

# DEMOCRACY



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'A FAMILY OF THE STATE':  
BUREAUCRATIC IMPEDIMENTS TO DEMOCRATIC REFORM  
IN MOZAMBIQUE

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'AFRICANA'

**"A Family of the State":  
Bureaucratic impediments to democratic reform  
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The historic April election in South Africa has raised great hope for the future of democracy in Africa. Now, neighboring Mozambique is preparing for its first multi-party election since gaining independence in 1975. A national electoral census will take place from 1 June to 15 August 1994, with the election scheduled for 27-28 October 1994. To insure that the population receives appropriate civic education in preparation for the election, 1600 five-person brigades have been trained to conduct the census.<sup>1</sup> Prospects for a "free and fair" election are encouraging. While it is true that democracy cannot take root without an open electoral process, it cannot flourish on that alone. I do not, of course, wish to demean the importance of elections, for they represent an important point of popular engagement with government, at least potentially. Indeed, that the election in South Africa was deemed to be "free and fair" is no small achievement; but so was the election in another of South Africa's neighbor's, Angola. What matters, surely, is what follows the election; in the case of South Africa, the quality of the democracy that takes shape as a consequence of the election. And here, as in the case of Angola, there are many potential obstacles in the path towards the development of a government which genuinely reflects the popular will. One of these is the state bureaucracy.

Looking back on the first decade of African independence, Crawford Young concluded that "the heart of the colonial state was its bureaucracy. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the colonial era is the modern administrative infrastructure." No doubt deeply influenced by his great knowledge of Zaire's precipitous path to independence, Young was prepared to argue further that

the disabilities of decolonization that impairs or destroys the administrative infrastructure are prolonged and severe. The supreme achievement of power-transfer statecraft lies in transmitting the bureaucracy intact to the independent government. This implies both a sound strategy of localization and a phasing of devolution of authority to the nationalist successor elite, so that power and

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<sup>1</sup> *Noticias* (Maputo), 4/21/94, 4/25/94, 4/26/94, 4/30/94, and 5/6/94.

responsibility are never tempted to destroy their most indispensable weapon against underdevelopment.<sup>2</sup>

Not everyone shares this rosy assessment. Among conservative scholars, L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, who edited the volume in which Young wrote his important essay on decolonization, take a much bleaker view of colonial bureaucratization. Referring specifically to the growth of marketing boards and their attendant bureaucracies, they emphasize the potential for graft, corruption, and state appropriation by single-party regimes. Thus, they argue, "The new dispensation may thereby greatly strengthen the bureaucratic element in society," which they regard "as one of Europe's most fateful legacies to the emergent states of Africa."<sup>3</sup> At the other end of the ideological spectrum, this assessment is shared by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Henri Moniot, who speak of "a maladjusted bureaucracy, because inherited from the colonial administration, and moreover dangerously overdeveloped." Indeed, they emphasize not only the problems posed by the "weight of a bureaucratic apparatus which the young states are not able to master," but also the emergence of "a bureaucratic aristocracy despised by the disadvantaged masses, because of its exactions and corruption."<sup>4</sup> Put differently, "One of the results is that the independent administration may be seen by the African masses to be as exploitative as the colonial administration."<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, complaints today about the dead hand of bureaucracy, and the corruption and inefficiency that inevitably accompany it, are legion in Africa and reflect what Bill Freund calls "the problematic relationship between the state and the mass of the people." More specifically, Freund asserts:

For the mass of Africans the oppressors have been identified again and again in the course of demonstrations, riots and revolts, as the agents of the state. For worker and cultivator they constitute an ambitious class of private accumulators eager to subject the population to collective state appropriation. The bureaucracy is so corrupt, so committed to procedural and managerial practices of limited productive value despite its ideology of development, that its incessant growth can only be felt

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<sup>2</sup> Crawford Young, "Decolonization in Africa," in L.H. Gann & Peter Duignan (eds.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960*, 2 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> L.H. Gann & Peter Duignan, *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonialism in Africa South of the Sahara* (Stanford, 1971; 1st ed., 1967), p. 272; see also, P.T. Bauer, "British Colonial Africa: Economic Retrospect and Aftermath," in Gann & Duignan (eds.), *Colonialism in Africa*, 4 (Cambridge, 1975), p. 645.

