantime, Resende protected his missionaries and defended them from all criticism so that none were expelled from Beira during his lifetime.

However, in 1962, the upper part of the Zambezi valley was cut off from Beira to make the separate diocese of Tete in which Barue and Zobwe were situated. Resende’s influence no longer extended there. Garin, having been called to Rome for consultation, was refused re-entry in

1965 after an anonymous denunciation of a political character. Bishop Félix Niza Ribeiro of Tete intervened on his behalf but unsuccessfully. André De Bels who had been teaching in the seminary was expelled. The PIDE agent who arrested him was accompanied by a Portuguese Jesuit, Fr Raul Sequeira, <sup>38</sup> and then subject-



Fathers Perreault Pierre, de Orube Aitor,  
and Perez Fernando

ed to an interrogation for eight hours before being put on a flight to Lisbon. The regional, Cras, was convinced that if De Bels had been in the diocese of Beira rather than of Tete, he would not have been expelled. The same year, three Fathers appointed to Mozambique, Pierre Perreault, Aitor de Orube and Fernando Perez were delayed in Portugal for a year. Perez says that it was because the White Fathers were causing the PIDE headaches in Mozambique. <sup>39</sup>

The political atmosphere was changing during the 1960's after the independence of Mozambique's neighbours, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. Frelimo had been formed from disparate independence movements in 1962 and two years later launched a war of liberation in the northern province close to Tanzania gradually infiltrating central Mozambique. At a time when the missionaries needed the protection of Resende more than ever, he was diagnosed with very painful cancer of the oesophagus. In 1966, he travelled to Portugal and then to Stockholm but medical treatment was unavailing. Refusing pain-killing drugs, he returned to his diocese. Passing Lisbon, he impressed the Cardinal Patriarch who declared, I have just been speaking to a saint. The cancer spread to his lungs and spine but he carried on working in spite of orders to rest. During his last days, he received his priests and missionaries in his bedroom, giving each one a few words of personal advice. He died on 26th January 1967.

True to character, in his last will he wrote, *I can dispose of nothing, because I have nothing*. He asked for a simple funeral during which his coffin should be carried by his African Christians. The funeral sermon

was preached by his former vicar general, Bishop Teixeira of Quelimane who said, *Within the dense forest of injustices, prejudices and practices, Bishop Resende's voice made itself heard as it fought for a Christian Mozambique... His pastoral letters were clear-sighted and just ... fear of the truth never corrupted him. Publication of the sermon was forbidden by the authorities.* Following the funeral cortège and lining the route were thirty thousand people, Protestants, Moslems and Catholics. In accordance with his wishes he was buried not in the Cathedral but in the local cemetery with his people. His gravestone was inscribed simply *Sebastião, First Bishop of Beira.* Each year, on the anniversary of his death, his grave is a place of pilgrimage and celebration.



Murraça, the church in 1968



Fr. Marostica Paolo in front of the house at Murraça in 1968

# Chapter four

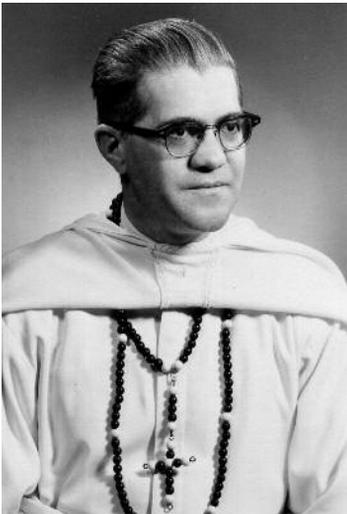
## he crisis approaches

### The changing atmosphere

After his ordination in 1951, Fr Pickard was appointed to join Garin and Pattavina at Lisbon for promotion. For two years he travelled to junior and senior seminaries looking for recruits to the Society. His movements were in no way restricted; he was even allowed to visit the political prisoners in São Tomé. Some of the seminarians he met were interested in going to Portuguese territories to teach people to be Christians and Portuguese, in effect working in partnership with the government, but none were interested in working elsewhere in Africa. So after two years, the project was abandoned and he was appointed to Mozambique. He had not found the atmosphere in Portugal particularly oppressive. The rule of Salazar was benign and nowadays many Portuguese would like to revert to it. In Mozambique also, the first Fathers to arrive there found the political conditions did not obstruct their pastoral work. In their rural parishes, the illiteracy rate was ninety per cent. There was no nationalist movement to compare with those developing in the neighbouring colonies. Independence parties were unknown. The security police force PIDE had been introduced into Mozambique in 1954 only for fear of communism, not to counter any budding nationalism. As the revolt of Frelimo developed, PIDE became increasingly powerful. It eventually acted independently of the government or the army, arresting and imprisoning suspects without any judicial authority.

A decade after his arrival, Pollet complained to Bishop Resende that the atmosphere had changed. Pollet was known to be outspoken. He and his assistant Father Mateo Gwenjere, a diocesan priest, were now being carefully watched by PIDE. At the parish of Manga, in Beira, the PIDE had even persuaded some of the Sisters to keep the Fathers under surveillance. The Regional Superior, Cras, reported to Rome in April 1966 that four of the leading lay people in his parish of

Manga had been arrested and imprisoned for several weeks. Then it was the turn of Gorongosa - two teachers and a carpenter of the Brother's, were arrested without any explanation. All of the Fathers' correspondence was being intercepted and read, even if it was posted in Malawi and Rhodesia. After meetings of parish catechists, some would be subject to interrogation by the PIDE to discover if politics had been discussed. The Fathers were worried to see their best people in trouble and in danger of imprisonment because of their links with the Fathers. They felt that it was a form of intimidation of the Fathers themselves although they themselves were in no physical danger because of their status and international connections.



Fr. Mondor Georges

When Fr Mondor, an assistant on the General Council, made a visitation July 1965, he observed that there were military bases in all the administrative centres. Numerous airstrips had been constructed for the rapid deployment of the army. Agents of the PIDE were everywhere, among the parishes, villages, teachers and mission employees. The civil authorities had become very sensitive to criticism. Garin made some critical remarks about the government at a village in the north of Portugal. He then went on leave to Belgium. At the end of his leave in March 1965, he was refused re-entry into Portugal and ipso

facto into Mozambique. In December of the same year De Bels, teaching algebra at Zobwe seminary, was the first White Father to be expelled from Mozambique. He was accused of helping a number of his former students to leave the country for studies abroad (Zobwe is only a kilometre from the border with Malawi). By that time, the diocese of Beira had been divided. Zobwe and two other missions now formed part of the diocese of Tete, higher up the Zambezi valley. The Regional Superior, Cras, was convinced that if Zobwe had still depended on Resende, De Bels would not have been expelled.

## **Frelimo**

The reason for the change of atmosphere was the armed incursions of freedom fighters. Not being allowed legally to operate within Mozambique, three small nationalist groups, the Mozambican African National Union (MANU), the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDEMAMO), and the National African Union of Independent Mozambique (UNAMI,) had been founded outside Mozambique, in Dar es Salaam, Salisbury, and Malawi respectively. In June 1962, they combined their resources to form the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) under the presidency of Eduardo Mondlane. Its headquarters were in Dar es Salaam. Two years later, convinced that no peaceful means would bring them to power in an independent Mozambique, the party turned to the use of force, encouraged by Nyerere. It received help from the newly independent African countries of the OAU and financial support from Scandinavia. The cold war then being at its height, it received weapons from China and the Soviet Union. It soon controlled the rural areas of northern Mozambique where, in accordance with its socialist policies, it established co-operative forms of agriculture and increased access to education and health care. After the assassination of Mondlane in 1969, and the internal struggles that followed, power ended up in the hands of the marxist, Samora Machel, the head of the military wing. By 1971, Frelimo had a guerilla force of seven thousand men. Opposed to it was a much larger Portuguese force of sixty thousand soldiers equipped with tanks, planes, and military equipment available to Portugal as a member of NATO.<sup>40</sup> Given the disproportionate size of the forces, Frelimo adopted a Maoist strategy based on gaining the support of the peasantry while using small scale guerilla tactics: ambush, sabotage, and the assassination of settlers. The Portuguese countered with reprisals, Africanisation of the military and intelligence gathering by informers. Nine hundred and fifty three protected villages were created. They resembled the concentration camps, greatly restricting the movements and agricultural work of the farmers.

## **The development of national feeling**

In the countries of Mozambique's borders, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, the development of nationalist independence movements had de-

veloped earlier. After defeating local and tribal opposition with modern weapons in the years before the outbreak of the First World War, Britain had unwittingly prepared the seed beds of nationalism. The union of the many heterogeneous groups ruled by traditional authorities into large territorial units created a national consciousness. From the class of minor civil servants and teachers, educated to serve the administration, nationalist leaders emerged who were able to build up mass followings.

Nationalism grew more slowly in Mozambique. Illiteracy was far more common, the opportunities for education beyond the lower standards of primary school being very restricted, and the small number of those with further education were pressured into a completely Portuguese mentality and way of life through the Assimilado system. A second factor was settler resistance. In Kenya European settlers had vainly resisted but only delayed Independence. In Rhodesia, the settlers who declared unilateral independence in 1965 were successful only for a time. They had backing from South Africa but lacked support from Britain. In Mozambique some quarter of a million Portuguese settlers who opposed nationalism had the support of the colonizing power. A third factor was in Portugal itself. Overseas territories had been part of the identity of the Portuguese nation for four and a half centuries and their possession was deeply embedded in its sense of identity. Even though only a small part of Mozambique had been occupied during most of that time, legal fiction asserted that the whole country was part of Portugal. Thus, in response to the United Nations Decolonisation Committee, Salazar replied that Mozambique was already independent, being part of Portugal. Addressing the National Assembly in November 1960, he stated *Surely the Portuguese people are not going to suppose that the fate of millions of men, the order and peace of their way of life, the fruit of their work, the principles of civilization they have adopted, can be handed over to the emptiness of speeches at meetings and the anarchy of the so-called movements of liberation.*<sup>41</sup> This was at a time when the other European colonial powers were reconciled to the fact that the end of Empire had been reached.

Nevertheless, some special factors favoured the growth of nationalism. The slave trade to Brazil carried on for centuries had left a residue of fear and distrust of the Portuguese. There were more recent

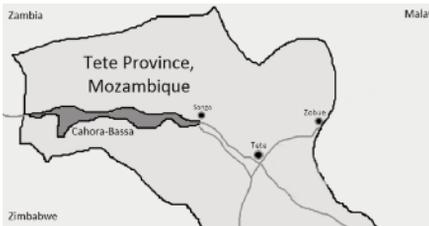
grievances. The expropriation of people's fields for the benefit of six thousand incoming settlers granted farms in the 1960's, the obligatory cultivation of cotton for sale at derisory rates for the Portuguese textile industry and, lastly, the system of contract (in effect, forced) labour, were all fresh in the memory. There was not a strong sense of explicitly nationalist feeling among the majority of rural Mozambicans, but there was deep rooted dissatisfaction and awareness of the changes taking place in the neighbouring countries. When asked in an interview with *Jeune Afrique* whether nationalist independence was a popular feeling (this was in 1971), Fr Pickard replied, *The population of Mozambique (at least that part which I am familiar with) is certainly conscious that the situation in which it lives is not ideal and longs for change. ... One should not forget that ninety per cent of the population of Mozambique is illiterate. So it cannot express its desire for independence clearly but I think that, basically the desire is present and shows signs of life.*

## **The Effect of the independence movement on the Missionaries**

It was not the policy or practice of the White Fathers to get involved in national politics anywhere in Africa. But their identification with their flocks gave them an inherent sympathy with popular aspirations. The leaders were often the products of mission schools and the new governments in neighbouring countries had not in any way hindered their pastoral work. On their arrival in Mozambique, the White Fathers had adjusted to the existing political situation. They had no problem learning the Portuguese language and making a written statement of loyalty to the Portuguese government. But their training prepared them for methods of work which were difficult to harmonise with Portuguese expectations. The Colonial Act (article 2) stated *Catholic Portuguese missions are considered to be institutions useful to the empire.* On the other hand, the Directory of the White Fathers' Constitutions (1953 edition) explained the work of the missionary in the social sphere quite differently: *The policy of the Church consists above all in the education of the political sense of the faithful...teaching people their responsibility for the common good.... The Church's duty is to bring the whole*

*man and all the institutions of human society to Christ... by creating the most human conditions of life possible.* In practice, this implied building on the foundations of local culture through the local language, the learning and use of which was an essential characteristic of the apostolic methods of the Society bequeathed to it by its founder. Missionary methods could not involve the destruction of an ancient culture in subordination to a foreign imported lifestyle. All over Africa, the aim of the White Fathers' missionary work was to build a local Church which was inculturated and self-supporting in personnel, for material and spiritual work. It could not be to build a replica of the Portuguese Church in Africa. The missionaries could not consider themselves or their work as institutions useful to the empire.

The innate contradiction between White Fathers' methods and the nature of the colonial Church was brought to a head when Frelimo began to wage the internal war for independence. The abuses by the army, particularly the unjust reprisals against civilians, made it impossible for the Fathers to maintain support for the continuance of colonial rule. Moreover, amid growing violence and conflicts, the White Fathers' missions were working in a particularly sensitive part of the country. The city of Beira was the base of the military and intelligence centres opposing Frelimo.



Map situating Cahora Bassa

In the diocese of Tete, the construction of the Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi was begun in 1969.<sup>42</sup> Since most of the electricity was destined for South Africa it was to be important as an income generating project and so strengthen the colonial

administration in the short term; a second aim was to irrigate the lower Zambezi valley for future white settlement. Frelimo did not wish to destroy the dam seeing it as a potential asset in an independent Mozambique. But inconsistently, Frelimo declared anyone working on it was viewed as a soldier and a legitimate target for their operations. So the engineers and workers needed military protection. There was more military activity in the dioceses of Beira and Tete, where the White Fathers had their missions, than in other parts of Mozambique.

## The problems for the local clergy

The diocesan priests were in a particularly difficult situation. During their training at Namaacha Seminary near Lourenço Marques, they were taught to conform in all respects to Portuguese clergy, in language, culture, habits of thought. No access to international newspapers or broadcasts was allowed. This is not to say that there was no resistance to the process within the seminary. A former student from Zobwe had been the subject of a letter of complaint, sent by the Cardinal Teodosio de Gouveia to Bishop Resende. The Rector of the Seminary had intercepted a letter to a friend written by a seminarian. He was disturbed by its contents and passed it on to the Cardinal who complained to Bishop Resende that the seminarian, what was reckoned to be the brightest in the seminary, had anti-lusitanian ideas and therefore could not be allowed to remain. To counter what appears to have been the seminarians' sympathy for the independence movement, Cardinal's auxiliary, Bishop Custodio Alvim Pereira, laid down a set of propositions for the seminarians to follow. They included such statements as these: *Independence is irrelevant to the welfare of man; to take part in movements for independence is against nature; even if the movement is peaceful, the clergy must abstain from it in order to maintain their spiritual influence over the people; the native peoples of Africa have the obligation to thank the colonists for all the benefits which they receive from them; the educated have the duty to lead those with less education from the illusion of independence; the slogan Africa for the Africans is a philosophical monstrosity.* The document found its way into the hands of Frelimo which used it for propaganda. Some students completing their studies at Zobwe refused to go to Namaacha. To impose more strictly the mentality which the Archbishop desired to be inculcated, the Dutch Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament who had been directing it were replaced by Portuguese Lazarists. These were much less able academically and had no training for their new task. As a result, there was a great deal of discontent among the seminarians at the simpler text books they introduced and some did not return after their annual vacation. Instead they fled abroad to study outside Mozambique. The situation caused Bishop Resende to seriously consider founding a senior seminary in his own diocese, although he made it clear to his own seminarians that he had no sympathy with those who supported a violent terrorist movement.

In the same letter of complaint to the Bishop of Beira, the Cardinal also remarked that the seminarians coming from Zobwe, educated by the White Fathers, were regarded as particularly recalcitrant. From the time of Prein they had been accustomed to easy going relations with the Fathers. That was contrary to what was expected of them as senior seminarians. Following the death of Resende, the Fathers on the staff at Zobwe were ordered to hand over the running of the seminary to Portuguese Jesuits. The Episcopal Conference observed that *the White Fathers were forming good Catholic priests, but they were not sufficiently Portuguese*. The Bishop of Tete conveyed the news to the staff at a meeting without a word of thanks for the work they had done over the years. A number of the students rejected the authority of the newcomers and, making their feelings clear in the only way they knew how, abandoned their studies, some going abroad.

Emerging from the confines of the seminary after ordination, and being appointed to parishes in their home dioceses, the secular priests experienced a great conflict between their character as Mozambicans and their assumed Portuguese identity. For the first time since their childhood they encountered their own culture and language from which their education had alienated them. They witnessed the poverty of their people and the oppression they suffered. Some, like Mateo Gwenjere, who was appointed to Pollet's parish, adopted a radical political position and left the country to join the independence movement.

## Tensions with the colonial authorities

Even before the death of Resende, the arrival of more White Fathers in Mozambique was looked at askance by the Portuguese authorities. In 1965 Perreault, de Orube and Perez were kept in Portugal for a year before being allowed into Mozambique. Perez, in his *Memorias*<sup>43</sup> says it was an attempt to discourage them as the missionaries were "causing them headaches". Van den Hout was accused of using the local language in the liturgy; although questioned he was not expelled at that time. On Sundays in Beira diocese, there were Masses in both Portuguese and in the vernacular. This was not the practice in all the dio-



Fr. van den Hout Walter



Inhangoma football team with Fr. Orube Aitor

ceses. Some Bishops did not allow the use of the local languages for hymns and prayers, even for weddings and baptisms. The majority of people in their dioceses had little or no knowledge of Portuguese. They never met the face of Christ who had come to announce the good news to the poor.

Pollet particularly was a thorn in the side of the Portuguese officials. Even some of his confreres thought he was intemperate in his protests against the colonial government. Perez compared him to a cock who sometimes crowed before it was dawn. Pollet himself told Bishop Resende in March 1966, *You have always preached prudence but on many occasions it is impossible for me to keep quiet. It would be against my conscience. How can I live in the middle of Africans, as a Missionary of Africa, without aspiring with all my heart for their freedom... We shall be accused of pernicious and subversive activity... But for us it is a question of truth and fairness and part of the teaching we must proclaim. Freedom for all men is part of the Good News.* He was outspoken with his parishioners about the Portuguese presence in Mozambique. He believed they would not report him but there were more informers among them than he thought, as records of the PIDE, now available, show. He was questioned seven times by the PIDE. A number of soldiers were stationed in his parish and, rashly, he told them that they had no right to be there. Bishop Resende had said of him, *I greatly esteem Fr Pollet as a missionary but he is not very prudent. I do not know if I can save him.* Five months after the funeral of Resende, he was told he should pack his possessions and go to a military camp. Instead he left the country for Malawi and was to spend the rest of his missionary life in Tanzania. His assistant priest at Murraça, Mateo Gwenjere, followed him a week later. In

November 1967 Gwenjere told a UN committee that Pollet had been threatened with death many times.