<sup>4</sup> C. Coquery-Vidrovitch & H. Moniot, *L'Afrique noire de 1800 à nos jours* (Paris, 1974), pp. 382, 427.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie Rubin & Brian Weinstein, *Introduction to African Politics: A Continental Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1977), p. 59. Cf. Henry L. Bretton, *Power and Politics in Africa* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 220-224; Irving Leonard Markovitz, *Power and Class in Africa* (Englewood Cliffs, 1977), pp. 324-341.

as a hated burden by the peasantry in particular, whose commodity sales sustain the state in many cases.<sup>6</sup>

Although this conclusion may be generally true, it neither helps us to distinguish the African experience from others nor to differentiate between different African experiences. On the one hand, Henry Jacoby's work makes it clear that while bureaucratization is universal, in the Third World "those phenomena produced by the 'bureaucratic sickness' are extremely difficult to contain, 'as there is no control but that of the bureaucracy itself.'" Among historians of Africa, on the other hand, only Dennis McCarthy has exposed the fallacious assumption "that if you have seen one colonial bureaucracy in action, you have seen them all."<sup>7</sup> His meticulous reconstruction of the relationship between the colonial bureaucracy and underdevelopment in Tanganyika may not convince readers in all its detail, but his methodology commands attention, and his conclusions emphasize the importance of undertaking comparable case studies that examine carefully the colonial bureaucratic legacy in individual African states.

In this paper I hope to reveal both the specific historical role that the Portuguese colonial bureaucracy played in colonial Mozambique and the consequent manner in which class struggle focused on the state bureaucracy in Mozambique during the first decade of independence. Before we can proceed to this analysis, however, it is necessary to examine the development of the modern state bureaucracy in metropolitan Portugal.

Although Portugal was burdened by one form or another of bureaucratic state for several centuries, the construction of the New State under the leadership of António Salazar marked a critical departure both for Portugal and its colonies. Following a chaotic Republican period (1910-1926) and two years of military dictatorship (1926-28), Salazar set out to fashion a state that was built on a combination of fierce nationalism and social corporatism. Writing before the revolution of 25 April 1974 that spelled the end of the New State and Portugal's African empire, A.H. de Oliveira Marques considered that

it seems beyond doubt that the corporative state shaped a new Portugal, very much in the socialist way, which will be hard to destroy.... the corporate system built up an economically organized country, an interventionist state essentially different from the liberal, "laissez-faire" Republican order. Almost forty years of actual performance have made the Portuguese accustomed to, and more and more dependent upon, the state....In this sense, the corporate

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<sup>6</sup> Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society since 1800* (Bloomington, 1984), pp. 251-252.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Jacoby, *The Bureaucratization of the World* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 168. In this context I was struck by the dedication "To all men and women who have suffered the arrogance of Indian bureaucrat (sic) for the last two hundred years" in the polemic by R.S. Varma, *Bureaucracy in India* (Bhopal, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> D.M.P. McCarthy, *Colonial Bureaucracy and Creating Underdevelopment: Tanganyika, 1919-1940* (Ames, 1982), p. x.

system brought about a true revolution for Portugal, for it changed the country's basic structures.<sup>9</sup>

The New State was also anti-democratic and totalitarian. State participation in all aspects of the economy, Oliveira Marques observed, "became a matter of fact, a natural and indispensable condition, increasing everyone's dependency upon the administration." Nor was this tendency eroded over time. In the 1950s Portugal instituted comprehensive plans for domestic and colonial development, "the Portuguese equivalent of the famous Soviet Five-Year Plans."<sup>10</sup>