Fr. Roesems Robert

The same month two young Fathers, van de Ven and San Juan who had spent almost a year in Lisbon studying Portuguese were refused entry to Mozambique. Two other young Fathers, Champagne and Hoyuela originally nominated to learn Portuguese at Lisbon were diverted elsewhere. In March 1968, Roesems was expelled. Wels was the next one to be excluded. He had given some Sisters a lift so they could vote in an election. They kept him waiting for two hours while they talked to some women they hap-

pened to meet. Impatient at the delay, he remarked testily to Sister Filomena that two hours was a long time to vote for a single candidate when the result was already known. His words reached the security police. He was also accused of saying Mass in the local language and of not allowing pictures of the president to be hung in the outstation schools. When he went home on leave in April 1970 he was refused permission to return. <sup>44</sup>

Next Capannel faced a series of accusations. He had spoken publicly in support of African farmers who had been deprived of their land for the benefit of Portuguese immigrants. <sup>45</sup> That meant he was fomenting hatred. He told an official that obliging the people to grow cotton and



Fr. Capannel Cesare

to sell it at a low price chosen by the buyer was unjust. What was more, he told a Sister that the Portuguese were robbers and the people that the Europeans should be learning their language and not they Portuguese. He was also accused of saying Mass for the soul of Lumumba. Accusations against the Fathers multiplied, some of them being absurdly misrepresented. Sometimes charges were based on reports of sermons by Moslems and pagans who had never been inside a Church. Once Capannel was accused when he had not

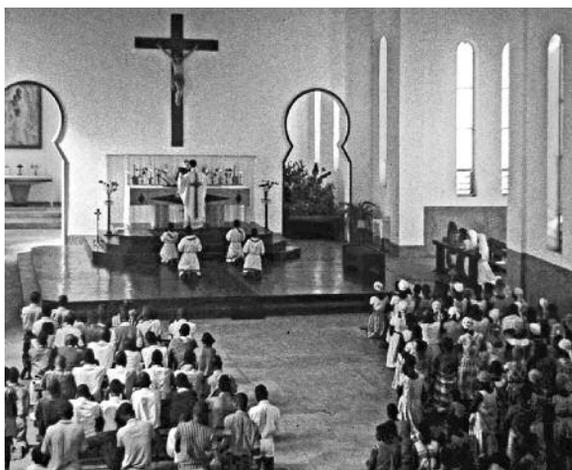
even preached. In July 1970, Nijs was accused of saying that he did not believe in God or the religion of Our Lady of Fatima and that Communists had done more for humanity than many Christians (Many Portuguese regarded Fatima as a heavenly sign of approval of their country. Pope Paul's visit to the shrine in 1967 was interpreted as papal endorsement of the regime). In fact what Nijs had said in a sermon was that military officers should give a good example of Christian living. The local commander was living with a concubine and took offence.



Fr. Nijs Victor

Parish meetings with catechists were customarily carried on in the local language which the PIDE agents did not understand. So it frequently happened that after a meeting catechists were arrested and interrogated brutally for a number of days to discover what had been taught. For example catechist Xavier Thomas was arrested on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1971. After being interrogated and beaten daily, he was confined with some four hundred political prisoners at Tete in six small rooms measuring 10m x 2m - that is to say – three persons per square metre. When the Fathers intervened he was released. The case, backed up with documents and photos, was brought to the attention of the Conference of the Bishops. As a result the photographer was arrested and interrogated by the police. No audible protest was made by the Bishops. Teachers and lay people who attended reunions were harassed in a bid to force them to say there had been talk of terrorism by the Fathers. Sometimes false accusations were extracted by violence. The holding of meetings of the Legion of Mary, of small Christian communities, and the activities of cultural and social associations, which were a normal part of parish life elsewhere, declined in frequency. Lay people were deterred from attending parish non-liturgical activities. Among the younger, some left the country, others were silent and inactive through intimidation. Fear of mistreatment caused a few to become informers. It was becoming impossible to build up a Christian elite.

The PIDE was present everywhere and acted independently of the government, the judiciary or the army, arresting and imprisoning on its



Mass celebrated at Murraça

and immediately arrested a leading layman of the parish. In this way, they tried to give the impression that he had been denounced by the Fathers.

Doubts and suspicions cast on the missionaries had an unsettling and inhibiting effect on them also. Obstacles were placed in the way of development projects such as the co-operatives at Gorongosa and Beira, an agricultural school at Chemba and secondary schools at Manga and Murraça. The Cultural and Social Centre at Manga was declared to be illegal and its members interrogated with physical blows to persuade them to make statements which could be used against the superior of the mission. Pressure was exerted on the Fathers by civil and military officials who went round the missions in an attempt to convince the Fathers of the merits of colonial policy. Bishops were aware of these visits so the Fathers supposed that they had consented to them.



Fr. de l'Arbre Luc

own authority. Its suspicions enveloped everyone, African or Portuguese, who felt impotent before it. Its methods were unscrupulous often turning its victims into informers, using delation to denounce and trap its victims. Two agents went to visit the Fathers at Munhava, spoke platitudes about the weather, then left

Nevertheless, some of the Fathers continued to help their former students to leave Mozambique for studies abroad. Americans and Russians were competing to train future leaders and scholarships to study in foreign countries were

available. It was easy for the Fathers themselves to cross the border in Malawi and not difficult for the students to circumvent the border posts. When the Zobwe (only a kilometre from the border) was handed over, the students received help from the missionaries at Charre. This activity may have been imprudent. As far as the Fathers were concerned, they were simply helping students to fulfil their academic potential and exercise their rights to further education which was not possible within Mozambique. But the authorities feared that these young men would acquire nationalist ideas and join Frelimo.

## The missionaries become more outspoken

During the nineteen sixties, the missionary personnel had begun to change. Some of the older Fathers and Brothers reached the end of their missionary lives. Mortier and Aust returned to Europe in 1963, Eulogius and Garin in 1964. Three years later Bernardus and Brouchoud followed. Some had been obliged to adjust to fascist governments in their earlier days in Europe and adapted to the Portuguese regime without great difficulty. To replace them and make possible the opening of new parishes, a number of younger men were appointed. José Sotillo, Juan Battista Latorre, Jesus Guardiola and Robert Roesems arrived in 1962. They were followed by Marcel Amport, Jozef Pampalk and Jean Ribaud in 1963.



Fr. Maltais Jacques



Br. Bernard  
- Wilhelm Seiler -



Fr. Sotillo José



Br. Amport Marcel

A year later came three more newcomers, Pieter Wels, Jacques Maltais and Roger Blomme. Aitor Le Orube, Pierre Perreault and Fernando Perez joined them in 1965 with Günther Zahn, Luc de L'Arbre,



Fr. Fraile Saturnino



Fr. Wels Pieter



Fr. Blomme Roger

Saturnino Fraile and Hermann Hinkelmann arriving in 1966. The young Fathers coming out had learnt their theology at the time of the Second Vatican Council. They were more aware of the process of decolonisation in those African territories served by the White Fathers. On arrival they spent time with Pollet to learn the local language and culture and listening to his political ideas. Pollet had been influenced by reading the life of the Belgian missionary Père Vincent Lebbe who, contrary to the practices of his confreres, had immersed himself in the Chinese way of life, proposing the slogan Return China to the Chinese and the Chinese will go to Christ.<sup>46</sup> Pollet's disciples were similarly inclined to be more critical and outspoken than the older men. The accusation made against them by the administration and, even by the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques, was that they interfered in politics, and even that they were communists (The communist party was the only one in Portugal which favoured independence for the colonies).

The younger White Fathers were committed to preach the whole gospel, to concern themselves with social work, agriculture, education, and political rights. For them, the Church was not only another worldly means of eternal salvation but a sign of freedom for the whole man in this world. They expected the Bishops to take up a position in favour of fundamental human rights.

As Fr Pickard remarked to *Jeune Afrique: Religion, politics, society and the economy, all are connected*. He was interrogated and accused of subversive activity merely because he told the people they could

use their own language in Church. The use of the vernacular aroused suspicion of the agents of the PIDE who were unable to understand or speak it. The meaning of the sermons they listened to was, if not in Portuguese, quite opaque to them. To learn what was said, they had to rely on unreliable informers. What they did understand did not always please them. Capannel preached a sermon at Christmas 1970 in which he spoke of love towards the poor: they should not be despised but paid a just wage. He was informed by the Administrator that his sermon was criminal. A Franciscan, Father Carreira, complained in a meeting of religious teachers that while people were starving in his parish, sacks of maize were rotting away in stores. He was summoned by the Governor of his province and told the matter was not his business. The Fathers found that if they went beyond airy banalities in their sermons and touched on social situations, they were accused of meddling in politics and of having communist sympathies.

## Position of the Hierarchy

The main complaint of the Fathers was that they were not supported or protected by the Bishop. Resende had been a voice crying in the desert for a quarter of a century and had the support of only one, Mgr Pinto of Nampula.<sup>47</sup> When Resende had once persuaded the hierarchy to sign a statement condemning terrorism and anti-terrorism, it was leaked to the government and censured before publication. According to the terms of the Concordat all the Bishops had to be Portuguese and have been compared to parachutists falling from the sky. They had no special training as missionaries. They were in effect employees of the government which had a major influence on their original appointment and paid their salaries<sup>48</sup> (The first three names proposed by the Vatican to succeed Bishop Resende were vetoed). According to Fr Molina, they were mentally living in the Tridentine Church: for them, Christianity was limited to the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of devotions. He compared the grandiose cathedrals and palaces for the hierarchy overshadowing the poor huts of the Africans to the abbeys of the middle ages around which the workers cultivated the monks' fields and plantations. In this context, the Africans were to be taught the joys of manual work at the service of the state and the settlers. Lack of education naturally led to a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of help-

lessness in the face of a modern technical society. It made people subservient and less able to discern or claim their natural human rights. There was a great need for education but Resende alone had appreciated the importance of schools. In 1971 there were 358,378 children in primary education. The number of students in higher education was 388. That is a proportion of roughly one to a thousand. Schools both in Portugal and Mozambique were in the hands of the Church according to the terms of the Concordat. So the Bishops had to take some responsibility for that situation being maintained. In October 1970 Mgr Pereira of Lourenço Marques was quoted in the *Tablet* as saying *Africa is incapable of governing itself. This duty reverts to old Europe and the Church of Christ.* He did not draw the logical and obvious conclusion that the Bishops, on behalf of the Church, should ensure a good standard of advanced education to prepare the people to govern themselves.

## Pope Paul VI

In the meantime, a succession of Popes expressed quite different ideas. As far back as 1919 Benedict XV had warned missionaries against importing alien nationalism. It was the keynote of his encyclical *Maximum illud*. But pertinent papal teaching was concealed from the people of Mozambique. The Portuguese translation of John XIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* was expurgated. In his visit to Kampala in August 1969, Paul VI said: *No one, as (Pope John observed) likes to feel himself subjected to political powers wielded from outside his own national or ethnic community. Therefore the Peoples of Africa have themselves assumed the responsibility for their own destiny. The Church greets this event with satisfaction, for there is no doubt that it marks a decisive step forward on the path of human civilization.*

*His Message to Africa* was published only in Resende's *Diário de Moçambique*. In the capital, all the copies on sale were bought by the police and destroyed. During the same visit to Uganda, Pope Paul spoke to the Bishops who were assembled from all over Africa for the inaugural meeting of SECAM.<sup>49</sup> They represented every country in Africa, except Mozambique. In 1970 Pope Paul gave Marcellino dos Santos of Frelimo and the leaders of the independence movements of Angola and

Portuguese Guinea a private audience at which he is reported to have said, *We are on the side of those who suffer. We are for peace, the freedom and the national independence of all peoples, particularly of the African peoples.* An important theme in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* was his call for peace. This was during the wars for independence in all the Portuguese colonies, characterised as they were by massacres and torture on both sides. Cardinal Gonçalves, the patriarch of Lisbon, declared that the Pope's statement was not to mean an abject abdication of Portugal's sacred duties. In other words, it did not apply to the colonial army. Pope Paul, however, made his position clear enough when replying to the greetings of the College of Cardinals in December 1973. *As long as the rights of all peoples, especially the right of self-determination and independence, are not properly recognised and respected, there can be no true and lasting peace.*

At no time did the Bishops make any public criticism of the methods of the army or police. The most extreme supporter of the status quo was the Archbishop Custódio Alvim Pereira, who had succeeded Cardinal de Gouveia Lourenço Marques in 1962. He asserted that opponents of Portuguese rule were enemies of Christ. He called PIDE the guardian angel of the homeland, defending good order and the innocent. On a number of occasions in public broadcasts he spoke of the conflict with Frelimo as being a holy war for Christian civilisation.

The history of anti-clericalism in Portugal from the time of Pombal, and especially its manifestation in the Republican party immediately prior to Salazar, haunted the Bishops. They seem to have feared that although anti-clericalism was contained by the *Estado Novo*, it might break out again should there be a regime change. The majority of the Bishops identified the welfare of the Church with the maintenance of the current Portuguese administration and its colonial policy. They had the support of the settlers. The benefit of the African faithful was a secondary consideration. Thus in effect, the Bishops were subjecting themselves to colonial oppression. Whether the Bishops were acting in the long term interest of their home country or of the settlers is another matter entirely as future events would show.

## Fr Cesare Bertulli

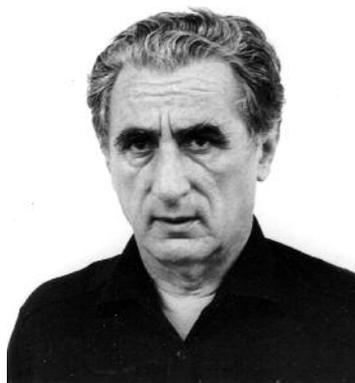


Fr. Cras Gérard

Initially, as far as the Society was concerned, the Mozambique missions came under the authority of the Regional Superior of Central Africa, Gerard Cras, based at Kacebere in Malawi. As the numbers in Mozambique grew the region was divided so in 1959 he moved to Beira from where he visited his confrères in their parishes. Although he had been an expert in Kihaya, the language of his first mission in Bukoba, Tanzania, his grasp of Chisena was limited. His letters to the Generalate concern only internal community matters. He made no comments about or explanation of the political situation. Whether he did not regard it as significant or whether he lacked political awareness it is impossible to say. It was said of him, rather unkindly, that he was only interested in cars. His mandate ended in 1968 and after a few months at the mission of Chena he returned to his first love, Bukoba diocese.

His successor Bertulli was of quite a different character and had a more intellectual background. After his ordination in 1940 he had been appointed to the Angelicum University in Rome to study theology where he passed his exams with the highest grade, *summa cum laude*. He arrived in Mozambique in 1946. Gifted as an artist and linguist, he had a dynamic working capacity. After learning Chisena, he was appointed assistant in an African suburb of Beira - Manga - where he soon became parish priest. He had a high regard for his parishioners and made the observation that their traditional culture and

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Fr. Bertulli Cesare

way of life, severely forbidden by the colonisers, are much higher and closer to Christian morality than the morals of the colonisers themselves. Civilisation does not consist in wearing trousers, a shirt and a tie, he said. His work in Manga, turning it into a model parish, in the eyes of Bishop Resende, has already been described. He was passionately committed to the development and independence of Mozambique and, after leaving, maintained correspondence with Samora Machel. His work in education and training of leaders did not meet the approval of the administration but he was always protected by Bishop Resende who told him *go ahead fearlessly... your Bishop will stand by you. Before expelling me they will have to walk over my dead body.*

By the time Bertulli succeeded Cras as Regional in 1968, he had to deal with Resende's successor. The first two nominees proposed by the Vatican as successors were vetoed by the government in the exercise of powers granted by the Concordat. Finally, Manuel Ferreira Cabral was appointed.<sup>50</sup> In his previous post he had been auxiliary Bishop of Braga in Portugal and he lacked any experience in Mozambique. He was described by the governor of Beira to Bertulli as Portuguese *de quarto costados*, literally, *on all four sides*. In other words he was extremely nationalist. This may be the reason why his nomination was approved by the government which wanted someone quite unlike Resende. One of his first acts was to dismiss the editorial staff of Resende's newspaper the *Diário de Moçambique* and then sell it. It had been the only journal in Mozambique to criticise the policies of the colonial administration. Now it was taken over by its pro-government rival, the *Noticias da Beira* and effectively silenced – a sale that caused particular dissatisfaction among the admirers of Resende.

## The war for independence

The disputes between Bishop Cabral and the White Fathers which characterised his term of office were played out against the background of the war for independence. Bertulli was well informed about the abuses by the Portuguese forces. Civil war inevitably leads to the most brutal treatment of combatants and civilians. While the forces of Frelimo were far from innocent, the attempts to repress the rebellion were horrific.

They included the torture, beating and castration of prisoners. Bertulli asserted that these were not merely the actions of a few sadistic individuals but an instrument of policy. In the countryside, napalm, bombs and defoliants destroyed not only houses, crops and domestic animals, but also women and children. *The Munhava lives and conceals himself among his own people like a fish in the water. So, if we cannot catch the fish, we must eliminate the water*, affirmed the military commander of the district of Estima in the diocese of Tete. General Carrasco, commander in chief in Mozambique, was even more merciless. *It is necessary to kill the men because they are terrorists, the women because they are the mothers of terrorists, the boys because they are future terrorists, the girls because they are the future mothers of terrorists.* <sup>51</sup>

One means of controlling the activities of Frelimo in rural areas was forcing people to leave their own villages and live in *aldeamentos*, a reinvention of concentration camps, originally devised by General Kitchener during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa. An *aldeamento* was sited on a flat rectangular piece of land which had been deforested. With a barbed wire perimeter, it contained between two and three hundred huts for families situated in parallel lines to facilitate control. It lacked a school or medical services. There was no permission to leave the village except for work in the fields which were overseen by the military. The lack of space and hygiene caused the people to call them *curral de cabritos - goatpens*. Families which refused to move to them had their house, store of food and domestic animals incinerated. On 9th May 1971, a whole village in Tete which had resisted moving to *aldeamentos* was bombed and the people killed. The inhabitants of three other villages (Mandive, Deveteve and Veremo) were threatened with the same fate if they refused to move. In 1974 the implementation of the policy was a major factor in reducing agricultural production and thus causing starvation and disease. <sup>52</sup>

The scale of military activity is indicated by a report issued in Lourenço Marques in August 1970. A total of 368 military operations had been carried out during the previous two months. An operation known as the Gordian Knot had involved 35,000 troops. As a result 400 guerrillas had been killed and 415 taken prisoner. The Portuguese lost 150 servicemen, killed or seriously injured. Most were of the soldiers

were conscripts, poorly educated, uprooted from their normal lives, obliged by their government to undertake national service for four years far from home, in an alien environment, among people of a different race and culture. Whenever they left the safety of their barracks they travelled in a continual state of fear of mines and ambush. Not surprisingly, even if inexcusably, they carried out reprisals on defenceless villagers when they saw their fellow soldiers killed. The long history of European colonialism records many similar cruelties which were by no means specific to the Portuguese empire.

Bertulli accused the Bishops of closing their eyes. They had, he said, the politics of Pontius Pilate and so were complicit in all the excesses. Archbishop Pereira visited the prison of Machava where prisoners had suffered extreme violence and advised them to be “regenerated” as Portuguese. A Consolata Father, Celio Regoli,<sup>53</sup> was accused of distributing tracts which incited revolt. The charge was totally false, having been extracted from his catechists under torture. No tracts were ever found. Archbishop Pereira, far from giving him support, demanded he be expelled *asking God to pardon him for the evil done to the Church by his celebrating religious offices in the local language*. The White Fathers were asked by the Bishops to be silent even if they witnessed flagrant injustice. The reason given was that they were foreigners. As such they were automatically under suspicion (The Bishops perhaps forgot that they themselves were foreigners in Mozambique). The traditional practice of the White Fathers has always been to try to be close to the people. Now they were told not to visit the faithful in the outstations lest they provoke the suspicions of the security police. Bertulli reported that Capannel, who was particularly assiduous in pastoral work in the villages, was regarded as a dangerous person. It was particularly disturbing to the security police that at Charre, while the Portuguese settlers passed the night in fortified houses, the Fathers slept with their windows open and went unarmed around the countryside. Why were they not in danger?

As well as being well informed about the rebellion and the counter-measures, Bertulli wrote letters which were far more vivid and detailed than those of his predecessor. He became a mouthpiece for those in favour of the radical step of withdrawing from Mozambique. In his anal-

ysis of the situation, he may have been the first one to use the word ambiguity in the political-missionary context. This term was to be repeated many times in the documents relevant to the White Fathers' departure. The dictionary definition of ambiguity is "the quality of being open to more than one interpretation". It usually refers to the meaning of a word or phrase which might be understood in two different ways. Bertulli used it to describe the situation of the missionaries in Mozambique. The White Fathers were working under the Bishops' leadership which was compromised by collaboration with the unjust colonial policies of the Portuguese government. Were they acting in the interests of the colonial government or for the welfare of the African people entrusted to their care? That was the ambiguity of their position.

## The visitation by Father Neven

When Roesems was expelled in March 1968, almost all his confreres went to the airport to see him off. They talked about the possibility of them all leaving and agreed that it would not be singly (*en queue de poisson*) but all together. Reports had reached Rome of a malaise among the Fathers and, at the end of the same month, Fr Neven, at that time an Assistant on the General Council, came from Rome for a visitation. As some Belgian Fathers had had some trouble with the government, he did not travel on a Belgian passport but made temporary use of a Vatican passport. The evening before leaving, in the company of the Superior General, he had dinner with the Portuguese Ambassador. The ambassador told him, *You Belgians were too quick to leave the Congo and that had been the cause of the troubles there. We will not make the same mistake in Mozambique.*



Fr. Neven Waly

Father Neven stayed in Mozambique for five weeks visiting all the Fathers and Brothers. Among them, he identified three groups. One con-

sisted of the younger men, more recent arrivals, who came mainly from northern Europe. Having come under the influence of Pollet, they favoured immediate independence and were secretly helping young men to leave the country where some got in touch with Frelimo. It was clear to Fr Neven that the government could not tolerate such activities which were also contrary to the written advice given by the late Bishop Resende. A second group consisted mainly of the missionaries who had spent twenty years or so in Beira: they were mostly Germans. Having experienced so much during the war they just wanted to get on quietly with their pastoral work without asking too many questions. They thought immediate independence would be premature. There were those with a third opinion originating mostly, he said, from the Mediterranean countries. Their views were less passionately held, and while not confusing the proper roles of church and state, better understood the Portuguese mentality. The question of leaving or not, however, was not yet a live issue among any of them. All the Fathers and Brothers wanted to continue to work in Mozambique. This being so, Fr Neven's advice was to avoid any acts, in speech or writing, in private or in public, which might be interpreted as hostile to Portugal. In particular, they should not help anyone to leave the country. Those who had been expelled had, in his judgement, acted imprudently.

The influence of Neven may have had a calming influence on the Fathers but there was no moderation in the policies of the government. In February 1970, seven hundred priests and pastors living in the Netherlands published a manifesto against the war in Mozambique. In reprisal, four Dutch priests working in Portugal, who had not signed the document, were expelled to Spain. The apostolic nuncio and the Patriarch of Lisbon, when informed by their superior, refused to intervene with the Portuguese authorities.

## **The Pastoral Council**

Opinions were divided among the Portuguese secular clergy. Two young priests, who sided with the Bishop, asserted that the White Fathers were in Mozambique to give the land to the Africans. The majority of the Portuguese clergy supported their government's position. In Beira, how-

ever, Bishop Resende had invited a number of his relatives and former students known to him from his days as a seminary rector. In his diocese, those of the secular clergy who were more critical of the government may have been in a majority by 1970. The pastoral council consisted both of diocesan priests and members of different missionary institutes, including Burgos, Comboni, White Fathers and Jesuits. It first made its presence felt outside the diocese when the funeral oration at Resende's funeral was censored. It protested to the Council of Ministers at Lisbon: *This insult to his memory gravely affronts us and obliges us to make this protest respectfully but vehemently.*

In November 1968 the Pastoral Council wrote to the Nuncio asking for the retirement of Bishop Cabral who had succeeded Bishop Resende in August 1967. The letter, alleging his incapacity, was signed by twenty priests. All were involved in pastoral work in the city of Beira and so were more constantly affected by the presence of the Bishop. They complained of his lack of direction and even lack of interest in pastoral work. He did not talk to the missionaries or lay people and ignored their council which, its member said, the Vatican Council considered to be the right hand of the Bishop.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, they thought his concern with the temporal goods of the diocese was exaggerated. On receipt of the letter, the Nuncio in Lisbon was more interested in finding out who was behind it, culpable in his eyes, than seriously reflecting on the situation of the Church.

Bishop Cabral spoke only to a small circle of like-minded clergy. Neven met some Portuguese priests in Beira who had begun to question the close link with the government but the Bishop was not talking to them. Several Portuguese priests left the diocese because they found it impossible to work in an atmosphere in which the dialogue was so limited. The former vicar-general, Mgr Duarte de Almeida, who had been vicar general in the time of Bishop Resende and one time editor of the *Diário de Moçambique* was dismissed and not given another post. He was simply told to leave the episcopal residence and had to move to a hotel. This scandalised a number of lay people. When they requested an interview with the Bishop to protest, they were told he was too busy to see them. A group of courageous Sisters went to see him to explain the division in the diocese and the scandal caused among the faithful

and in their communities. They did not receive a satisfactory response. Finally the Bishop called a meeting to take measures against Duarte but the Bishop himself was judged unanimously to be at fault. De Almeida's position was regularised when the pastoral council threatened to refuse to celebrate midnight Mass at Christmas and inform the people of the reason.<sup>55</sup> The meeting degenerated into chaos when the clergy demanded to talk about the situation in the diocese. Bishop Cabral walked out. After appointing one of his Franciscan supporters as Vicar-General he flew off to Lisbon.

## The continuing silence of the Bishops Conference

While the violence of the war and the reprisals continued, a number of initiatives had been undertaken asking the hierarchy to clarify their position. On 25 February 1968, *Le Monde* published a letter which had been leaked to it. It had been addressed to the Hierarchy, asking crucial questions about the liberty of the press and the independence of the Church from the State. The only response was an investigation by PIDE to discover who had sent a copy of the letter outside the country. Bishop Pinto of Nampula presented to the Episcopal conference documents and photos of massacres by Portuguese troops in his diocese without provoking any public protests from his fellow Bishops. Their continuing reluctance to speak out publicly shocked many of the missionaries who regarded silence as nothing less than collaboration. In 1970, while many of the missionaries were becoming more and more critical and dissatisfied, the missionary regional superiors met the Episcopal Conference. We are in charge, follow our advice, the missionaries were told. The pastoral line given them was prudence and silence. But it was demoralising for the missionaries to be unable to speak out against the injustices and massacres which were taking place.<sup>56</sup>

In the meantime, there was increased surveillance of the Fathers. They were always aware that they were being spied on by *bufos* – informers. Van den Hout was required by PIDE to answer a three page long questionnaire on a range of topics, from his opinion of Portuguese rule in their overseas territories to what he knew of Fr Mateo Gwenjere (Fr Gwenjere had left the country and had appeared as a witness before the United Na-

tions in New York). He gave guarded and sensible replies. The payment of informers inevitably lay behind the wildest and most absurd of accusations. Charrier <sup>57</sup> complained of being accused of a litany of faults. His custom of sometimes eating with Africans was taken to be a proof of communist beliefs. From there it was a short step to alleging that his evening bible lessons were a cover for teaching communist methods of sabotage *for he knows the methods having done military service in Algiers!* He had set up a branch of the Xaverian movement for boys, a religious parallel to the International Boy Scout Movement. It was accused of being subversive and its little parish circular containing edifying stories and games was taken away for inspection.

## **A time to choose**

The expulsion of Wels from the parish of Barue left the community incomplete. Rather than appointing a replacement, the regional council, on instructions from the Generalate in Rome, withdrew his two confrères Lambert and Charrier, both of whom were suffering from ill health. They were transferred to other missions in the diocese leaving Barue without priests. This enraged the Bishop. In a meeting with Bertulli which lasted for two hours, he accused the White Fathers of lacking any conscience. On two occasions, during visitations by Councillors from Rome, the question of remaining or leaving had been put to a vote, and the decisions to stay had been unanimous each time. But the situation deteriorated rapidly after the arrival of Bishop Cabral. By the beginning of 1971 opinion was no longer unanimous.

Some were in favour of staying, whatever the situation. The nature of the Brothers' work did not bring them into conflict with authorities. The elder Fathers wanted to remain, particularly the Germans who during the nineteen-forties had been refused admittance to other colonies and felt some gratitude to the Portuguese for accepting them. They had spent many years in the country, investing their time and energies into building up Christian communities almost from scratch. Their hearts were firmly attached to their Christians and they had no wish to abandon them. Moreover, they were too old for a move to another country where they would be required to learn new languages, African and European. They had learnt to be very discreet and none of these early arrivals had been expelled.

Most of the Fathers were convinced that the Christians were well aware that the missionaries' sympathies were with them rather than with the government. However, what of the non-Christians? Some Fathers believed that they were seen as collaborators with injustice. Years before, Cras had remarked that *While the Portuguese regard us as spies, the Africans regard us as brothers of the dominators speaking of God to keep them in slavery.*<sup>58</sup> *Father Chouinard, told the Toronto Star after leaving: We had to witness the gospel not only to our flock, but to others too... The Christians understood our position but for non-Christians, we were public functionaries... We did not want to remain as instruments of the hierarchy to oppress the people.* Molina told a committee of Justice and Peace in Belgium, *During the first years of my missionary life I was naive... The repression of independence movements opened my eyes. I realised that I was myself an oppressor and that I ought to change.*

At this distance, it is difficult to be precise about the number of missionaries favouring the different opinions. From the evidence of the Fathers who were in Mozambique at that time and are still with us, it seems that the split was about fifty-fifty. Most of the younger Fathers and the Regional Bertulli took the more radical view in favour of leaving. The Belgians were the least sympathetic to the Portuguese. The Germans and the Brothers wanted to stay. However, those in favour of leaving were more articulate and vocal. Their point of view was put very clearly by Capannel in a letter from Murraca dated 19th February 1971. *The Church is chained, silent, and even an adulteress with the State. ... Our presence counts for nothing; we resemble ants who annoy an elephant until it treads on us... We must do more than teaching Portuguese and making Christians of old people who continue their pagan life with some Christian sauce... After years in a false situation, from servility, the moment has arrived to lance the abscess with a radical remedy... It is necessary that we preach without constraint the true visage of Christ, teaching the Africans the legitimacy of their social and political aspirations. We have already lost four confrères but the attitude of the Bishops has not changed. I am convinced that our departure en bloc will oblige them to change their attitude lest others follow our example.*

In 1946, the Society, not individual missionaries, had made a commitment to undertake mission work in Beira diocese at the behest of the Vat-

ican Secretariat of State. The White Fathers' missions in Mozambique were the responsibility of the Society as a whole and could not be abandoned by a local decision. The Superior General and his councillors needed to be convinced that the political situation made it impossible for their confreres in Mozambique to fulfil their calling to be effective witnesses to Christian teaching. The Secretariat of State had to approve, or at least be aware, of any radical decision. In the next chapter we turn to Rome to trace the increasing concerns and involvement of the General Council.

## Appendix

The attention in this chapter has been focussed on the Fathers because it was their primary concern to preach and teach, often publicly. Out of the public eye, there were a number of Brothers fulfilling their missionary vocation in work which did not normally bring them in conflict with the civil authorities. The lack of attention to them in this booklet is not meant to minimise their value. Perez, who knew many of them well, paid this tribute to them. <sup>59</sup> *Our missions would not have accomplished so much without the hard work of the Brothers. All kinds of schools, hospitals, maternity clinics, dormitories, wells, agricultural projects, the breeding of cattle and other livestock, workshops for carpentry and other trades were the product of their labours. The inventive capacity of the Brothers is unbelievable when one considers the local means at their disposal and the slim budgets available to them.*

# Chapter five

## The Decision to withdraw

### A different perspective

At Rome the perspective was different. There were four factors to be considered by the General Council. One was the international implications. The Society had missions in many African countries in which ecclesiastical and political leaders felt deeply their solidarity with the people of Mozambique. Secondly, the Society had no commitment to Portugal as such. There were no permanent communities in Portugal and no Portuguese members of the Society – attempts at recruitment had failed. Thirdly, the day to day experiences and views of the men in Mozambique had to be taken into account but within the context of their freedom to work according to the established principles and methods of work of the Society. This point was made succinctly in the minutes of the General council for 29/4/1971. *The Society is consecrated to the whole of Africa: it cannot have one apostolic policy for Mozambique and a different one for the rest. There is a fundamental solidarity in the Society in the way we propose the message of the gospel.* In other words, we cannot be Malians with the Malians, Ghanaians with the Ghanaians, Congolese with the Congolese, and Portuguese with the Mozambicans. Lastly, reference had also to be made to the Secretariat of State which had the duty of oversight of the Church in Mozambique.

### Views of African leaders

In 1960, Tom Mboya made a very optimistic statement: *It is time for the Church to speak out loudly about the Portuguese situation... the Church exercises a great influence and cannot continue to be silent in the face of the oppression of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique.* Ten years later, speaking to the Maryknoll Sisters at their General Chapter, Julius Nyerere was more realistic. *In the Portuguese*

*colonies of Africa... for centuries the Church has, without protest, accepted forced labour, torture, exploitation and alien domination. Even now the Church refuses to speak up against the colonialism and oppression in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. It is true that in recent months his Holiness has received in audience three of the nationalist leaders; but this is only a beginning. Unless it is followed up by open speech and action, the identification of the Catholic Church with Portuguese tyranny will continue.*

The leaders of three liberation movements addressed a letter to the inaugural meeting of SECAM (The Conference of Bishops of Africa and Madagascar) at Kampala on the occasion of the visit of Pope Paul VI. The writers stated that the massacres, assassinations, deportations, imprisonments, torture, and the aerial bombardments of many thousands of men, women and children, the use of napalm, the destruction of local cultures, had the blessing of the Church in Portugal. These actions are contrary to Catholic teaching *but we cannot dissociate Rome from the Catholic Church in Portugal if Rome itself does not do so. ...The movements, on behalf of the people, ask the Bishops to intercede with the Pope that he openly and clearly condemns Portuguese colonialism and recognises the right of the peoples to the self-determination and national independence. On the position of the church depends its future in those countries. The future attitude of our peoples towards the Catholic Church will depend on the position it adopts to their fundamental problem, that of reconquering our dignity and sovereignty as African people.*

Their complaints did not lack foundation. In an article *Mozambique: Terreur Policière*, Bertulli made use of a photograph of the Patriarch of Lisbon. In his full episcopal regalia, surrounded by candle-bearing acolytes and soldiers setting off for Mozambique, he was blessing a tank. Unfortunately, it was not unknown for chaplains to take a more active part than their religious duties required. An army chaplain, at a meeting of religious at a Franciscan mission in Mozambique, appalled his hearers by claiming to have himself helped throw prisoners out of helicopters to their deaths. Later events were to demonstrate that the Church's association with the army had the effects foreseen and expressed by the leaders of the independence movements.

## Concerns of the General Council

To the Fathers in Mozambique, it was, primarily a local issue. But in Rome, the General Council was more aware of the international implications for the Church. The conflict in Mozambique and the other Portuguese colonies had repercussions throughout Africa. The cold war was then at its height as eastern and western powers competed ideologically for influence in Africa. Nevertheless, the question of the Society remaining or withdrawing from Mozambique was never seen by the General Council as a political matter. It was a problem within the Church, a pastoral problem stemming from the incompatibility between the missionaries way of working and the hierarchy's policy to maintain all things Portuguese. A decision would be made on strictly ecclesial grounds.

In 1946, all the White Fathers' missions in sub-saharan Africa were under the jurisdiction of the Society by the *jus commissionis*. This meant that its missionaries generally carried out pastoral work under the direction of a Vicar Apostolic belonging to the same Society and under the supervision of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. There was a consistency of pastoral methods across the continent from Guinea in the west to Tanganyika in the east. The aim everywhere in Africa has always been to build up an inculturated local Church, self-supporting in material and personal resources. There was a different situation in Mozambique where the missionaries worked under the jurisdiction of secular Portuguese Bishops, with the oversight of the Secretariat of State. Right from the start, the minutes of the General Council recorded the likelihood of future difficulties. The situation would require its particular attention and intervention.

## Visitations

At the time of the first visitation by Bishop Durrieu in 1948 there were no significant pastoral problems. Only after 1964 did the activities of Frelimo change the political landscape. One of the General Assistants, Fr Mondor, was sent for several weeks in 1965 to see how the violence of the Independence movement and of the counter-measures by the

army had raised tensions and caused difficulties in pastoral work. He showed some sympathy for the Bishops who were caught between two fires: while they receive financial assistance from the government for building missions schools, hospitals, convents and the use of cars for pastoral visits, they are aware of the social injustices for which government officials are responsible. However, he said the Portuguese were ill at ease with foreigners who were politically aware. This distrust had communicated itself to the missionaries. False accusations were made against the Fathers. They were defended by Bishop Resende but he had not been able to have reverse the refusal to readmit Garin. This was a Father who knew the Portuguese language well and had always been circumspect in maintaining good relations with officials. All the same, Mondor reported that the Fathers and Brothers demonstrated a good missionary spirit and were putting into practice the recent Vatican Council's teaching on catechesis, the liturgy and collaboration with the laity. He foresaw future difficulties and suggested missionaries might later have to be relocated to Malawi where the language was similar to Chisena. In the meantime he advised them to act with very great prudence.

### A third visitation

Two years later, at the General Chapter of 1967, Fr Morte, formerly of Mozambique and then in charge of the Province of Spain, to which the community of Lisbon was attached, reported a certain malaise among the missionaries. The older men were working steadily but he thought the younger were more turbulent and liable to be expelled one after another. As a consequence, Fr Neven made a long five week visitation which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter. In his report he had conceded that some Fathers had been imprudent, notably in helping their former students to leave the country. He advised extreme caution in what they might say outside the community. He told them that if they wanted to remain and continue their work, they must not place themselves outside the socio-political context in which they were working.