This portrait by the leading historian of modern Portugal stands in stark contrast to Richard Hammond's apologetic contention that "the Portuguese government and bureaucracy, regarded historically, are not exceptionally inhumane or irresponsible. Rather do they represent a survival that to many outside the Portuguese dominions appears an intolerable anachronism."<sup>11</sup> In fact, the New State was not an anachronistic survival, but instead bears comparison with Jacoby's totalitarian examples of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, in which, he reminds us, "the extreme development of this tendency [bureaucratization] can be explained in terms of the historical characteristics peculiar to Germany and Russia, but it did not take place outside the world in which we live."<sup>12</sup> Where Hammond is correct, however, is in his recognition that in Portugal there was "no external check on the conduct of bureaucrats in the field," not even a ruling political party, which did not exist in the New State.<sup>13</sup> And here, of course, he echoes Jacoby on Third World bureaucratization.

How has this legacy affected contemporary Portugal? Tom Gallagher reports that some four per cent of the national population were employed as civil servants, giving Portugal proportionately one of the world's largest bureaucracies.<sup>14</sup> "Excessive bureaucracy" and a "tangle of red tape" stifled economic activity, while "over-centralisation...has encouraged corruption and waste." Gallagher notes, too, that "a gargantuan bureaucracy has always been a feature of the Portuguese state," but specifically identifies the New State and the nationalizations following the 1974 revolution as giving rise to "the ludicrous and sometimes callous extent bureaucracy has gone to in Portugal." Among several vivid illustrations of this tendency and its perception by the Portuguese public, the characterization of the bureaucracy by one anonymous individual as "'fascism' in freedom" is

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<sup>9</sup> A.H. De Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal* (New York, 1972), 2, p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

<sup>11</sup> Richard J. Hammond, "Some Economic Aspects of Portuguese Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," in Gann & Duignan, *Colonialism in Africa*, 4, p. 277. For a penetrating revision of Hammond's thesis of uneconomic imperialism, see Gervase Clarence-Smith, *The third Portuguese empire 1825-1975: A study in economic imperialism* (Manchester, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Jacoby, *Bureaucratization*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Hammond, "Some Economic Aspects," p. 276.

<sup>14</sup> Tom Gallagher, *Portugal: A twentieth-century interpretation* (Manchester, 1983), p. 243.

especially striking. The principal artifact of this extraordinary state bureaucracy was the official tax-stamped paper (*papel selado*). As Gallagher concludes, and as anyone who has ever lived in Portugal can verify,

Stamped paper (which is not cheap) is the required currency a citizen needs even in the most trivial transaction involving the state. For illiterate people and rural folk, not surprisingly, the state is often something which is held in real dread.<sup>15</sup>

That Portugal has suffered from the highest rate of illiteracy in Europe throughout the twentieth century makes this observation all the more lamentable.<sup>16</sup>

For Mozambique, matters were no different under Portuguese colonial rule. Malyn Newitt remarks of the African colonies, in general, that

there was a steady increase in the scope and penetration of the administration. The hunger of the New State for statistics, reports and plans was no less than that of its predecessors, but now the lone labour of overworked *chefes* was supplemented by a growing number of government agencies and departments directing, monitoring, planning and regulating every aspect of colonial life. . . . The hand of the bureaucracy was everywhere: there was a form for everything and a decree governed every form of activity. It was in the nature of the régime to absorb all national life into the bureaucracy. . . . It was in essence a régime of bureaucrats.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, as James Duffy pointed out nearly three decades ago, "this formidable administrative service" was "larger in proportion to the size of the territory and number of its inhabitants than that of any other colonial power in Africa."<sup>18</sup> Volumes of colonial legislation vividly attest to the bureaucratic character of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa.<sup>19</sup>

With specific reference to Mozambique during the hegemony of the New State, this change of course was especially sharp. Much of Mozambique had previously been farmed out to various foreign concessionary companies and the East African colony was scarcely within the economic orbit of metropolitan Portugal. Leroy Vail remarks that Salazar saw the need for "a bureaucratic revolution" in that part of the empire and that "a small army of bureaucrats was posted to

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248-249.