Fr. Morte Manuel

Further details of his conclusions are found in a report of the Superior General van Asten in a report to the Secretary of State. The Bishops of Beira and Tete were very careful not to displease the civil government, to bite the hand that feeds them. The Administration was trying to destroy all traces of the work of the late Bishop Resende. The missionaries were asking themselves can a Church which is always seeking to please the government, truly take root among the African people. But when questioned by Neven, every Father and Brother wanted to remain in spite of the political and religious context. Although the visitor had advised them to avoid any action which might be interpreted as hostile by the authorities, this was easier said than done. Ordinary pastoral actions such as preaching in the local language, catechist meetings, and contacts with secondary school students were easily interpreted as hostile activity. In a remark that might have been more immediately relevant elsewhere in White Father missions, the future of the Church lay with the African clergy. Unfortunately, the African priests had to undergo assimilation to a Portuguese way of life during their training only to discover the profound suffering of their people when they began pastoral work. Consequently they were, in the words of Bertulli *écartelés et déchirés* torn apart between their obligations to the people and to their Bishop. Moreover, they were subject to baseless denunciations from black and white PIDE agents who were everywhere.<sup>60</sup> From this report, it is clear that the General Council were fully advised of the problems facing the missionaries.

## **The issue of Barue**

Van Asten's first of three visits to Beira was in July 1969, following visitations of Malawi and Zambia. He observed the difficulty of the situation and said the Fathers needed encouragement. Several Portuguese priests had left the diocese because they had found it impossible to work in an atmosphere of apathy, ambiguity and with a lack of dialogue between the Bishop and his priests. The problem was felt not only by the clergy, all the Christians in the diocese were becoming discouraged by Bishop Cabral's attitude to the civil and military authorities. A few weeks later a group of laypeople wrote to the Apostolic Nuncio at Lisbon asking for the replacement of the Bishop.

As the situation became more critical, Bertulli was called to Rome in September 1970. The Regional council was reluctant to appoint a replacement for Wels at Barue. It was this issue which caused the General Council to become actively involved in Mozambican affairs. If Wels was not permitted to return, then according to the Society's rule of three, his two confrères, Lambert and Charrier, would not be allowed to remain but would have to be transferred to other missions.



Fr. van Asten Théo

Van Asten wrote to Bishop Cabral asking him to use his influence to get the ban on Wels revoked. He followed it with a threat. *If it is impossible to intervene effectively, and if the political and police conditions no longer permit the missionaries to exercise their ministry in Mozambique then, taking into account our duties to other countries in Africa where the dioceses continually ask our help, in countries which know how to receive and respect their missionaries, even if the governments are not catholic, I shall be obliged not only to refrain from sending*

*any more young Fathers to Mozambique, but also to give the Fathers there the freedom to leave and go to work elsewhere, if they wish.*

Bishop Cabral was either unable or unwilling to have the sentence on Wels reversed. In any case, he did not reply, so, at the end of December 1970, the Regional Superior, Bertulli, was instructed to transfer Wels's two confrères to another mission. They left on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January leaving an inventory of all the goods left in the schools, Church and mission house. Some items had been paid for by the Fathers themselves at the price of 676,000 escudos. Those bought with diocesan funds (provided ultimately by the government) cost 530,000 escudos. Before leaving they burnt some old copies of *Paris Match* – an action which was to have repercussions later. Their departure from Barue brought the Bishop's relationship with Bertulli to a new low. Clearly depressed, the Regional asked van Asten to visit Mozambique: he was at the end of

his tether and could not continue unless the Bishop was replaced. Meanwhile Wels had been re-appointed to Malawi in November 1970.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1971, van Asten went to see the Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot to inform him that if there was no intervention by the Secretariat, the White Fathers would leave Mozambique in February. Villot asked for the departure to be postponed, so instead, a deadline was provisionally fixed for May. Villot was pleased to learn of van Asten's pending visit hoping that the problems might be resolved. Two days later Bishop Cabral arrived at the Generalate where he was received by three of the assistants, Grosskortenhau, Chaput and Perrier. He explained the decision of the government about Wels exclusion and asked for a letter to be sent to the Fathers instructing them to keep out of politics. Chaput told him that for a century the White Fathers had had no difficulty in any of the sixty-five other dioceses in the ten countries which they were evangelising. Why should the Fathers in Mozambique be any different? He explained that what particularly annoyed them in Rome was to hear that Sisters were denouncing the Fathers. In reply, Cabral claimed that the Sisters had spoken to other people and it was they who had denounced the Fathers. What then had the Bishop done to defend the Fathers? There was no reply.

## **The second visit of van Asten, in February 1971**

Before returning to Mozambique, van Asten convoked a meeting of the Superiors General of those institutes with missionaries in Mozambique. It was attended by Superior Generals or Assistant Generals of the Capuchins, Jesuits, Franciscans, Picpus, Burgos, Holy Sacrament Fathers, Marist Brothers and the Missionaries of Verona.<sup>61</sup> Its purpose was not to persuade them to imitate any action the White Fathers might take but to seek their advice and support for any decision taken by the General Council.

On his arrival at the airport in Beira, all the Fathers and Brothers were there to receive van Asten. At the ensuing meeting at Manga, the mood of the majority was despondent. They were constantly suspected of being involved in politics and of inciting terrorism whenever they

confronted injustice. They received no support from the Bishops and could no longer carry on their pastoral work effectively. Fifteen of the thirty-one were in favour of immediate departure. Seventeen would leave after issuing a statement. A smaller group of four or five wanted to remain at all costs. After discussion, all agreed to co-ordinate their departure in solidarity at the end of the school year. After listening to his confreres, van Asten met missionaries of other institutes including Picpus Fathers, Jesuits and Combonians who understood the reasons for the departure, if it were to be decided, though they were not planning to leave themselves. The Burgos Fathers also wanted to stay. Van Asten pointed out that since the White Fathers had no Portuguese members and no province in Portugal their ties were less strong than those of the other missionaries.

Van Asten met the Bishops of Tete, Quelimane and Vila Cabral who agreed with the eventual independence of Mozambique but believed that the people were not yet ready. Van Asten told them he did not know natural rights were conditional and Africans do not see them that way. Rather they wanted to get out of their misery through their own resources. When van Asten told the catechists in training at Inhamizua that the White Fathers were going to leave, one catechist stood up and said, *We have been waiting for this gesture for a long time... We will suffer to see you leave... but it is necessary. We will take on our responsibilities. The Church of Mozambique may die, but she will rise like Christ.* This statement was followed by long applause.

Van Asten's return flight was via Lisbon where a meeting was arranged with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Overseas Territories. The minister has nothing against the Society of the White Fathers but believed they should not get involved in politics. The missionaries must agree with Portuguese policies or go elsewhere – even to Sudan or China. If they observed abuses they should bring them to the attention of the competent authorities by passing through the Bishops. Van Asten explained that if the situation continued, he would withdraw the White Fathers even though that involved a big sacrifice on their part, some had been there for more than twenty years and loved the people and their pastoral work. The response was *You are a racist, because you do not want the Africans to be Portuguese.*

The Papal Nuncio, whose concerns extended to all Portuguese territories, expressed his fear of anti-clerical reaction if the Bishops spoke out. After the Pope had received the nationalist leaders, there had been a strident backlash in Portugal and the nuncio had feared expulsion himself. The Portuguese felt themselves strong, he said, because they had the support of other western nations, fellow members of Nato. He did not want confrontation. The Superior General told him the missionaries did not want to be pawns in a game of papal diplomacy. To re-establish the missionaries' trust, there was a need for the appointment of a Bishop like Resende and for the Bishops to take a firm political position.

On his return to Rome, van Asten made a report to the Secretariat of State. The malaise was greater than expected. The Bishops realised their position was not defensible but justified it by saying Mozambique was not ready for Independence. At Lisbon, the nuncio was timid and afraid of confrontation with the government. The missionaries were unable to carry out the mission of today's Church. The situation was not similar to the restrictions in a communist country because everyone knew what the Church thought of communism and did not ally itself with the regime. In Mozambique the Church made no clear demand for the freedom of the apostolate and for independence from the State. It was difficult to understand the silence of the Secretariat of State given the statement of Paul VI at Kampala, Vatican II text *Gaudium et Spes* and the encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*. The missionaries did not want to be sacrificed for the sake of good relations with Lisbon. There were four possible actions which might be taken. 1/ The Secretariat of State approves of our departure and we leave. 2/ The Secretariat of State asks us to wait. But this question has been discussed for three years, ever since a note was sent to the Cardinal Secretary in December 1968 after Neven's visit. Delay would require the nomination of Bishop like de Resende and the Bishops' taking up a firm outspoken position. 3/ If the Secretary demands that missionaries stay permanently in the present situation, it should give valid reasons, as publicly as the situation required. If the reasons were invalid the Secretariat would be in contradiction with the position of the Magisterium. 4/ The Secretariat leaves us free to act. Then we will leave.

The following day in a meeting with the Superiors General, van Asten explained the tense situation and said that many of the Fathers were

ready to leave and had the support of the other non-Portuguese missionaries in Beira. In conclusion, *If the Bishops remain silent, we will be considered as Portuguese agents. We must also consider the other parts of Africa where we work and what Africa leaders think if we remain silent too.* Explaining the general lack of support for the White Fathers among the Portuguese friars in Beira, Fr Tiberi who, as the Franciscan Secretary for the Missions represented his order, explained that they were mostly elderly, Portuguese and pro-government. The younger men in Portugal would be more sympathetic, they did not approve of colonialism. Sympathising with the anti-government youth they did not want to work in the existing colonial context.

## The decision of the General Council

The minutes for Thursday 29th April 1971 summarised the final considerations of the General Council. The Church was being used as a means of maintaining Portuguese rule. It was impossible to preach the integral gospel freely. Instead, a false message was being propagated



1967 General Council (from left to right)  
Robert Chaput, Théo van Asten, Joseph Perrier,  
Wilhelm Grosskortenhaus, Walgrave (Waly) Neven.

with the complicity of the hierarchy. Secondly, there was in the Society a basic identity of the gospel message it preached all over Africa. The Society could not have an apostolic teaching for Mozambique which was different from that in other missions. Thirdly, if no decision were taken immediately, the missionaries in Mozambique would very likely depart or be expelled one after the other.

The benefit of a *bloc* departure will be lost. There was a need to make a dramatic statement. Individual expulsions over a period of time would not reach the headlines or even the attention of the world media, nor would other parts of the Church notice. Pulling

out together would be a sign, not only to the Bishops and to the Christians and non-Christians of Mozambique but also to the outside world. Fourthly, if the Bishops were forewarned, damage to the Christian community could be minimised as they would have time to secure replacements. Lastly, it was appreciated that departure was not an easy solution. The missionaries in Mozambique were attached to people and loved their work. To leave would be a burdensome sacrifice and for the elder men to transfer to another country would not be easy. In conclusion, it was decided that each of the five members of the Council would consider the matter until the next day when a secret vote, in writing, would be submitted. If a decision to leave were taken, the whole Society should be informed and the reasons for it. The next day, after a Mass celebrated together, the Superior General opened the voting papers. They were unanimously in favour of withdrawal.

## **Implementation of the decision**

A series of letters was composed to inform all the concerned parties. Since a Society commitment was being renounced, at least for the time being, the withdrawal had to be explained to all the Fathers and Brothers elsewhere in terms which made the reasons clear. There follows a summary of the letter addressed to all the regions and provinces and appeared in the *Petit Echo* in June 1971.

“After prayer and reflection we have decided to withdraw the White Fathers from Mozambique. We acknowledge the material support provided by the government, unparalleled in our other missions. But sent as they are to bear witness to the Gospel, the missionaries find the confusion between Church and State a great disservice to the presentation of the Gospel message and of the real face of the Church. Too often certain acts of apostolic ministry, especially those aimed at promoting social justice, are considered as subversive acts, and often the occasion of imprisonment or ill-treatment for Christian leaders. For a long time we have asked and waited for the Hierarchy to take a definite stand in the face of injustice and police brutality. Faced by a silence which we do not understand, we feel in conscience that we do not have the right to be accomplices of the support which the Bishops give the government.

They seem to give in to a regime shrewdly using the Church to consolidate and perpetuate an anachronistic situation. A muzzled Church can remain a worthwhile sign where the Church is persecuted. She becomes a counter witness in a country which openly proclaims itself Catholic but uses the Church for aims which have nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another reason is that we have always tried to build up local Churches. It seems to us that Africanization ought to be the normal climate of any missionary activity in present day Africa. In Mozambique the Church is not Mozambican but Portuguese.

It is not an easy decision; to stay would be for the temporary pastoral good of the people we serve. We are convinced that, in the long run, our decision will benefit them. The stand we take is in no way a reproach to the Missionary Societies which will continue their ministry there. We are well aware of the painful sacrifice we are asking of our men in Mozambique. We hope that in the not too distant future we may be once more able to serve the Church there when it will have become an indisputable sign of salvation and justice.“

The statement was signed by the Superior General and all four Assistants. 15<sup>th</sup> May 1971.

The letter to the Bishops of Tete and Beira and to the hierarchy was somewhat different. Here is a brief summary.

Excellencies, this letter is to inform you that I have taken the decision to withdraw all the White Fathers working in Mozambique. It has the unanimous agreement of my Council. In the present context, the White Fathers in Mozambique cannot show the true face of the Church. They have received substantial aid from the Government. None have suffered imprisonment or bad treatment. But the constant confusion of Church and state is profoundly harmful to the preaching of some gospel truths. We have for long desired a greater independence of the Church from the State. The gap between the Hierarchy's support for the regime and the position which is clearly needed has become too great. The Church is being used to perpetuate an anachronistic situation which will, in the end, fail. Since no public protest is possible within Mozambique, leav-

ing is the only way to draw attention to the false situation in which the Church is situated today.

A silent Church can be a valid sign in a country where it is persecuted. But silence is a counter witness when the Church is used for ends which have nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have weighed the consequences of our decision for our Christians communities which are still young and fragile. But they must learn that the Church is not to be identified with the government and our missionaries are not agents of colonialism.

It is a great sacrifice for our Fathers and Brothers to leave and adapt to other nations and languages. We work in sixty other dioceses where we have assisted at the birth of fourteen nations with which we have shared their aspirations for independence. Why can we not have the same attitude in Mozambique? For us, Africa is one and our sympathies in Mozambique cannot be in flagrant contradiction with those elsewhere.

I have visited Mozambique to discuss the matter with our missionaries. We will leave at the beginning of July before the beginning of the next school year. I have informed the Secretary of State and informed the Superiors General of the other missionary Institutes which work in Mozambique. I understand the grave consequences of my decision but our divergent ideas and aims, in a matter so vital for the welfare of the Church in Mozambique, has brought me to this conclusion.

The letter concludes with prayers and hopes for convergence of consciences in the future and was signed by Theo van Asten, Superior General.

There are significant differences between the two letters. In addressing the Society, the Council emphasised the impossibility of preaching the whole gospel within the political confines of a narrow colonial system. The exercise of true missionary evangelisation was frustrated as was the building of a genuine African Church. The letter to the Bishops went far beyond the question of withdrawal. By implication it challenged the traditional union of Portuguese missionary endeavour with national and imperial interests. Whatever might be said of that combi-

nation in previous centuries, it was anachronistic in the twentieth: the Bishops were living in the past and out of place in the continent of Africa.

A third letter to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, was much shorter. The situation had been explained to him on numerous occasions with increasing urgency and requests for decisive intervention. Since no action had been taken by the Secretary of State, van Asten wrote, *I have come to the conclusion that it is up to me to take responsibility for a decision.* He has done so with the unanimous consent of his Council and was now on his way to Mozambique to arrange the withdrawal. He had also informed the other missionary Institutes of his decision and added copies of the letters to the Bishops and to the Society. Having arranged with the First Assistant, Fr Chaput, to have the letter delivered the next morning to the Secretariat, Fr van Asten left the Generalate and spent the night in a hotel, out of communication until his plane left the next evening.

## **The departure from Beira**

He arrived at Beira after a long journey travelling via Lisbon and Luanda on the evening of the seventeenth of May. As on a previous visit, all the Fathers and Brothers were waiting for him at the airport. They insisted on a meeting the same night at which the decision of the General Council was explained to them. He then asked them to vote on whether they accepted the decision or not. According to two Fathers and a Brother present who have been interviewed, about half of those present were in favour of leaving, especially the younger men, while the older especially German missionaries and the Brothers would have preferred to stay. But given the decision of the General Council, it was considered by some at least to be a matter of obedience and almost all voted to leave. However, it was agreed that there must be solidarity in the departure and even those who voted to remain would leave with the rest. Van Asten gave them instructions to be scrupulous in leaving all the property of the missions even if it had been paid for by the Fathers and Brothers themselves. They were to leave only with their strictly personal possessions.

The next day, this final decision was conveyed to the Bishops of Tete and Beira by the Superior General personally and the Episcopal Conference was informed by letter. When the news reached Don Custodio

Alvim Pereira, the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques, currently the president of the Bishops, he passed on the news to the administration. On the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> May, two officers of the DGS invited Bertulli to their office in Beira. There he was told that an order of expulsion had been issued. All the White Fathers should leave within forty-eight hours. The second paragraph of the official notice informed them that from that day, they must cease all activity in the province and they will leave by plane from Beira for Amsterdam or some other country in Europe. Apparently the administration believed that many of the missionaries were Dutch and that they were somehow linked to the current Dutch crisis in the Church (The Portuguese newspaper *Novidades* of 20.5.1971 carried the headline: *Dutch Missionaries leave Mozambique*). In fact only one of them, van den Hout, was from the Netherlands and after Bertulli protested, they were all given tickets for Rome. As there was space on the plane only for eight to leave each day, departure within two days was impossible. The first to leave on the 27<sup>th</sup> May were the Fathers of Munhava and Manga, parishes in the city of Beira. Eight more Fathers and Brothers left on each of the following days, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and the final group on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Bertulli and Brother Gunther Zahn, the provincial bursar, were among the last to leave. Many people went to the airport to see them off, among them were some Portuguese but most were Africans who went there in spite of the fear of reprisals. No Bishop or representative of the hierarchy was present among them.

Their absence provoked a protest from Sisters of four different congregations. They wrote to the President of the Episcopal Conference: *It is not with indifference and dry eyes that we were present at the expulsion of thirty-two missionaries who have sacrificed everything to preach the faith for the good of their Brothers. They have been here for some twenty-five years. We are profoundly surprised by the attitude and silence of the Bishops and of the Vicar General. Do not these Brothers merit some words of comfort and thanks for all the good they have done? And those of us who remain, do we not feel the necessity of support and encouragement? ... What does the future hold when the present is so full of questions? The present problem is not particular to Beira but for the whole church in Mozambique. Hoping for an understanding and paternal reception from your most Reverend Excellency, Your daughters, Twenty-six signatures followed.*

## **The White Fathers who left Mozambique in May 1971 were :**

*From the Diocese of Beira:*

- Fr Bertulli (1)
- Munhava:** Frs Pickard, Rovelli, de l'Arbre, Garcia (4)
- Manga:** Frs Chouinart-Audet, Bariain, Bertulli, Perez Gadea, Bros Zahn, Knobelspies, Stieger (4+3)
- Murraça:** Frs van den Hout, Perez Prieto, de Orube, Bro Amport (3+1)
- Nazaré:** Frs Molina, Pampalk, Bro Halder (2+1)
- Chemba:** Frs Tschoecke, Lambert, Brone, (3)
- Lundo:** Frs Nijs, Guardiola, Bro Hamberger (2+1)
- Gorongosa:** Frs Weckermann, Marino, Maltais, Bro Mueller (3+1)

*From the Diocese of Tete:*

- Charre:** Frs Pille, Hinkelmann (2)
- Inhangoma:** Frs Prein, Bosman (2)

The following had been expelled previously and already appointed elsewhere in Africa: De Bels, Capanelli, Garin, Pollet. Roesems, and Wels. (6)

The following were in Europe but belonged to the region:

Frs Charrier, Cras, Diener, Eich, Fraile, Perreault, Schupp. Some were on leave; not all of them would have returned to Mozambique on account of health problems or for other reasons.