<sup>16</sup> Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2, pp. 203-204.

<sup>17</sup> Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The Last Hundred Years* (London, 1981), pp. 186-187.

<sup>18</sup> James Duff, *Portuguese Africa* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 288.

<sup>19</sup> For Mozambique, see, e.g. Caxinata G. Sinai Cacodcar, *Código do Registo Civil da Província de Moçambique* (Lisboa, 1960); República Portuguesa, *Principal Legislação aplicável aos Indígenas da Província de Moçambique* (Lourenço Marques, 1960); and Francisco Pinto Ramos, *Resumo Sinóptico de Legislação da Província de Moçambique* (Lourenço Marques, 1955).

Mozambique: in the 1930s.<sup>20</sup> As in Portugal, the process of accelerated bureaucratization that dated to the origins of the New State was replicated in Mozambique.

The hand of the former colonial power can usually be detected everywhere in most post-colonial situations, but nowhere in Mozambique was this legacy more apparent than in the state structure itself. More than any other commentator, Barry Munslow has clearly identified the staggering dimensions of this stultifying system.

Frelimo inherited a lethargic, cumbersome, bureaucratic, racist and corrupt Portuguese colonial state machine festooned with red tape and special tax stamps-to be affixed in appropriate denominations in specific places on a million forms and filled in for virtually every activity the citizen would wish to undertake. It was nothing short of a nightmare. . . . the complicated procedures virtually excluded most Africans from such limited rights as they might legally have enjoyed. Frelimo's experience with the democratically elected people's committees of the liberated areas provided the beginnings of an alternative state, but the problems associated with taking over, transforming and controlling this grotesque monster were of an altogether different order.<sup>21</sup>

That this bureaucratic inheritance posed a significant threat to the possibilities of achieving a Mozambican revolution was apparent to the leadership of Frelimo even before independence. In 1971, President Samora Machel noted:

We have already seen that in an exploitative state, the entire apparatus of power - its laws, administration, courts, police, army - have the sole aim of maintaining exploitation, serving the exploiters. The state, power, laws are not neutral techniques or instruments that can equally well be used by the enemy or by us. So the decisive issue is not that of replacing European personnel by African personnel.

...  
We cannot found a people's state, with its own laws and administrative apparatus, on the basis of a state whose laws and administrative apparatus were totally conceived by the exploiters to serve themselves. It is not by ruling through a state designed to oppress the masses that one can serve the masses.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, and despite the fact that an enlarged version of this critical speech on "Establishing People's Power to Serve the Masses" was completed in 1974 and published in pamphlet form at

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<sup>20</sup> Leroy Vail, "The political economy of East-Central Africa," in David Birmingham & Phyllis M. Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa* (London, 1983), 2, p. 235.

<sup>21</sup> Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: the Revolution and its Origins* (London, 1983), p. 157

<sup>22</sup> *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary - Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Barry Munslow (London, 1985), pp. 11-12; see also p. 57 for a reiteration of this point in another 1974 speech.

independence, during the period of the Transitional Government (20 September 1974 to 25 June 1975) and in the euphoric months immediately following independence, this threat might not have been so obvious, because of both the disruption caused by the departure of most Portuguese civil servants and the wide range of more immediate problems facing the new government of Frelimo.

One specific context in which this difficulty became apparent was urban housing. Parallel to the situation in Portugal at the same time, nationalization of certain critical segments of the private sector compounded an already ponderous administrative machinery. Furthermore, as Allen and Barbara Isaacman point out, nationalization of housing "provided a new opportunity for the state bureaucracy to engage in corruption, and officials in the State Housing Authority (APIE) became notorious for allocating the best house to their families and friends."<sup>23</sup>

A particularly vivid index of the significance of this and other problems posed by the state bureaucracy can be found in letters to the editor that appear in *Tempo*, the leading news magazine in Mozambique. These letters both reflect the widespread disgruntlement that people felt in the early years of Mozambican independence and reveal the popular forces that drove official action against the state bureaucracy. Although *Tempo* served as an important vehicle for the dissemination of official Frelimo documents, it was never been an official party organ. Thus, the "Letters from the Readers" section of *Tempo* cannot be dismissed as a shadow forum being orchestrated by the party to serve previously defined goals.<sup>24</sup>