In Rome, those who were expelled in 1971.: 1. Br. Halder Jozef, 2. Fr. Hinkelmann Herrmann-Josef, 3. Fr. de Orube Echeveste Aitor, 4. Fr. Tschoeke Henri, 5. Fr. Neven Waly (assistant), 6. Fr. Zahn Günther, 7. Fr. Maltais Jacques, 8. Fr. Pille Roger, 9. Br. Hamberger Johann (Eucharist), 10. Fr. Bosmans Arthur, 11. Fr. Morfe Mugica Manuel, 12. Fr. Schupp Franz, 13. Fr. Weckenmann Alfons, 14. Fr. Perres Gadea Pedro, 15. Br. Stieger Moritz, 16. Fr. Garcia Casas Carlos, 17. Fr. Perrier Joseph (assistant), 18. Fr. Lambert Franz, 19. Br. Müller Friedrich, 20. Fr. Molina Molina Antonio, 21. Fr. Grosskortenhaus Wilhelm (assistant), 22. Fr. Pickard Jean-Pierre, 23. Fr. Marino Vincenzo, 24. Fr. Chaput Robert (assistant), 25. Br. Knobelspies Adalbert, 26. Van Asten Theo (Supérieur général), 27. Fr. Brone Romain, 28. Fr. Guardiola Herrera Jesus, 29. Fr. de L'Abre Luc, 30. Fr. Bertulli Cesare, 31. Fr. Prein Theodore, 32. Fr. van der Hout Walter, 33. Fr. Perez Prieto Fernando, 34. Fr. Nijs Victor, 35. Br. Amport Marcel, 36. Fr. Pam-palk Jozef, 37. Fr. Bertain Galar Fidel, 38. Fr. Chouinard-Audet Yvon, 39. Fr. Rovelli Alberto.

# Chapter six:

## Reactions to the departure

The previous year, in June 1970, twenty-two Spiritans of Angola had composed a manifesto in a similar situation. “In conscience, we cannot accept a system of missionary activity as it is and to maintain it is a grave fault.” But their plea did not get the support of all their confrères and their General Council was divided. As a result, only one of the signatories left the colony, P. José Veiga, the superior of Novo Lisbõa (now Huambo) who had initiated it. At a meeting of the Superiors General on 14th May 1971, the Superior General of the de Montfort Fathers revealed that his order had twice, during the previous fifty years, wanted to leave Mozambique but on each occasion they had been pressed by the Vatican to remain until there were sufficient African priests. Unlike these two Institutes, the White Fathers did not have either a province or permanent foundation in Portugal. Nor was Mozambique part of the vast areas historically committed to the Society in the time of Cardinal Lavigerie (One cannot envisage the Society abandoning a people among whom it had first preached the gospel and founded the Church). In Mozambique, for all these reasons, the Society was more free than the Spiritans or the de Montfort Fathers to take the decision to leave. Although this concerned only a handful of missions in one diocese in a single province of a small European country, the decision was unprecedented in modern missionary history. So it provoked surprise, reactions and discussions across the Church and even in the secular press.

In political circles it was greeted as a political decision. For example, an article in *Mozambique Revolution*, a journal published in Dar es Salaam by the Frelimo Department of Information, called it *an attack on the Portuguese regime*.<sup>62</sup> But this was an inaccurate interpretation. The General Council always insisted that their reasons were ecclesial. However embarrassing it was for the Portuguese government, the withdrawal was not part of a political agenda, but a protest against the Bishops for their failure to defend the missionaries’ freedom to preach the gospel in its entirety. As Fr Pickard said in an interview to *Jeune Afrique: For us, the Church is not only a means of eternal salvation, an organisation which*

*administers the sacraments, but it must be a sign for the liberation of the whole man... Since the nomination of Bishop Cabral, we see that the Church is no longer considered by our people as the Church of Christ but as a branch of the Portuguese government... All we asked for was to teach the rights of all, without beating about the bush, without fear. It is that and only that which we have wanted to do.* <sup>63</sup>

## **The reaction of the Bishops**

The Bishops issued a statement on 1st June signed by the Vicar General of Beira (in the absence of Cabral) and the Bishops of all the other seven dioceses. After expressing their gratitude for the remarkable spiritual and material work the Fathers and Brothers had performed during twenty-five years, they deplored the decision to leave which “they do not consider to have been inspired by the true spirit of the gospel.” They said the White Fathers constituted less than two per cent of the missionary personnel in Mozambique and that the decision was due to a pressure group against the wishes of the majority. They reaffirmed their own respect for legitimate public authority and their political neutrality. They claimed to be watchful in defence of the fundamental rights of the human person, to be alive to violations to which they react with all necessary firmness. The school system with the support of the Church “is gradually embracing the entire population of young people”. They contrasted the attitude of the White Fathers with that of other missionary institutes and even praised the perseverance of non-Christian Churches in their witness of faith and love. They addressed a “word of comfort and of hope to the Christian communities abandoned by the missionaries”.

A reply, issued by the General Council, complained that the Bishops’ letter was an attempt to minimise the affair. The White Fathers constituted a much higher proportion than two per cent of the pastoral clergy. In any case, the problem was much bigger than a small percentage might suggest. To believe that other missionary institutes were not aware of it, and did not see things in the same light as we did, would be a grave mistake. Even some Portuguese priests approved of what we have done. But the White Fathers certainly did not wish other missionaries to leave. On the contrary, we hoped that our action “may provoke profitable reflection and a real change of atmosphere.”

The decision was not against the wishes of the majority of White Fathers in Mozambique. When consulted, only five of the thirty-seven present at the time were opposed to any departure. The letter continued in a more polemical tone. The Bishops' collaboration with public authority was mere servility. The school network was not aimed at freedom for Mozambique but at Portugalisation. The progress for the masses was in any case very, very slow compared with surrounding countries. The whole system was maintained only by informers and repression. Cardinal Malula was quoted: *To serve the truth is to go beyond the formulae of public authority... that in every domain man be free to pursue his personal and social development.* There was no real Africanisation. How many African priests and Bishops are there? <sup>64</sup> The abandoned Christian communities truly need a “*word of comfort and hope.* As one Mozambican catechist said, “*The Church is like Christ, she must die to rise again.*” *And it is precisely a resurrection tomorrow that we envisage. We would like to see it occur with the least possible delay.*”

The Archbishop of Lourenço Marques, Dom Custodio Alvim Pereira, took a much more sceptical view of the work of the White Fathers. He had failed to appreciate the value of the missionaries making Christian teaching and the worship of God accessible to the Sena people of Beira in their own language and culture. In an interview with a Portuguese newspaper, he said: *For a long time the White Fathers have been interested in anthropology and sociology. From there they have entered politics. They have profited from the situation to deliver in their missions an anti-Portuguese catechesis while claiming that they wished to preach the whole gospel. In this way, they have sown in the spirit of the black people ideas of independence. For myself, I do not find in the gospel any sermon on independence. Why do some of them want to mix religion and politics? There is a great confusion in their minds.* In answer to a question he said, *Perhaps Mozambique will be independent one day. But that will be after progressive development. In any case, it is not for foreigners to preach independence.*

The Archbishop, who was born in Portugal and went to Mozambique at the age of forty-three as an auxiliary Bishop, had perhaps forgotten that to the indigenous population he was himself a foreigner. The standpoint of the Archbishop and his fellow Bishops may be explained by

their background within the history of their homeland. From the time of Vasco da Gama, the mission of State and Church had proceeded hand in hand. Having driven the Moors out of Portugal, it seemed that the national vocation was to counter Moslem presence elsewhere. The colonial rule of Mozambique had been assumed as a Christian duty. The faith was spread as it was practised in Portugal, with its particular traditions, culture and language. The Bishops were intelligent men, educated, pious, and undoubtedly pastoral minded. But however valid their ideas and ambitions might have been in past centuries, they were anachronistic long before 1971. Africa had moved on and left them behind.

## **The reaction of the Portuguese Government**

Even before the Conference of Bishops had reacted in writing, Dr Rui Patricio, the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, had given a press conference in which he was asked, *What is exactly going on as regards the White Fathers in Mozambique?* In reply, he asserted that the White Fathers were all foreigners and some of them had used their ministry for subversive political activities, attempting to turn people to terrorism, even persuading them to join Frelimo. While they have received more material aid from the government than they would receive anywhere else, one of them had insulted the Portuguese national anthem and flag. Their Superior General had told another member of the government that he was unable to make them observe decent standards of conduct. Finally, when they left the mission of Barue they destroyed all the furniture and equipment of the mission. *I leave all judgement of this to Christian consciences*, he concluded.

In reply, a letter from the General Council underlined the difference in their ways of thinking and pointed out the factual errors in his press conference. The Portuguese authorities confuse the two spheres of politics and religion. The Church in Mozambique is used for political ends, a situation tacitly accepted by the Bishops. Against this background, any genuine ecclesial attitude is seen as subversive. The minister accuses a White Father of encouraging people to take part in terrorism. But even elementary acts of pastoral charity are interpreted as terrorism.

When flight into exile is the only course open to someone who is pursued for arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, not for any crime but unjustly, for his ideas, missionaries do not consider it anti-Portuguese to assist him. It was a humanitarian act. Several passages show that we do not speak the same language. What we regard as the apostolic message of today's Church (the encyclicals *Pacem in Terris*, *Populorum Progressio*) the Portuguese regard as subversive doctrine.

The minister referred to another confrere lacking respect for the national anthem and flag. This was an isolated case, not at all recent, which would have no significance in a normal country (The Bishop at the time dismissed it as a clumsy attempt at humour). When the Minister says the General had told the Minister for Overseas territories that he was unable to make them observe decent standards of conduct, he twists the meaning of what was said. Fr van Asten had said he could not oblige the missionaries to support Government thinking or oblige them to act against their consciences. As the Vatican Council said in its Decree on Religious Liberty (para 2) No one is to be prevented from acting in accordance with his beliefs.

Finally, with reference to Barue, if the Minister wants to speak to Christian consciences, he should first of all check the truth of his allegations. Nothing belonging to the parish was destroyed. A responsible person was put in charge of all the parish property and the local people are witnesses to its safe handover. A detailed inventory of the property and goods handed over was appended to the Council's letter. It showed that more than half the costs of the buildings and equipment had been paid for by the missionaries from their own resources (The origin of the Minister's misjudgement appears to be that, before leaving, one of the Fathers had burnt some of his old copies of *Paris Match*, an incident which, through malicious misrepresentation and exaggeration, led to the absurd accusation <sup>65</sup>).

## **The reaction of the other Superiors General**

Throughout 1971, the Superiors General of the Institutes working in Mozambique held a series of meetings. The first was called by van As-

ten on 4<sup>th</sup> February. It was attended by the Superiors General or General Assistants of the Burgos Fathers, Capuchins, Comboni Fathers, Franciscans, Holy Sacrament Fathers, Jesuits, Marist Brothers, Picpus Fathers, and White Fathers. The purpose of the first meeting, mentioned above, was to give a report on the situation and to seek advice and support. It was not to persuade the participants to imitate any action the White Fathers might take. The participants proposed the composition of a document which would explain to the Bishops on what conditions missionaries would work in Portuguese territories. A working group was chosen to prepare a text which would synthesise the ideas exchanged. It consisted of Fr Perrier (White Father Assistant), Fr Bertrand (de Montfort), Fr Sanchez (Spiritain) and Fr Bartolucci (Consolata).

A second meeting was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March with most of the same persons in attendance. Van Asten gave a report on his February visit to Mozambique: the Church has become an agent in the process of Portugueseisation of the population. Consequently the missionaries were regarded as Portuguese agents. For a long time they had remained silent and avoided confrontation with the authorities but now they had reached an impasse. He described the meeting with his confrères of whom only four or five wanted to remain; the overwhelming majority were in favour of leaving. They would stay only if the leaders in the Church made an unequivocal gesture in the face of the Portuguese regime. It was not possible to make a survey of the laity to know what they thought but the Sisters all wanted the Fathers to stay. He described meetings with the Bishops of Tete, Quelimane and Vila Cabral and had the opportunity to discuss the situation with a number of missionaries of other Institutes, Jesuits, Capuchins, and Comboni, Burgos and Picpus Fathers. In Rome, the Secretary of State did not wish to speak out. This had been made clear in a visit to Cardinal Villot <sup>66</sup> by van Asten and his assistant Fr Perrier. Van Asten concluded that, taking into account the repercussions in Africa as a whole, it was better to leave Mozambique so that the position of the Church might clearly emerge. The document proposed in the previous meeting was not yet ready.

A third meeting was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, that is, after the General Council had made the decision to withdraw. Fr van Asten asked for comments. The majority approved but not all. One present regretted the

decision as dividing the missionary societies. Another member thought it too extreme as the consequences for the Christians were very grave. The majority were in favour, however. The lack of unanimity had delayed the drawing up of a common statement proposed at a previous meeting but it was now agreed that it should say that the group understands the reason for the White Fathers' decision, and will themselves continue to work in Mozambique and hope the situation will improve.

A fourth meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May to approve of a document drawn up by Fr Michel of the Picpus. In the absence of van Asten in Mozambique, three of the General Assistants were present: Frs Chaput, Grosskortenhuis and Neven. The document was sent to the different Institutes for their remarks and suggestions. It read as follows:

*Having learnt of the decision of the General Council of the White Fathers to withdraw all their missionaries from Mozambique, the General Councils of the Missionary Institutes which also work in that country have been consulted on the attitude they will take towards this decision. They are unanimous in respecting the decision taken by the White Fathers and recognise that their motives are well founded.*

*Judging, meantime, that the people of Mozambique still need the support of missionaries and that, in similar situations, reactions may well be different, the General Councils advise their missionaries to stay with the people and behave in accordance with their Christian conscience.*

*They recognise that many of their missionaries also suffer from the political situation and the excessively narrow relationship which exists between Church and State in Mozambique. This is why the missionary institutes are together preparing concrete proposals and will jointly present them for the consideration of the Hierarchy of that country so that the full range of missionary activity is possible.*

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June the fifth meeting took place at Frascati, twenty kilometres from Rome. During the meeting Fr Chaput telephoned with news of the expulsion and the arrival of the first group. They were sent by taxi to speak to the meeting. In view of the dramatic preceding events the representation of the various Institutes was stronger. The

Superiors General of the Jesuits, Franciscans, Picpus Fathers with their Portuguese provincial, Spiritans, de Montfort (also accompanied but by a General Assistant), the Verona Fathers, the Blessed Sacrament Fathers with the Assistant for Africa, and a General Assistant of the Capuchins and Marist Brothers. The representatives of the Consolata Fathers and Sacred Heart Fathers sent excuses for their absence. Fr Arrupe SJ presided. There was still some disparity in the perception of the situation. It was suggested that if one missionary speaks out, all should protest with him. If a missionary is imprisoned or molested, all the other Institutes should declare their support for him. The example was recounted how a Peruvian Bishop had recently been imprisoned and the Cardinal of Lima interrupted his business in the United States to return and take up his defence. The prophetic gesture of the White Fathers had alerted public opinion. The world press was on the side of the missionaries. The Bishops were morally obliged to support them and the Holy See should insist that the Bishops be conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities. The question of a common letter to be addressed to the Bishops was raised but there were objections that the situation of each Institute was different. However an attempt would be made to produce one.

The reports on the meetings of the Superiors General and their assistants do not give details of individual contributions so it is not possible to know who said what. That there were divisions of opinion is clear from the recurring failure to agree to a common document addressed to the Bishops of Mozambique. In spite of the considerable powers of persuasion of van Asten, the words that they were *unanimous in respecting the decision taken by the White Fathers and recognise that their motives are well founded* do not, in the end, mean very much. It does not indicate strong support but only expresses a certain sympathy and understanding. There was no suggestion that any other Institute agreed with the White Fathers to the extent that they seriously considered withdrawing their own missionaries. The impression given is that there was a wide variety of opinions which the group had no wish to publicise. So their differences were dissolved into the anodyne resolution issued at the meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> May. Another statement intended for the Bishops of Mozambique was drawn up at the meetings of 13<sup>th</sup> July. One Superior General refused to sign it. Fr Buhlmann

of the Capuchins thought it was too weak. A paragraph was added stating that the missionaries wanted to remain united to the hierarchy. The letter reached Secretariat of state and there it was blocked without any reason being given.

## **The reaction of other missionaries in Mozambique**

The position of at least one General did not meet the approval of his men in Mozambique. The Consolata Fathers in the dioceses of Vila Cabral and Inhambane wrote a letter to their General Council in August 1971. They complained that their Superior General had refused to approve of the White Fathers' decision while they themselves were in complete solidarity with it. They declared themselves infinitely grateful to van Asten. The tone of the letter betrays a good deal of frustration, accusing their Superiors at Rome of being *out of touch with the situation*. *We are convinced that the Word of God is not a narcotic drug but opens our eyes and teaches us to be morally accountable.*

Their views were shared by many of the fellow missionaries. Even before the decision had been ratified by the General Council, a number of other missionaries had met van Asten during his visit on 19th April. According to a résumé of the meeting, written by the Jesuit Vasco Fernandes, they agreed with the decision of the Society as an extreme attempt to force the Church to clarify its position in Mozambique. They demanded a clear and unambiguous *prise de position* by the Episcopal Conference, refusing to agree to delays or compromises with the government. As Religious, they required a similar united stand of all their Superiors General.

On the Sunday following the departure, May 30<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Pentecost, a declaration was made in all the churches of Beira. It concluded as follows: *The universal Church, especially after the Second Vatican Council, ...has at heart the preaching of the gospel in its fullness. In the face of the silence and indecision of the Hierarchy... most missionaries have for a long time past been faced with an agonising problem of not knowing where they are going with their people. Several times, but in vain, we have asked the Bishops to take a clearly defined stand...*

*The ambiguity and confusion in the Church was a witness to the contrary of the gospel... The major superiors of missionary congregations met in Rome and decided that some unequivocal expression must be given of the true mind of the Church. That is why it was decided to recall a group of missionaries from their field of work in the hope that some clarification of the false situation might emerge. We are making this statement to demolish false rumours which are defamatory and lack foundation in fact. As it happened, the Mass in the cathedral of Beira was broadcast that day on Radio Pax and reached an audience spread all over Mozambique. After reading it, the parish priest, a Franciscan, stated: To the text which I have just read, I wish to add on my own responsibility: everything that was printed yesterday in the newspapers is a pure lie. And now let us say our Creed together.*

The presbyteral council of Beira issued a statement on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1971 in which it objected to the calumnious and baseless accusations against the priests and religious of Beira who, in the task of evangelisation, sought to proclaim the dignity of the poor by witnessing to justice and love. In accusing the missionaries of being agents of subversion, they offended against truth, justice and honour. It protested against the expulsion of Mgr Duarte de Almeida with the White Fathers. After praising the work of the White Fathers it declared, *We desire to see the Church in Mozambique more independent and autonomous in its own sphere... free of the compromises and ambiguities which disfigure it and which take away its capacity to announce the gospel effectively. ... We prefer a Church persecuted but alive to a Church favoured by the government and gravely comprised with the temporal powers.* The statement was signed by twenty priests and Bishop Pinto, then Apostolic Administrator of Beira diocese.