Housing, not surprisingly, is one of the objects of complaint in these letters. In the case of Magaiza Muianga Sebastião, for example, his attempts to secure housing in Matola and Maputo were consistently frustrated by bureaucratic inefficiency, obfuscation, and sheer callousness. Although housing to which he had been assigned was confirmed in several instances to be available by the local party group, either keys were missing, locks had been changed, or the appropriate papers had been misplaced. Consequently, although his July application had been approved in September, he was still without housing in December.<sup>25</sup> Problems of bureaucratic abuse were still apparent in APIE at the end of 1978, when a letter from four individuals complained about "these functionaries who want to take the place of colonialists, making work a privilege for satisfying their personal needs," and reminded readers that "they create discontent in the soul of the population through their negative methods of work."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Allen & Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982* (Boulder, 1983), p. 141; cf. James H. Mittleman, *Underdevelopment and the Transition to Socialism: Mozambique and Tanzania* (New York, 1981), p. 115.

<sup>24</sup> For selections from a similar reader's forum during the colonial era, see José Capela, *Mozambique pelo seu Povo: Cartas à "Voz Africana"* (Porto, 1971). Although these letters reveal implicitly the daily confrontation of ordinary Mozambicans with the Portuguese colonial bureaucracy, they do not specifically address themselves to that problem.

<sup>25</sup> *Tempo*, 322 (12/15/1976), pp. 2-3.

<sup>26</sup> *Tempo*, 430 (12/31/1978), p. 2.



Another major area of discontent during this period focused on the difficulty in obtaining identity cards. "I am writing this letter to the functionaries of Mozambique," begins Domingos Maibasse, "who up to here still have not abandoned bureaucratism." He then goes on to single out for criticism the workers in the Archive of Identification in Maputo and questions how long it takes for them to send out an identity card, which is an absolutely indispensable official document for all Mozambicans. In his own case, he had suffered only a single delay of several weeks beyond the initial promissory date. His concern, however, was a larger one.

What brings me to write this letter is that I am not the only one to whom this thing has happened. It was almost the majority of those present.

And I heard the criticisms of all those who had the same luck as mine. I was disturbed to see the People dispirited in the face of that situation.

Functionaries: Let us abandon bureaucratism!<sup>27</sup>

Considering the general problem of staffing official agencies with inexperienced personnel in the first ten years of independence, simple inefficiency was perhaps often the root cause of these situations.<sup>28</sup> But not all. Other complaints about the Archive of Identification mention harassment by bureaucrats and the citation of obscure regulations as the basis for demanding additional payments, while a writer from Beira was able to ascertain that several petitions to obtain a new identity card from the central Archive in Maputo were never even sent from the regional office, where two different clerks had given him no help at all.<sup>29</sup>

Similar criticisms were voiced by a number of other correspondents with respect to a wide range of state services. Alberto Mapume denounces those petty officials who only work when the head of section is present to watch over them and calls for each functionary to internalize the responsibilities inherent in a particular job.<sup>30</sup> Other writers report problems of procrastination, general confusion, bureaucratic delays, unwillingness to reform work habits after official calls to transform the state apparatus in October 1976, and arrogance in dealing with the public.<sup>31</sup>

A somewhat different perspective on the problems associated with the state bureaucracy comes from Martirio de Sousa Mangué, himself a junior clerk in the state sector of Xai-Xai, who points out that the enormous difference in pay and fringe benefits between minor personnel and higher functionaries in the state administration was the cause of much resentment and "humiliation" in the

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<sup>27</sup> *Tempo*, 305 (8/8/1976), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Tempo*, 351 (6/26/1977), p. 11 and editorial comment.

<sup>29</sup> *Tempo*, 322 (12/5/1976), p. 3; 346 (5/22/1977), p. 3; 355 (7/24/1977), p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Tempo*, 292 (5/9/1976), pp. 2-3.

<sup>31</sup> *Tempo*, 305 (8/8/1976), pp. 2-3; 323 (12/12/1976), pp. 2-3; 352 (7/3/1977), p. 4; 355 (7/24/1977), pp. 3-4; 367 (10/16/1977), p. 3; & 427 (12/10/1978), pp. 3-4.

ranks of the former.<sup>32</sup> Such resentment, however justified, might have been responsible for many of the bureaucratic practices that so agitated ordinary correspondents to *Tempo* during this period.

Perhaps taking a cue from its readers, *Tempo* featured cover stories on the problems of bureaucratization as early as June 1976.<sup>33</sup> Its analysis focuses on the nature of the colonial functionary and of colonial functionalism, which it asserts

was a bureaucratic machine where people were served according to whether or not they were in the service of the exploiting class. . . .

Thus, colonial functionalism was created to serve the exploiting class and as such it was armed with all the paper, laws, stamps, sections and their characteristic small fry, petty officials and big chiefs.<sup>34</sup>

It then proceeds to discuss the class nature of the struggle which was being waged in the heart of the state bureaucracy both by those individuals who had served in the colonial administration and by those who had been recruited into the state sector since independence. Finally, in accordance with the analysis developed at the closing session of the Eighth Meeting of the Central Committee of Frelimo (11-27 February 1976 in Maputo) that since it was the state apparatus itself which threatened the Mozambican revolution, it was therefore logically necessary to destroy that state apparatus, *Tempo* focuses attention on the critical need to decolonize the bureaucratic mentality that pervades such an administrative system. Indeed, *Tempo* specifically identifies an important component of this national struggle, the elevation of the bureaucracy "to the level of ideology: bureaucratism."<sup>35</sup>

The analysis of the state bureaucracy and the problem of bureaucratism that had emerged within a year of Mozambican independence is strongly reminiscent of Trotsky's criticism of bureaucratization in the Soviet Union. While he recognized the need for professional, modern administration in a revolutionary state - an assessment that was shared by the leaders of Frelimo - Trotsky conceived of bureaucratism as something altogether different. "Instead of acceptable administration," writes David Lovell, for Trotsky "bureaucratism signified the unacceptable aspects of bureaucracy: corruption and inefficiency, its becoming a power serving its own interests, and particularly the development of a more ambitious outlook - a 'world view,' in fact - rather than the professional ethos sketched above."<sup>36</sup> Whether or not there was a direct theoretical connection

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<sup>32</sup> *Tempo*, 356 (7/31/1977), pp. 4-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Tempo*, 296 (6/6/1976), pp. 16-23; for the cover of this issue, see Figure 1. A related story appears in *Tempo*, 297 (3/7/1976), pp. 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> *Tempo*, 296 (6/6/1976), p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23. For the text of President Machel's speech to which this refers, see *Tempo*, 283 (3/7/1976), pp. 54-55.

<sup>36</sup> David W. Lovell, *Trotsky's Analysis of Soviet Bureaucratization: A Critical Essay* (London, 1985), p. 21.

here, within sixteen months of independence, Frelimo found it necessary to launch a major national campaign designed specifically to grapple with the Portuguese colonial bureaucratic legacy.

The first National Seminar of the State Apparatus and Public Service was held at the northern port of Nacala during 15-20 October 1976. Taking its cue from the Eighth Session of the Central Committee, the Seminar rigorously examined virtually all aspects of the inherited contradictions in the state apparatus and attempted to chart a course for constructing a new state administrative system in which the central political commitment of people's power could be effected. Oscar Monteiro, who was then Minister in the Presidency, presided over the Seminar. In his opening address, he sounded the alarm in these terms:

**'We can now see that instead of impressing upon the state apparatus throughout Mozambique the popular and revolutionary character it had assumed in the liberated areas, we were swamped by the administrative machinery left by colonialism. Instead of giving directions, we were controlled and directed.'<sup>37</sup>**