## **The reaction of the Secretariat of State**

Fr Bertulli said in an interview *it was the only way to oblige the hierarchy to examine itself on the ambiguous situation of the Church in Mozambique... For we are not appealing against the government but against the hierarchy and not only against the local hierarchy but against the Secretariat of State* (He claimed as precedent Paul resisting Peter to his face in Galatians 2:11).

The Secretariat of State performs the political and diplomatic functions of the Vatican, dealing with foreign affairs on the international scene. In 1971 the Secretary of State was, unusually, a Frenchman,



Cardinal J-M. Villot

Cardinal Villot.<sup>66</sup> Throughout this period, it is clear that he was more concerned with the maintenance of harmonious relations with the Portuguese government than with any missionary problem. The pattern had been set in May 1940. The then Secretary of State, Cardinal Maglione, had signed a Concordat with the Portuguese government. The terms were negotiated with difficulty. Maglione was eager to re-establish the influence of the Church after the repeal of anti-clerical measures. Salazar, al-

though a practising Catholic, was equally determined to prevent any religious intervention in the political sphere which he regarded as exclusively the preserve of the State. He also gained a measure of control in the Church through the right of veto on episcopal appointments who had, moreover, to be Portuguese citizens. His agreeing to pay their salaries and expenses was less a concession than a means of making them clients of the state. In return, he conceded the management of education to the Church, which some commentators have regarded as a bribe. By the Missionary Accord, signed at the same time, the arrangements were extended to overseas territories. From the negotiations, Salazar clearly emerged as the victor. The relationship of Church and State permanently inhibited Vatican intervention in Mozambique: any involvement going beyond purely ecclesiastical matters would be decried as interference in politics.

In June 1970 a Conference was held at Rome to express solidarity with the peoples of the Portuguese Colonies. It was attended by some three hundred delegates. As mentioned above, at its conclusion, Pope Paul received in audience the leaders of the independence movements of Portuguese Guinea, Mozambique and Angola. Horrified, the Portuguese ambassador presented a note to the Secretary of State expressing *the profound regret of the Portuguese government and nation that His Holiness allowed terrorist leaders, in rebellion against an established Government which maintains centuries-old relations with the*

*Holy See, to come close to his person, talking to them and addressing to them words of salutation.* He was then recalled to Lisbon. To conciliate the Portuguese government the Secretary of State explained that there was no political significance in the Pope's meeting with the nationalist leaders who had been received as Roman Catholics and Christians. The version published in *The Osservatore Romano* of 4<sup>th</sup> July p 2 stated, *The Pope receives all those who ask for the comfort of his blessing. So it was in this context that the persons you speak of approached the Pope.* This was manifestly not true but fictions are an essential part of international diplomacy and the ambassador was able to return. The incident indicates a gulf between the Pope's teaching on the one hand as at Kampala in 1969, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (banned in Mozambique) and in his reported statement to the leaders, *We are for... the national independence of all peoples, particularly of the African peoples,* and, on the other hand, the Secretariat of State's priority of harmonious relations with Portugal.

In January 1971, Villot had persuaded van Asten not to take a decision to leave before the end of April. After his visit in February, as already explained, van Asten spelled out even more clearly the conditions for staying. Even so, no action was taken by the Secretariat by the end of April so van Asten concluded that it was up to him to act on the decision then taken by the General Council. *It was up to me to take on the responsibility (for a decision).* On the day of his departure, Villot received a letter referring to the inconclusive discussions with Mgr Casaroli and Mgr Gaspari, and informing him of the decision to leave.

On his return, van Asten requested an interview with Villot. The concurrent disputes in the Dutch Church had led the Portuguese government to misjudge the reasons for the missionaries' leaving and van Asten did not want any similar conclusion to be suspected in the Secretariat. So in view of his own nationality, he took his General Assistant, Fr Perrier, with him. After some argument with Villot's secretary, they were both admitted. Villot was pleased to learn that Perrier came from his own home diocese and the conversation proceeded amicably although Villot admitted that the withdrawal had come like a cold shower. He admitted, "we have let the affair languish owing to many other concerns in Yugoslavia and elsewhere." The Secretariat had de-

cided to act but had not decided how to do so and while it had dawdled the Society had acted quickly. He did not want the press to think he (Villot) had backed the decision. He had discussed the matter with the Pope who had not been too pleased – his exact words were *Mais enfin, je ne peux pas approuver cette mesure. Je lui ai répondu, Saint Père, les Pères Blancs ne vous en demandent pas tant* <sup>67</sup> (Bishop Blomjous was later to defend the decision to leave without the explicit support of the Vatican on the principle of subsidiarity). At the end of their discussion, Villot and the two Fathers parted with big smiles. Van Asten remarked that their discussion could not have gone better. The same morning, they met Mgr Casaroli, an assistant at that time to Villot and eventually his successor as Secretary of State. He took a more positive view and called the departure a prophetic gesture, a phrase picked up and used by the press. Another official of the Secretariat, Mgr Gaspari, admitted that he thought in the long run it would be beneficial for the Church. Villot's final extant comment on the whole affair was made to van Asten's successor as Superior General, Fr Vasseur. According to his memorandum, written after an introductory meeting with Villot in February 1974, the Cardinal remarked, *I appreciated Fr van Asten for some of his ideas, but not for Mozambique.*

Cardinal Villot remained reluctant to offend the Portuguese government so that even two years later, in September 1973, *Le Monde Diplomatique* commented, *The Vatican has not taken up a clear position separating itself from the "Catholic" politics of the Portuguese State. That will be essential to preserve the future of evangelisation. The Vatican risks undermining its political standing in Black Africa. Its lack of support for the national liberation struggles will, in the future, when the African people have seized their independence, be considered as a form of complicity with white power.* This prophecy would be realised in Mozambique.

## Reactions of Bishops elsewhere in Africa

Jozef Blomjous wf, Bishop emeritus of Mwanza, <sup>68</sup> regretted that the White Fathers had not taken the decision two or three years earlier. In an interview with *La Croix* he said he had no doubt that the African Bishops were supporting the White Fathers. He recalled how the previ-

ous year, in the second meeting of SECAM at Abidjan, the situation in the Portuguese territories was a subject of several interventions. The ambiguity of the Church was condemned and the Bishops of those territories were called upon to act courageously. The Archbishop of Lourenço Marques responded that the symposium had nothing to do with internal Portuguese affairs and should not meddle with them.

A number of Bishops in Africa were outspoken in support of the withdrawal. In an interview, Bishop Sangu of Mbeya, Tanzania said that for him it was a question of the credibility of Christianity in Africa. Several Bishops asked White Fathers Generalate that the personnel released from their duties in Mozambique should be appointed to their dioceses. At the World Synod of Bishops of 1971, Archbishop Nsubuga of Kampala made an intervention. *In the document Justice in the World given us to prepare this Synod, we read of...the fundamental right to freedom of expression of association of movement, a truly free vote, and the right to organisations. We all know, without dissimulation the situation in South Africa, Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique. The Governments of these countries do not practise the principles of Justice. Our people in Africa look to us here in this Synod, and want proof that the Church is sincere in its teaching. They want witness. They will no longer be satisfied with clichés in which injustice is ignored or camouflaged because of diplomatic expediency. There have been instances when representatives of the Church in Africa have had the courage to give true witness to Christ's teaching that all men are equal – but there has been no sign of approval from Church Leaders to whom our people turn – but rather, an enigmatic silence. ...The United Nations and civil governments are already acting. What is impeding the Church?*

A remark made by Fr Sanches, cssp, at a meeting of the Superiors General in May 1971 is relevant here. He remarked that prudence was seen by the youth as a lack of courage and was causing young people to leave the Church in Portugal.

## Other reactions

Among the most outspoken supporters of the withdrawal were Protestant organisations. They had no love for the Portuguese adminis-

tration which had always favoured the Catholic Church. Fr Neven went to Geneva to explain the decision to the World Council of Churches. He took as his theme the proverb - *Les soldats se sont aperçus que leurs officiers ne voulaient pas se battre et ils se sont retirés*. In this context the meaning was that the soldiers withdrew because they saw their officers (the Bishops) did not want to fight. There was a positive reaction to his talk. La Croix reported in November 1971 that a conference of the Protestant Churches of all Africa at Kinshasa passed a resolution supporting the White Fathers.

An alternative view was expressed in a letter by a Swiss Palottine Father, Dr Erwin Helme. Dated 25th May 1971, the day on which the SDG informed Bertulli of the expulsion order, it was diffused widely by the Portuguese authorities. Dr Helme had been based in Portugal for twenty-five years without any government interference. He accused van Asten of making a political decision. Missionaries, he said, ought not to mix in political questions. They should be loyal to the civil authorities lest they be taken for revolutionaries. Christ never revolted against the Romans. The White Fathers were acting against the Holy See. By implication, they accused the missionaries still working in Mozambique and those of past centuries, St Francis Xavier included. Dr Helme, like public opinion in Portugal, was carefully sheltered by a wall of censorship from the reality of the violence and injustices in Mozambique. It is not recorded if his opinions changed during the following years when the curtain was raised and the true state of affairs attracted worldwide attention.

His reference to the Holy See was to the popular belief in Portugal that the Papal Bulls supporting the early explorers granted special political privileges so the Portuguese nation might rule other peoples. According to Bertulli the continued silence of the Secretariat of State in more recent times was interpreted by some of the Bishops as justification for their political position. In the Portuguese territory of Angola, the Bishop of Carmona e São Salvador claimed, *The religious meaning of Portuguese conquests is evident in the eyes of the Holy See because the aim of the conquests is less a means of maintaining a regime than a religious policy to extend the faith.*

A more serious criticism came from Cardinal Rossi of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. He had been informed of the decision at the same time as the Secretariat. He replied promptly and vigorously in a letter of 18th May 1971. He was profoundly pained by the decision to leave Mozambique. He quoted the Latin tag *Salus animarum suprema lex (the supreme law is the salvation of souls)*. The White Fathers' action would have repercussions elsewhere and would harm missions both in Mozambique and *in other countries* (He probably meant other Portuguese territories). He wrote of the grave obligation to serve even in situations not fully conforming to one's point of view and without the full liberty the ministry required (His implication was that the White Fathers were not ready to put up with much inconvenience). He concluded with *Awaiting a courteous and immediate reply*.

Van Asten replied with a letter which displayed all the literary talents of Fr Perrier. In brief, he pointed out that Mozambique came under the Secretary of State and he had always kept Cardinal Villot, Mgr Gaspari and Casaroli informed. They were sympathetic to the problem and did not forbid leaving. He pointed out that his confrères had died in the Congo and also “during the long-lasting Algerian civil war we had lost martyrs. We did not pull out from there. Thanks to the lucidity and courage of Cardinal Duval of Algiers, the position of the Church was never equivocal. The White Fathers, your Eminence, are ready to suffer and to die if necessary on the field of their apostolate. But they cannot live contrary to their consciences. Lavigerie had the same law, but for him the respect and dignity of the African was his supreme law. It is not simply a matter of our point of view, but it was a situation against our conscience. It was a situation which we were obliged to accept in a Catholic country, without the right to say anything, because the situation was tacitly accepted by the official Church. We would be happier if the hierarchy spoke out and took seriously *Populorum Progressio* or the speech of Paul VI at Kampala.” Finally, he took issue with the Cardinal's use of the word courteous. He regretted not having assimilated the delicate style appropriate in a court, but “we missionaries are men of action; to be clear is not necessarily to be discourteous. “

## Reactions in the international press

SEDOS published a survey of relevant articles in seventy-five newspapers and journals, both religious and secular, from eighteen countries and in eight languages. Most were from Western Europe but three were Canadian and seven from African countries. They represented both sides of the argument.

The papers in Portugal and Mozambique followed the official Government line that the White Fathers were interfering in politics. They printed prominently to the statement of the Bishops of Mozambique and quoted President Caetano. He described the decision as coming from a Gospel of subversion and was the result of a conflict between the local Bishops and White Father Superiors who were acting *ultra vires*.

There was a consensus in the international press outside Portugal and Mozambique. It was overwhelmingly favourable to the decision, considering it to be an act of courage, a conscientious response to unjust circumstances, a witness to honesty. Some African commentators were jubilant: *one of the greatest contributions to the liberation of the Africans that the Church has made... will be glorified in the hearts of the oppressed. (Uganda Argus 26-5-71). A priestly rap for racists (Times of Zambia 21-5-71)*. There were far-reaching implications even if the journalists were uncertain how to spell them out. At least, it was hoped that the demonstration would secure, for the missionaries who remained, the minimum freedom they needed to continue their evangelising mission.

# Chapter seven

## After the departure

### A letter from Alvoet

From a letter of Fr Walter Alvoet WF: “The Carnation Revolution in Portugal occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974. The country was in turmoil. Mario Soares became a leading figure in Portuguese politics and, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the artisan of decolonization. I was received by Soares in June. He brought me to a meeting in the great arena of Villa Franca. There I experienced the voices of thousands of people, the explosion of freedom, *Liberdade*. Delegations from Germany, France and Italy were introduced to the crowd and applauded vigorously. Finally Soares presented me. One of the White Fathers, he said, *the first ones who dared to confront the dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano and who voluntarily left Mozambique because they refused to tolerate any longer the ambiguity in which they had to work*. I had to get up on the platform. There I was, deeply moved, arms in the air as if I had won the Tour de France. I was given applause which I did not deserve since I have never been in Mozambique. But I was happy for my confreres who, sick at heart, had abandoned everything, and for the General Council, who had made a prophetic gesture, conducting the operation with great skill and courage.” This incident took place nearly three years after the departure of the missionaries from Mozambique. In the meantime, many things had happened.

### Reactions to the continuing war

The departure of the White Fathers did not lead immediately to any fall in the level of violence. When some Spanish missionaries complained about the massacres in Mukumbura, the local chief of DGS (former PIDE) told them: *Terrorism must be fought with terrorism. If you have not the stomach to swallow that, you should leave. Do not mix with politics, concern yourselves with preaching the gospel... and be ready to see even worse things*. In 1972 there were mass arrests of Protestants.

Sources vary in estimating the number as between five hundred and eighteen hundred. Most of the officials of the Presbyterian church of Mozambique were included. Cardinal Alfrink, President of Pax Christi International, sent a telegram to Bishop Nunes Teixeira (chairman of the Epistcopal Conference) expressing his shock at the death in custody of Pastor Manganhela and urgently asked him in ecumenical solidarity to give juridical help “to these our Christian Brothers and other political prisoners, recognising the right of self-determination of the people of Mozambique.”<sup>69</sup>

Thirty-six missionaries, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters of the diocese of Tete met on 1st July 1971, to reflect on the departure of the White Fathers. They discussed the massacres, the use of torture, the destruction of villages, and the confinement of political prisoners. In protest, all of them signed a report addressed to the Bishops’ conference. As a result, a number of Fathers and Sisters were interrogated and accused of defending a catechist who had been tortured, of translating into the local language some passages of Pope Paul VI relating to torture, of going to pray at night with the village people, and of having founded a movement for Catholic youth. After the interrogation some missionaries were expelled, others transferred, and a general prohibition was put in place forbidding missionaries to visit regions where military operations were being carried out. Six months later, after two missionaries of Mucumbura had been imprisoned, their confrères sent a further complaint to the Bishops. It stated that even after four more massacres, the continuance of torture, arbitrary imprisonment and selective killings, no statement had yet been made by the Episcopal conference. This time the Bishops themselves were accused. *You are culpable before God and before the world for your silence.*

## **More departures and expulsions**

Until 1972, the government had refrained from imprisoning the clergy, but this practice now changed. On New Year’s Day 1972, two Portuguese secular priests at Macuti denounced the injustices of the war. They were imprisoned for thirteen months before being put on trial. However, negative publicity for the regime ensured that only minor charges were filed. The judge recognised that massacres had taken place

and they were released. A group of Burgos Fathers wrote a report on massacres at Bukumbura and circulated it to civil and religious authorities. When it was rejected, two Burgos Fathers gave an interview to a Spanish newspaper and sent a copy to Caetano (Salazar's successor). They were arrested and, without any judicial process, imprisoned and kept in isolation for almost two years. They were then released and expelled.

Not all the Bishops were silent. Bishop Dias Nogueira of Vila Cabral, who was moving to a see in Angola in July 1972, wrote, in a final pastoral letter, of the lamentable and useless excesses of the security police. He pointed out that terrorism could not vanquish terrorism. The silence of the tomb was not true peace. There was a need for justice, education and winning the confidence of the people. His fellow Bishop Pinto of Nampula preached a homily on the day of world peace 1-1-1974. He called for a reappraisal of the military campaign to restore peace in Mozambique. A new mentality was needed to deal with the war in a spirit of dialogue. He raised sensitive questions: the aspirations of Mozambicans for self-determination, whether talks with Frelimo were preferable to war, the crimes committed on both sides. Such topics were anathema to the administration. Then in March he followed up his homily with approval of a document signed by the priests, Brothers and Sisters of his diocese. It was entitled *Imperativo di coscienza* and called for *a courageous response to the grave problems of the Mozambican people*. This was too much for Caetano's government and he was sent into exile with eleven Verona Father signatories. The same year, thirteen Dutch Montfort Fathers were expelled from the north of Mozambique. For their role in publicising the Wiriyamu massacre, ten Burgos Fathers were sent out of the country; some of them joined Frelimo. Five Picpus missionaries left voluntarily in protest against the silence of the Church.

## Wiriyamu

Long before the incident at Wiriyamu, Bertulli had pointed out that repression in Mozambique could not be carried out without the supply of weapons by other members of NATO. Britain in Kenya, France in Algeria and the American CIA in Central America, had all been implicated in assassination and the torture of dissidents in cases which are

all well-documented. These allies had no reason to take any particular notice of the accusations against Portuguese activity in their colonies. In any case, few journalists in western Europe knew the Portuguese language or were well informed about Portuguese affairs. The widely reported departure of the White Fathers had drawn attention to Mozambique, but to alert public opinion worldwide there was a need for a striking incident, detailed, firmly evidenced and well-publicised. It took place on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1972 at Wiriyamu.

Soldiers were told by their officers to kill the whole population of a village. Half were children, half the adults were women, all were civilians. Most of the victims were shot, some were put in huts which were then set on fire or had grenades thrown in. Many of the children were kicked to death or hacked to pieces. Reports on it were first made by two Burgos Fathers in the Spanish press but it hit the headlines in the world media after it was reported in the *Times* of London by Fr Adrian Hastings on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1973. He listed the names of many of the victims. He concluded with an appeal to the allies of Portugal and the companies pouring money into the Cahora Bassa dam to realize how they are closing their eyes to genocide. He called on them to insist on a full public independent investigation, to recognize the profound and persistent wickedness of a whole course of policy which had resulted in the massacre of Wiriyamu.<sup>70</sup> The macabre details, vividly described in the international media could not be ignored by national governments. The reaction of the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques was in vain. During an interview with the German paper *Die Welt* he said: *What the Spanish Fathers have claimed is an invention; this is a plot for political ends devised by people who are Christian Marxists.* Bishop da Silva of Tete refused to confirm it although it took place only twenty kilometres from his residence. A Sister Lucia, a nurse, who flew over Wiriyamu and saw the devastation, refused afterwards to give an interview *lest it should be used for politics.* Not all Sisters were so intimidated. One working in the hospital at Tete said she could fill books with the names of people who had been tortured by the PIDE and DGS. The government published a denial in a mendacious and slanderous pamphlet with the quaint title *The Mare's Nest.* But as one horrific story followed another, its denial was not believed. Even in friendly South Africa, the *Star* in Johannesburg published a report of women being forced to place their babies

in a grain mill. The government eventually had to agree to an official enquiry which conceded that a massacre had taken place. In The Netherlands, five government ministers petitioned Cardinal Roy, president of the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, asking for the Secretary of State to clearly support the missionaries and speak out in favour of the oppressed people of Mozambique. It emphasised that the silence of the Church would be interpreted as approval for the unjust policies of Portugal.