The Seminar displayed the enthusiasm and vitality that typified all of Frelimo's activities during this period, and the participants characteristically created a song for the occasion:

Let us all go united, decided  
To destroy the exploitative apparatus  
To construct the new state that serves the People

Frelimo has already well delineated  
The orientations to carry out  
And the words of President Samora  
Give us methods to follow  
We do not want the old functionary  
Who despises the People and only seeks privileges

But we want the privilege for all  
To be this: to serve the People  
Long live, long live People's power  
Long live the class which directs History  
Workers allied with peasants  
To crush the bourgeoisie.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Munslow, *Mozambique*, p. 158. The original text may be found in *Tempo* (Maputo) 317 (10/31/1976), p. 57. A full account of the Seminar's proceedings and resolutions can be found in *Tempo*, 317 (10/31/1976) pp. 54-64 (which includes the original text of Oscar Monteiro's comment at p. 57); 318 (11/17/1976), pp. 41-48; & 319 (11/14/1976), pp. 38-47. The cover of Issue 317 of *Tempo* is reproduced as Figure 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Tempo* 317 (10/31/1976), p. 59.

If exhortations and seminars could solve the world's problems, then Frelimo would long since have succeeded in eliminating bureaucratism in Mozambique.

Nine months after the Nacala Seminar, however, *Tempo* carried a series of articles that specifically drew attention to the persistent class struggle that was taking place within the state apparatus. In one of these, "The Story of a 'Family,'" the magazine criticizes the concept that there are those who consider themselves to belong to "a family of the state," and therefore are part of an inherently privileged class.<sup>39</sup> Throughout this period, too, *Tempo* featured a variety of cartoons that singled out bureaucratic abuses by enemies of the state, as well as a long feature comic strip entitled "Bureaucracy-Bureaucratism" at the end of 1976.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the ominous cartoon figure of Xiconhoca rapidly entered Mozambican popular culture as a representative of the enemy personified (see Figures 3-7).

Perhaps the most significant terrain of struggle against the colonial bureaucratic legacy was the national health services. From the moment of President Machel's impassioned call to "Transform the Central Hospital into a People's Hospital," which was delivered in Maputo on 6 October 1976, a vigorous campaign was waged to root out all remaining colonial vestiges in the area of health.<sup>41</sup> The task was formidable. According to David Bell, who worked as a medical cooperante in Zavala, Inhambane Province, from 1976-1978,

One overriding feature of the colonial health service, as in all areas of administration in Mozambique was the stifling bureaucracy. . . . If there was one thing that was invested with great care, attention and pride, it was the meticulous completing of forms, typing of reports, and filing of documents.

Accompanying this bureaucracy was a bureaucratic mentality that almost knew no bounds. Sick peasants were often interrogated about all their personal details, name of mother, name of father, number of identity card etc., before they were seen. I remember a young peasant who had just witnessed his wife's death, being told abusively that he had been stupid not to have brought his various documents with him so that the proper forms could be filled in. Needless to say the higher people were in the local class structure the less the attitude was taken.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Tempo* 359 (8/21/1977), pp. 59-64; also 355 (7/24/1977), pp. 58-63, & 356 (7/31/1977), pp. 57-63.

<sup>40</sup> *Tempo* 323 (12/12/1976), pp. 20-25.

<sup>41</sup> *Samora Machel*, pp. 142-155.

<sup>42</sup> Gillian Walt & Angela Melamed (eds.), *Mozambique: Towards a People's Health Service* (London, 1984), pp. 80-81. See Figure 7 for a Xiconhoca cartoon about bureaucratic problems at the Central Hospital in Maputo. For a thorough analysis of the larger Portuguese colonial heritage in African health services, see Martin F. Shapiro, "Medicine in the Service of Colonialism: Medical Care in Portuguese Africa 1885-1974," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1983, especially chapters 2 & 6.