## **The Carnation revolution**

The Wiriyamu massacre did nothing to enhance the reputation of the army. Military service in the army to repress independence movements was increasingly unpopular and thousands of young men went abroad to avoid it. Officers in the army, notably General Spínola, realised that the defeat of independence movements was not winnable by military means. Although the economy of Portugal was growing faster than the average for European nations, more than forty per cent of the national budget was being spent on fighting colonial wars. The consequent rising taxation aroused intense dissatisfaction. The governing party had been in power for almost half a century and people looked for the freedom to discuss new policies without the constraints of censorship. Former allies began to impose sanctions because of the colonial policy, a move which threatened to obstruct Portuguese entry into the European Economic Community.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974, the Armed Forces Movement, composed of military officers, took over strategic points of power in the country and declared the overthrow of the government. Thousands of Portuguese citizens took to the streets in support, mingling with the military insurgents. No one came out to defend Caetano. In Lisbon, only the regime's political police, the DGS, resorted to force, opening fire on a crowd of civilian insurgents, killing four people before surrendering. One of the central points of the revolt was the flower market in Lisbon, richly stocked with seasonal carnations. The pictures of soldiers with flowers in the barrels of their guns and wearing carnations on their uniforms were shown on television giving rise to the name Carnation Revolution. What

started as a military coup became a popular uprising. Salazar's successor, Caetano, ceded power to General Spínola before fleeing to Brazil where he remained for the rest of his life.

The Revolution changed the relationship of Church and State in Portugal and Mozambique. Eventually a new Concordat was signed in 2004 which redefined the relationship of the Portuguese government and the Church, each to be autonomous and independent. In particular it recognised the right of the Holy See to appoint Bishops without political interference. So ended the ancient *Padroado*. But long before that, in June 1974, the Minister for Overseas territories met van Asten and assured him that his confreres could return to Mozambique. He informed him of his government's intention to grant Mozambique, Angola and Guinea independence. A problem he had, however, was to establish communication with Frelimo. He was ready to meet the Frelimo leaders but felt they were suspicious of his initiative. Van Asten suggested sending Bertulli to Dar es Salaam to help arrange a meeting, a suggestion welcomed by the Minister who promised to pay any expense involved. But on the day Bertulli was due to leave, Bishop Pinto, on behalf of the Minister, informed van Asten that the Minister was now considering alternatives. The plan was abandoned but independence was not long in coming.

## Independence

Before the Revolution Spínola had published a book (Portugal and the Future), in which he expressed his view that the only solution to the Colonial Wars was the discontinuation of the conflict. But as President he had no wish to grant independence, dreaming of a Lusophone commonwealth run from Lisbon. This was not acceptable to Frelimo who were ready to maintain their armed struggle. Unlike Machel and his fighters, the Portuguese soldiers were unwilling to continue the conflict, preferring to remain in barracks rather than to engage their opponents. Portugal had no alternative but to recognise the right of the Mozambican people to independence. In September 1974, an agreement was signed at Lusaka in which Portugal agreed to transfer power to Frelimo. Mozambique became independent on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1975.

Independence led to changes among the Bishops in Mozambique. Between August 1974 and the end of 1976, the Bishops in seven of the

nine dioceses resigned their sees. Their ages were not a factor, ranging from forty-four to sixty-five years, the average being only fifty-seven. Three of the seven who left Mozambique found dioceses in Portugal to receive them. The other four simply retired. At Beira, Bishop Cabral had resigned only five weeks after the departure of the White Fathers. After a brief period during which Pinto was apostolic administrator, he was succeeded by Altino Ribeiro de Santana. Santana was by ancestry a Goan. His appointment was badly received by the Portuguese settlers and he survived for only a year. One day a case of excrement and a hand grenade were thrown at his house. The next day he died of a heart attack. His successor, Gonçalves da Costa, lasted until the end of 1976 when he was transferred to Faro in Portugal. Only two Bishops remained in Mozambique: Bishop Pinto in Nampula and Ferreira da Silva SJ at Vila Cabral (renamed Luchinga). The latter had not long been a Bishop and had previously been a missionary in Malawi. At the primatial see of Lourenço Marques, renamed Maputo, the new Bishop was the first Mozambican priest to be ordained in modern times, Alexandre José Maria dos Santos, ofm.

## **The Secretariat of State and Independence**

On the 22nd May 1974, Bishop Pinto, who had been exiled from Mozambique a few weeks earlier, despite his Portuguese nationality, was received for lunch at the Generalate in Rome. He was accompanied by the Regional Superior of the Comboni Fathers who had been expelled with him. Pinto informed the Councillors that the new President of Portugal, General Spínola, had told him the expelled missionaries would be allowed to return. They should wait only until the government had settled down. Spínola had also invited him to be a member of the Council of State in Portugal. The Councillors and the Bishop agreed, however, that it would be better for him to return to his diocese in Mozambique. He might, however, become a consultant albeit at long range. Van Asten ventured the opinion that he should be elevated to a more important diocese like Lourenço Marques or at least Beira.

Three days later Pinto had a meeting with Cardinal Villot at the Secretariat of State. There he was badly received. He was told he was a troublemaker because he had been outspoken and taken a position dif-

ferent from that of the other Bishops. He was also reminded that he was the ordinary of only one small diocese, not Bishop of Mozambique. Pinto's suggestion that he should arrange a meeting between the Superiors General and the Bishops of Mozambique was turned down. Instead, he should return to Mozambique on his own without the expelled missionaries. On leaving Villot's office, he met Mgr Casaroli of the Secretariat in the corridors and told him of his disappointment at the lack of understanding of the situation he had met with and Villot's lack of charity for a suffering Bishop. The next day he was to see Pope Paul. Lest he should be received badly again, the Superior General of the Comboni Fathers gave him a letter to take, asking for a sympathetic reception which, in fact, the Pope gave him. Some months before, Pinto had written to the Pope a long eloquent document on how compromised the Church had become. *How could it proclaim the gospel to the poor, he asked, when it appeared to be on the side of the powerful?* On the occasion of his visit Pinto told Pope Paul that this was a critical moment for the credibility of the Church in Mozambique and it was the right time to speak of the people's right to freedom.

The following day Pinto attended a meeting of the Superiors General where all agreed on the urgent importance of the Church to speak out. A letter to that effect was written by the Superiors General to the Pope on the 5th June. It requested intervention with the Episcopal conference that they should explain clearly that the mission of the Church was to incarnate the Church in the culture and traditions of the people. In doing so it should maintain its independence of the State. It requested that new ordinaries should be in harmony with the post-conciliar ecclesiology and be able to dialogue with the missionaries, religious and lay people. Bishops that had clearly compromised the dignity, authenticity and genuine aspirations of the Africans should be removed from office. It was signed by eleven Superiors Generals and two Assistants representing their own Generals. Maybe it was significant that this letter was addressed directly to the Pope rather than to the Secretary of State.

A few days later the Superiors General met the Nuncio from Lisbon and gave him a hard time. At the beginning of the meeting, he wanted van Asten withdraw as he no longer had missionaries in Mozambique.

Supported by others at the meeting, van Asten refused point blank, to the embarrassment of the Nuncio. When the Nuncio asserted that missionaries should remain outside politics and only be concerned with the bene supernaturalis of the people he was reminded of their human rights and dignity in the face of injustice. The Generals told him of the need to removal of the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques; the Nuncio replied that the Vatican does not, in principle, interfere in local hierarchies. The proposal for White Fathers to return to Mozambique was raised. The Nuncio stressed that they must be chosen well to which van Asten replied that he would choose men who were molto rivoluzionari. During the meeting the Nuncio was rather nervous and lost his temper several times.

Throughout the long drawn out crisis in Mozambique, the Secretariat seems to have been out of step with Pope Paul who had spoken out clearly at Kampala during his visit there and later received the leaders of the Independence movements at the Vatican. In July 1973 the Pope spoke out in defence of missionaries who, in spite of suspicions and calumnies, were helping indigenous people in their ascent, both spiritual and civil (This was at a time of the Wiriyamu scandal). In December 1973, speaking to the College of Cardinals the Pope spoke of the right of all people to self-government and independence, describing those who opposed it by force of arms as unworthy of civilised Society.

A Picpus Father, Edmund Blommaert, gathered many documents relevant to the White Fathers' departure and visited several of their former missions in 1972. In his conclusions, published in the Petit Echo, he remarked that while the White Fathers had shown clearly to the world how to escape from an ambiguous situation, the Vatican knew what it should do but lacked the courage to do it. An article in Pro Mundi Vitae, in January 1977, expressed disappointment that the Vatican (i.e. the Secretariat of State) had never spoken out against the injustices in Mozambique during Portuguese rule in spite of being well briefed on the situation many times. The writer suggested that the Vatican had wished to preserve, at all costs, good relations with Portugal. He *could not avoid the impression that Rome had not realised that the future of the Church (in Mozambique) was at stake.*

After the Wiriyamu incident, there are signs that the policy of the Secretariat of State were changing. As a further sign, on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1975, Mgr Francesco Colusuonno arrived at Maputo as Apostolic Delegate to Mozambique. This amounted to a recognition of the independent Mozambique government and meant that the missions were no longer dependent on the Nuncio at Lisbon. Also, they were transferred from the jurisdiction of the Secretariat of State to that of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

## Marxist government

As early as April 1961, an article in *The Osservatore Romano* had referred to the ill-fated stubbornness of Portugal. A Munhava war, it said, would bring in external support and begin a tragic adventure as in Indochina and Algeria. That would profit no one, least of all Portugal.



Samora Machel

The prediction proved accurate. The long expensive military struggle to hold on to Mozambique ended in failure after many lives had been lost and much suffering caused.

If independence had been conceded in the early 1960's, the humane and moderate socialist wing of Frelimo led by Mondlane and Simango would have undertaken the administration of the country. It is likely that two peaceful decades of readjustment and development would have followed as in the neighbouring countries of Zambia and Tanzania. Instead, the long running revolt against the Portuguese had

given the opportunity for the military wing of Frelimo under Marxist leadership to take over the independence movement. Moderate leadership was eliminated within Frelimo <sup>71</sup> and control passed to the military leader Samora Machel. <sup>72</sup> It is ironic that Portugal's desperate attempts

to resist communism actively prepared the way for the only neo-Marxist government to achieve power in any of the former African colonies.

The imposition of a communist ideology destroyed the economy, perpetuated violence and by its existence provoked the intervention of South Africa and a devastating civil war between Frelimo and Renamo. In 1975 Renamo was founded as an anti-communist political organisation. With weapons and support from Rhodesia and South Africa, it led an armed revolt against the Frelimo government. A peace agreement was made in 1992. Renamo then became a political party winning 30% of the votes in the first multi-party elections. For the people a new period of poverty and a novel form of repression were introduced. The Church was to suffer restrictions on its freedom of action.

## The collapse of the economy

During the first years of independence the economy of Mozambique declined drastically, from an estimated \$2.1 billion in 1975 to \$1.2 billion in 1985. This was due to a number of factors. Recruitment of miners for South Africa and Rhodesia fell by more than half leading to a corresponding fall in their remittances. European sanctions on the Ian Smith government in Rhodesia reduced trade through Beira. Destructive floods were followed by a devastating regional drought in the early 1980's. Then a worldwide recession reduced the value of exports. Attacks on the property of Portuguese settlers during the first days of independence caused virtually all quarter of a million of them to abandon the country, taking with them many skills needed for development. The low level of education during the colonial period meant that there were not enough educated people left to maintain the well-developed infrastructure of the ports and transport system

Once in power, Stalinist policies and bureaucratic central control were put into effect. Portuguese owned oil refineries and coal mines were nationalised. So too was all the agricultural land. Foreign investment was frightened away. Attempts to raise alternative capital by investment in inefficient collectivised farms failed and the low prices paid to small farmers reduced production still further. In a speech in December 1985 Samora Machel demanded that *each family cultivate a mini-*

*mum number of hectares... The production of cotton is imperative. The governor of Nampula was more specific. Each family must cultivate four acres in which they must sow cotton, cashew nuts, maize, manioc, groundnuts beans and rubber... There are foremen whose job it is to force people to work in their fields... At the third cockcrow all must be bent over their hoes. They may not return to their homes at midday. They may return to their homes only when the sun sets... Some will say this is forced labour. Yes, it is forced labour.*

Perhaps in desperation, the death penalty was extended to economic crimes and corporal punishment imposed as a penalty for a range of offences. Re-education camps were set up where political opponents, petty criminals and alleged anti-social elements such as prostitutes, were imprisoned, often without trial. Thousands are reported to have died there through harsh treatment. Strikes were banned. By the early 1980's the shops were empty, the local currency was worthless and the country bankrupt. Inevitably the popularity of the new government declined, especially among the farmers who were not permitted to own their own fields. Socialist policies had eventually to be abandoned after the death of Machel in 1986.<sup>73</sup>

## **The anti-religious campaign**

The many warnings that collaboration with the Portuguese government would damage the Church when Mozambique became independent were only too well justified. During the first months of Independence Machel made a number of speeches attacking the Catholic Church. On Independence day he accused it of culturally alienating his fellow countrymen by co-operating with Portuguesisation in its schools. In the name of Christian resignation it had made the population docile instruments for colonial exploitation. The following month, at Marrupa-Niassa, he complained of the presence of chaplains in the colonial army. *In all crimes committed by this army we find a chaplain on the side of the colonial army to baptise so it could kill better.* A week later, at Nampula, he stated, *The Portuguese soldiers were baptised before they went to war; they left the church to commit wholesale murder; they butchered children... then they came back, received communion and slept in the churches. Therefore there will be no privileges for any church here in Mozambique.*

A month after independence, the border was closed for missionaries. Catholic schools, hospitals and dispensaries were nationalised. Some Churches were closed. Bank accounts of dioceses, churches and missionaries were frozen. In Beira, the former White Father parish at Manga, with all its buildings and facilities, was taken over. Religious teaching in schools was forbidden. Adults were intimidated to discourage them from following instruction. Restrictions were placed on seminary entrance. Among the rural parishes of Beira, seventeen of the thirty parishes had been nationalised with their schools. All the same, Machel was aware of the strength of the Christians. At a seminar for political formation he conceded that The Catholic Church is not weak. *At the moment, we are not strong enough for a head-on attack, neither have the masses been educated yet. The only result would be that the Church would become even more powerful, for the masses would take sides with the Church and secretly support its anti-revolutionary activities. We want to avoid turning Church leaders into martyrs.*

Instead of destroying the Church he hoped to attack its supra-national character, to liberate it from the imperialism of Rome. Following the example of the Chinese government, the party would prepare the way for the establishment of a national Church, independent of the Vatican. Lay people would be educated to purge away the unpatriotic stains in their faith. After all, relations with the Vatican were important only to theologians. Priests who could not be prevailed upon to conform would be discredited. That was the theory. The reality never had any chance of success.

Fr Perez had first-hand experience of the anti-religious campaign. He was one of three White Fathers who had returned during the first weeks of Independence (The other two were Roget Pille and Francisco João Silota - our first Mozambican confrère). Like other clergy he had to take on a second occupation so had become a teacher in a nationalised, former Catholic, school in Murraça. At the school were two directors, appointed for political reasons. At a staff meeting, Perez complained of the low standard of education which he attributed to the excessive time spent on ideological classes. This caused the directors to denounce him and accuse him of keeping in touch with rebels through a clandestine radio. In fact, he did not have even a radio receiver. Nev-

ertheless, he was arrested and kept in prison for several weeks. There he was treated very well by both officers and prisoners whom he taught maths. Visitors brought him many cigarettes and he used the packets to make playing cards and dominoes. After a few weeks the Bishop intervened with government and he was released.

## The Bishops speak out

The Bishops were aware of the source of their problems. In a talk to his clergy, Bishop Pinto admitted *the Church collaborated actively with the colonial regime. It collaborated actively by consenting to propagate the national Portuguese culture, by appearing ostentatiously in the company of the colonial administrators, by preaching a gospel of resignation and obedience to the established order. The Church has collaborated passively by allowing itself to be used by the colonial power, by not protesting against the oppression of the regime and by hushing up, out of fear and prudence, the colonial crimes and violations of justice in the war of oppression. The collaboration of the Church with the Portuguese regime was an insult to the people of Mozambique which will not easily be forgotten.*

But independence from colonial rule was also an opportunity. *The new times for Mozambique are also new times for the Church. The Spirit is present and questions his Church. It is time to rise from our sleep. It is the time for conversion of conscience, of behaviour, of work methods and of structures. The Church too has been liberated from colonial oppression. It will have to grow in freedom. Only in this way will it be able, in the midst of the revolution, to witness to life which tries to form a new man in the new Mozambique.*

Unlike their predecessors, the new Bishops were not slow to speak out when necessary. They condemned the government for building a godless society with its death penalty and re-education camps. A pastoral letter at the beginning of Advent 1978 listed the many freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution but not respected by the government. It criticised the restrictions of religious practice and the distinctions made by state authorities between believers and non-believers, to the disadvantage of the former. It encouraged lay people to join in public affairs even though the social order was controlled by a Marxist-Leninist party.

The Bishops courteously invited atheists to examine the gospel of Christ with an open mind. A pastoral letter in 1981 complained again about intimidation such as enquiries to find out the names of people attending Mass, forbidding the baptism of children and other unconstitutional practices. Instead the Bishops wanted dialogue between Church and State to build up mutual confidence and respect.

A report on a visit by the General Assistant Fr Missiaen in 1982 reported on the impossibility of travelling beyond Beira but among the urban population Mass attendance filled the Churches while hundreds of children came for religious lessons on Saturday afternoons (In the early years of Independence, this was forbidden). Small Christian Communities were active, a fact which aroused the suspicions of the government. As for the parishes outside the city there were only four priests. The five rural parishes formerly in the hands of the White Fathers had no priests. Charre and Inhangoma in Tete diocese each had a resident Comboni Father. This meant a great reliance on lay leadership especially catechists. Unfortunately, it was rarely possible to have meetings with them. In spite of the difficulties, a good spirit was observed among the two hundred priests in the country who included in their number fifty-nine Mozambicans. The Church had taken deep root and it was hoped that soon more White Fathers might come to Mozambique.

Bertulli had kept in touch with Machel during the last years before independence. Machel invited him as a guest at the national celebrations in April 1974. He greeted him warmly and thanked him for all he had done. But from now on, he said, neither Bertulli nor any other missionaries were needed in the new nation. Bertulli continued to correspond with him. In his last letter to Machel, written shortly before he died, being struck crossing the road in Rome in March 1976, Bertulli wrote several pages on the ideology of the Mozambican revolution but made no mention of religion. According to his confreres, he was upset by the religious policies of the government and hoped they were only a temporary reaction to its colonial and capitalist experience.

In fact, as Bertulli had hoped, the anti-religious policies lasted only a few years. The Bishops of Beira and Maputo repeatedly appealed for peace and an end to the conflict between Frelimo and Renamo. For some years the Frelimo government was unwilling to enter any dialogue and

branded the Bishops as *the apostles of treason*. In partnership with leaders of other Christian denominations, the Church eventually played a critical role in finally bringing about a peaceful agreement in 1982. By then the anti-religious campaign had largely run itself out. In 2015, on the anniversary of the Lusaka agreement which had brought independence to Mozambique, President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi attended Mass at the Cathedral of Tete and praised the Church for its role in peace-making and national reconciliation.

## The return of the White Fathers

Two Fathers Perez and Pille arrived a month before independence (25 June 1975) and were joined later by Francesco Silota. From 1983 the trickle of returnees was maintained, entry permits being difficult to obtain. Alberto Rovelli, Hermann Hinkelmann and Odilo Cougil arrived and later Pam-palk. Br Marcel Amport came back from Malawi but having no building material,



Filipe Jacinto Nyusi

it was decided that he return to Malawi. In May 1983, the Fathers were requested to staff the major seminary at Maputo. The building had been occupied by the army and when they left they took with them everything that was moveable and some items like doors and lavatories which hardly fit into that category. The new staff included Fathers who had not had previous experience in Mozambique. The first to arrive was Marcel Boivin who arrived in 1984 and was later joined by other semi-

nary professors. A photograph taken at Beira in 1996 shows sixteen White Fathers then working in Mozambique. Three others were absent, one at a meeting, two temporarily outside the country. By then, the departure from Mozambique was history.



Those of 1971 : Frs Molina Antonio, Perez Pedro, Hienkelman Josef, Perez Fernando, Rovelli Alberto



November 24<sup>th</sup> 1996. **Seated, from left to right.** : Odilo Coughil (District sup. of Mozambique), Fidel Salazar, Cosmas (stagiaire), Jesus Esteibarlanda (regional Sup. ) Alberto Rovelli. **2<sup>nd</sup> row, standing** : Antonio Molina Molina, Vincent Bailey, Hugh Seenan, Jean-Pierre Le Scour, Pedro Perez Padea, Fernando Perez Prieto, Norbert Angibaud. **3<sup>rd</sup> row:** Hermann-Josef Hinkelmann, Ferdinand van Campen, Marc Anger (district Sup. of South Africa), Pierre du Suau de la Croix. **Absentee** : Claudio Zuccala (Home leave in Italie), Mgr. Francesco Silota (in Nairobi), Gerry Stones (at a meeting of seminaries' superiors).

# Conclusion

Before finishing, a word should be recorded about the sixty-eight Fathers and Brothers who spent all or part of the twenty-five years in Mozambique between 1946 and 1971. They brought Christianity to thousands of people and set an example of dedication and adaptation for fellow missionaries of other institutes and for those who would come later. When thirty-two of them left Mozambique in 1971, they were asked to choose three missions for their future apostolate. Where possible they were sent to their first choice, a number going to Malawi because of the similarity of languages. Others went to Zambia, Tanzania, Burundi, the Congo and even West Africa. A few were too old to learn new African and European languages and retired to their home countries. A handful returned to Mozambique a dozen years later. Several, given the opportunity to return, remained in their new fields of the apostolate. A few left the Society for other pastures.

A year after the departure of the White Fathers, Fr Edmund Blommaert of the Picpus Fathers collected many documents relevant to departure and visited several missions in Mozambique. He observed that the old ambiguity had disappeared. The missionaries knew what to expect from the Bishops. The settlers had learnt what missionaries were for. The Africans had known that for a long time and had been confirmed in their conviction. He found two kinds of Christians: the official Church with the Bishops who seemed to have been born in the era of the Portuguese conquerors. With them were a number of priests and religious who were planters, colonists or farmers rather than priests, and some so-called Christians who used religion for their own interests. But there was also another Church in the ascendancy: the unpretentious Church of the poor, an African Church still led by foreign missionaries, locally born priests and a handful of Portuguese clergy who had had their eyes opened. These were men devoted entirely to their people. For their devotion, they risked imprisonment or expulsion or even the loss of their lives. They were all extremely grateful to the White Fathers for having clarified the situation as they themselves continued to build up a future Mozambican Church with its own leaders.

When the decision was made to depart, some of former missionaries were doubtful if it was the right decision but followed the lead from Rome in a spirit of obedience. As a consequence they did not suffer the indignity of being lumped together with the Portuguese Church and being later expelled by the Marxist government. Those who did return later did so with honour and carried on pastoral work with an enhanced reputation for justice, building on the foundation of their predecessors.



François Richard visitation at Beira, in November 2002.

**Standing from left to right:** Herber Bernard, Eberle Josef, Coughil Odilo, Gebala Hinkelmann Hermann-Joseph, Angibaud Norbert, Henriques (stagiaire), Richard François (Superior General), Zubiria Jesus, Ssekamate Aloysius, Villaseñor Sergio  
**.In front from left to right:** Kinunda Quinbert, Perez Fernando.



In Nairobi, in 2000, our confrere Mgr. Francesco Silota, Bishop of Chimoio (MZ), with Diego Sarrio he has just ordained deacon.

# NOTES

**1** The Society of Missionaries of Africa was the name officially adopted at the Chapter of 1894. The early members of the Society liked to call themselves White Fathers and as the Society spread to many countries in Europe and Africa, this was the name by which they were generally known. The name contains a reference to the colour of their religious habit, not to their ethnic origin. For similar reasons, the Carmelites are known as White Friars, the Dominicans Blackfriars, and the Franciscans Greyfriars (their original habit being woven from undyed wool). In recent years, the word white has for some a racial connotation and they prefer to use the longer name of the Society. However, when writing about past events, it seems appropriate to use the name commonly used at the time. In his allocution to the eighth caravan leaving for Mozambique, Cardinal Lavignerie remarked, The popular voice has baptised this little Society, still weak and obscure, by a new name, the White Fathers. The name comes from the colour of the habit, and also from the ardour of their charity, from the interior sun which ignites and lights up their souls...In the sight of God they shine with justice and charity. (Lavignerie, *Instructions aux Missionnaires*, Namur, 1950, p. 377)

**2** *The aforesaid King and Queen (of Spain) promised... neither... will they disturb, trouble or molest..., the said king and prince of Portugal or the future sovereigns of Portugal or their kingdoms in the status of possession or quasi-possession which they hold over all the trade, lands, and barter of Guinea, with its gold mines, or over any other islands, shores, sea coasts, or lands, discovered or to be discovered, found or to be found.* Pope Sixtus IV, *Aeterni regis*.

**3** Fifteen nations took part in the Berlin conference of 1884-5: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden-Norway (united until 1905), the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), the United Kingdom and the United States.

**4** Monomotapa was derived from Mwenemutapa meaning Prince of the Land and strictly speaking referred to the ruler.

**5** Among the ruins of the fortress at Sena, however, the missionaries did discover the site of the chapel.

**6** Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo was born the son of a country squire in 1699. After a career as a diplomat he became Minister of Foreign Affairs. In this post he became a favourite of King Joseph I who made him chief minister in 1755. In that office he carried out many financial and economic reforms. Ennobled as Marquess of Pombal, he was effectively the ruler of Portugal until the King died in 1777.

**7** Livingstone was reproved by the British Foreign Office for publishing his comments.

**8** As Hilaire Belloc wrote, *Whatever happens, we have got The Maxim gun, and they have not.*

**9** Today Zambia and Zimbabwe

**10** That reference was changed in 1956 being hardly consonant with membership of NATO.

**11** Mozambique's status as a colony was taken for granted in the Colonial Act drawn up by Salazar in 1930. Only in 1951 was Mozambique attached to metropolitan Portugal.

**12** However, the Council of Ministers resolved that in recognition of the services rendered by D. Antonio Barroso beyond the seas to the Fatherland and in acknowledgment of his personal virtues, a life pension shall be granted him by the Colonial Office. In the same statement the government also claimed to be acting in defence of freedom of religion.

**13** A note on anticlericalism: The immense crowds drawn to Fatima in 1917 were of the same nation as men like Costa who preached a militant anti-clerical secularism. There is an apparent paradox of a nation with an instinct to spread spiritual values to overseas territories electing an anti-religious government. Anti-clericalism arises where the clergy cling to a hierarchic priest-centred church and minimise active participation of the laity in the Church. The laity become lethargic, having been fed for centuries on pious devotions and lacking any intellectual content in their faith. Some come to regard the priests as privileged tyrants, ruling the lives of the faithful with an irrational authority. The clergy tend to become sensitive and hostile to any challenge to their prestige. Clerical and anticlerical characteristics exist at the same time and feed off each other. However, one does not have to be a Marxist to observe that conflict often produces progress. The aggressive anti-religious measures of the republican government stimulated a new energy among the faithful and even roused many out of their religious apathy.

**14** General Assembly of the UN adopted resolution 1514(XV) in December 1960 "the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation." Portugal did not support the resolution, nor did eight other nations including the USA, Great Britain, France, and South Africa.

**15** In neighbouring Tanganyika, a hut tax of one shilling (at that time, the price of a goat) was imposed to motivate Africans to seek paid work.

**16** Lusitania was the name of the south of Portugal in the time of the Roman Empire.

**17** In 1967 Bishops were paid 20,000 escudos per month. At the exchange rate of the time, it was equal to \$700 and worth about \$5,000 in 2015.

**18** Garin reported the temperature in December at Magagade to vary between 37 and 40 degrees.

- 19** Fernando Perez : *Memórias dos Misionários de África em Moçambique* Benicassim 2012 p.36.
- 20** Salazar despised both Nazism and Italian fascism. He regarded them as pagan revivals and spoke of Mussolini as a deluded Caesarist.
- 21** The Second Overseas Plan of Salazar's government stated: We must people Africa with Europeans who can assure the stability of sovereignty and promote the Portuguesisation of the native population.
- 22** Livinhac Correspondence 51012.
- 23** General council minutes 4th December 1933.
- 24** General Council minutes 24th April 1945.
- 25** Zelia Pereira, 'Les Jésuites et la formation d'élites au Mozambique 1961-74' in *Social Sciences and Missions* (Lausanne) no.14, 2004, pp. 75-116.
- 26** Ibid.
- 27** In his diary Resende wrote that there is a collection of Franciscans here who should be in a museum. In their defence it should be pointed out that the younger Franciscans in Portugal did not share their views but were unwilling to be appointed to Mozambique because of the political situation.
- 28** Garin to MG Magagade 7 July 1946
- 29** The first Mozambican priest in modern times was Fr Alexandre José Maria dos Santos, OFM, ordained in 1953, later Cardinal Archbishop of Maputo.
- 30** The Chinese people at Beira numbered 4,300 in the early 1970's.
- 31** Quoted by Morier-Genoud, Eric D., *Catholic church in Colonial Mozambique*, Thesis, Binghamton University, p.136.
- 32** The three first graduates from Zobwe to be ordained were Mateo Gwenjere, Domingos Ferrão and Manuel Muçawuro. They had started their studies at Zobwe in 1950. According to Cabrita Joao: *The tortuous road to democracy*, NY. 2000, pp.83-4, Gwenjere was abducted from Kenya by a member of the Tanzanian security police Supt J. Matola in March 1975 and was handed over to Frelimo. In the communist tradition, he was given a show trial and executed.
- 33** The Portuguese love flowery and exotic language.
- 34** The diary of Gorongosa of 7-2-52 describes how the women were mobilised to open up new fields along the roads. In consequence, they were unable to protect their own crops from monkeys and wild pigs. When will holy liberty come for the children of God? asked the diarist.
- 35** Quoted by his former vicar general, Bishop Teixeira of Quelimane at the funeral of Don Resende.
- 36** Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (International and State Defence Police).
- 37** Cras to Volker MAfr 746668.

**38** Evidence of Fr Gwenjere to UN committee 6 November 1967.

**39** Perez, Fernando, *Mémoires des Missionnaires d'Afrique au Mozambique* p.68.

**40** The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was created for the collective defence of its members. It included most western European countries, the United States and Canada. It was created to oppose any expansion of the Soviet Union.

**41** Quoted by James Duffy, in 'Portuguese Africa' in *Gann and Duignan's Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960*, Cambridge, 1970, p.192.

**42** When completed in December 1974, the Cahora Bassa Dam was 171 metres high and 303 metres wide. It holds back the largest artificial lake in the world which began to fill in 1974 reaching a maximum length of 250 km and a width of 38 kms. Five turbines generate a total of 2000 megawatts. Until now the greater part of the electricity is sold to South Africa.

**43** Fernando Perez : *Memórias dos Misionários de África em Moçambique* Benicassim, 2012, p.91.

**44** Neven wrote to the Superior General of the Sisters. While praising the Sisters for the good work some of them were doing, he deplored the actions of Sisters Filomena and Tereza for originating the accusations against Wels. How can a missionary work with confidence when he knows that his closest collaborators spy on him and denounce him to the police? He asked to have them moved.

**45** During the 1960's, Salazar encouraged migration to Mozambique. Six thousand Portuguese peasants were given farms, mostly on land taken from Mozambicans. The plan proved expensive and, since most of them were illiterate and unskilled in tropical agriculture, they failed to stimulate the economy. According to Fr Gwenjere, giving evidence before a United Nations committee in 1967, compensation to the displaced farmers amounted to seventeen dollars in cash and the grant of a less fertile plot.

**46** *Vie du Père Lebbe : Le tonnerre qui chante au loin* by Chanoine Jacques Leclercq. Its publication created a minor sensation in 1953. Père Lebbe's proposal to appoint Chinese Bishops met the approval of Benedict XV. who dispatched Costantini to make a visitation of China after which the first Chinese Bishops were ordained in 1926. Lebbe drew the ire of his Lazarist superiors who returned him to Europe for several years. The case for Lebbe's beatification was opened in 1988 by the Little Brothers of St. John the Baptist of Taichung whose order he had founded, not by his Lazarist colleagues.

**47** Manuel Vieira Pinto was born December 8, 1923 in São Pedro de Aboim, Portugal. Ordained priest on August 7, 1949 he was appointed Bishop of Nam-pula on April 21 1967 and made Archbishop in 1984. He was the only Portuguese Bishop to remain in Mozambique after Independence. At the time of writing (September 2015) he is living in retirement.

**48** Bishops were paid by the civil administration on the same scale as a provincial governor. In 1967 that amounted to 20,000 escudos a month: equivalent

at the time to US\$700, valued at \$5000 in 2015. The government also paid for buildings and subsidised most of the ordinary running expenses of the Church. In consequence, the faithful were accustomed to contribute very little.

**49** Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

**50** Bishop Cabral, born 1918 and ordained priest in 1942, was appointed auxiliary Bishop of Braga in Portugal in 1965. On the 3rd July 1967 he was transferred to the see of Beira.

**51** Blommaert E. *Mozambique – Une église signe du salut...pour qui?* p.134.

**52** Classified documents of the US Dept of State relating to the famine were revealed by Wikileaks.

**53** He later worked in Tanzania and in 2013 he celebrated his hundredth birthday. There is a full page obituary of this priest, Including his experiences in Mozambique, in

[http://sfogliabile.rivistamissioniconsolata.it/2013/MC\\_11\\_2013/files/assets/basic-html/page9.html](http://sfogliabile.rivistamissioniconsolata.it/2013/MC_11_2013/files/assets/basic-html/page9.html)

**54** The decree *Christus Dominus*, 3.2, stated: *It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan Bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate.*

**55** Mgr Duarte de Almeida, although of Portuguese nationality, was to be expelled from Mozambique at the same time as the White Fathers.

**56** In the international press, news of reprisals and massacres was repressed effectively until after the departure of the White Fathers. Instances were later well reported and are too numerous to detail here.

**57** In letter to the Generalate of 21.6.71.

**58** Cras to Volker MGA 746885-089.

**59** Perez Fernando, *Memórias dos Misionários de África em Moçambique*, Benicassim, 2012, ch.18.

**60** In 1969, Marcelo Caetano who had succeeded Salazar the previous August, changed the name PIDE to DGS - Direção-General de Segurança - General Security Directorate - but its character and methods did not change.

**61** Now called the Comboni Fathers.

**62** Mozambique Revolution No.48 July-September 1971.

**63** *Jeune Afrique* 22nd June 1971.

**64** In all eight dioceses, there was a total of 35 African priests. There were no African Bishops.

**65** The BBC broadcast this unsubstantiated tale in its news services.

**66** Cardinal Villot was born in 1905 and ordained in 1930 for the archdiocese of Paris where he became auxiliary Bishop in 1954. Twenty-one years later

he was Archbishop of Lyon, primate of the French hierarchy. He remained at Lyon for only two years before entering the service of the Vatican in 1967. He became Secretary of State in 1969 during the reign of Paul VI. He remained in office until his death in 1979.

**67** I cannot approve this decision. I replied to him, “Holy Father, the White Fathers do not ask you to.”

**68** Bishop Jozef Blomjous was born in 1908. After ordination at Carthage in 1934 he was appointed to Mwanza. In April 1946 he was designated Vicar Apostolic of Musoma-Maswa and four years later was transferred to Mwanza which became a diocese in 1953. As Bishop he had a reputation for being innovative: he founded a pastoral research centre, an anthropological study house, a retreat house, and a library. He was the first Bishop in Tanzania to require parishes to be self-reliant and his junior seminary at Nyegezi was the first in Tanzania to introduce fifth and sixth forms. He resigned in 1965 in favour of his auxiliary Bishop Renuvus Butibubage. In the years that followed he was a member of the Secretariat for Non-Believers, a consultant of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and Professor of Missiology at the University of Ottawa. During the Vatican Council he had a great influence among the Bishops from Africa who played an important role in the reform of the liturgy and the introduction of the vernacular at Mass. He died on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1992.

**69** Little has been said about the Protestants. They had always been less favoured by the Portuguese government but that also gave them a certain extra freedom. Some of the early leaders of Frelimo were Protestants including Mondlane.

**70** Wiriya was fully investigated by a Portuguese journalist, Felicia Cabrita. She based her research mainly on the testimonies of soldiers and published her findings. She put the figure of those killed as three hundred.

**71** To suppress any potential opposition within the party, Uria Simango and his wife Celina were executed without trial as were other prominent Frelimo dissidents, including Paulo Gumane and Adelino Gwambe, former leaders of UDENAMO.

**72** Samora Moises Machel was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1933 in a village in the south of Mozambique where he attended the mission elementary school. After completing the fourth class, he trained as a nurse in Lourenço Marques until he joined Frelimo. He proved to be a tough and intelligent soldier and a charismatic leader. He never used his power to enrich himself.

**73** During the decades after the independence of Mozambique Europe and America were transferring much capital and industry to the low wage economies of Asia. In Socialist ideology, however, investment is identified with capitalist exploitation. As elsewhere in the continent, the leaders of Mozambique resisted the inflow of foreign capital which would have laid the basis for industrialisation and technical education. Instead of competing with Asian countries for the trans-

fer of manufacturing and the technology which went with it, they preferred a smaller national economy over which they had complete control. Society of the Missionaries of Africa.