As one of the Mozambican hospital orderlies commented to Dr. Bell one day, "There are people working here . . . who are colonised up to their bones. They don't want anything to change, change is not in their interests."<sup>43</sup>

The collection of essays in which Bell's testimony appears is full of similar reflections on the imprint of Portuguese colonial rule on Mozambique's health services with respect to the bureaucratization of both structures and mentalities. Moreover, even when new administrative structures were actually created, Bell suggests that "The form of a new structure often retained a great deal of authoritarian bureaucracy . . . ." Thus, in coming to grips with his experiences at Zavala, he realized that he had

learned much about the realities of a colonial inheritance in health care and how an understanding of Mozambique's colonial history is crucial to an understanding of the political process taking place there now. . . . Often, although the content of the work had changed, its form remained steeped in reactionary colonial methods.<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding the launching of a full scale assault on "the enemy within," which was identified as a national priority by Frelimo in a speech of the President's at Maputo on 18 March 1980, the struggle to overcome the multiple aspects of bureaucratism in the health services of independent Mozambique - not to mention every other major sector of national life - continued.<sup>45</sup> Nor was the issue resolved at the Fourth Congress of Frelimo, which was held 26-30 April 1983 at Maputo. To be sure, the Fourth Congress was remarkable for the open expression of popular criticism and the seriousness with which such analyses were taken by the party leadership. But although the state apparatus and its attendant bureaucracy were specifically targeted for streamlining and decentralization, the Fourth Congress, as Joseph Hanlon wisely observes, "did not so much make changes as set the stage for changes."<sup>46</sup> The reason for this, Hanlon points out, is that the state machinery was burdened by middle-level officials who have variously been identified by Frelimo leaders as "aspirants to the bourgeoisie," an "internal bourgeoisie," and even a "national bureaucratic bourgeoisie."<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, because of the regular exchange of personnel between the party and the state, state officials "often cloak their bureaucratic position with Party credibility. So the state

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<sup>43</sup> Walt & Melamed (eds.), *Mozambique*, p. 82.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 91. Cf. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London, 1984), pp. 55-71 on health care.

<sup>45</sup> *Samora Machel*, pp. 86-103, especially at 93. See also, Richard Williams, "We are declaring war on the enemy within," *People's Power in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau*, 16 (1980), pp. 30-39, and in Bertil Egerö, "Development trends and political democracy in post-independence Mozambique," *AKUT* 22 (Uppsala, 1982), pp. 2-11, especially ¶ 5 & 6.

<sup>46</sup> Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 251; see also *ibid.*, pp. 202-209 and cf. Paul Fauvet, "Frelimo's IV Congress," *People's Power in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau*, 21 (1983), pp. 13-18.

<sup>47</sup> Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 185.

group is inside the Party."<sup>48</sup> Shades of Trotsky's concern about "bureaucratization in the . . . party apparatus."<sup>49</sup>

It is significant that Hanlon, whose book arguably remains the most balanced account of Mozambique since independence, chooses to conclude his opening chapter by sounding the warning that

bureaucracy has proved a refuge for the incompetent. The Portuguese left behind a complex system requiring formal petitions, tax stamps and rubbed-stamped signatures. Frelimo never dismantled this system, and for anything difficult or unusual, the answer is often that the petition is not right, another signature is needed, or someone else is responsible.<sup>50</sup>

This criticism is reiterated by Michel Cahen, who contends that Frelimo never succeeded in controlling the state apparatus. He notes, in particular, the conservatism of district administrators, for whom change is the enemy, which he assigns not to their personalities, but to their function.

Ils aspirent donc à la tranquillité. Ils vivent dans la même maison, avec la même voiture, parfois le même "boy" que l'ex-administrateur colonial et apparaissent souvent aux yeux de la population d'une manière non fondamentalement différente. Mal connue, cette strate bureaucratique a sans doute un rôle capital dans l'échec des villages communautaires.<sup>51</sup>

Faced at every turn with setbacks at the hands of the state bureaucracy, it is little wonder that popular aspirations were so often frustrated during this decade.

In light of the devastating war that shattered Mozambique from the time that Renamo began to receive South African military supplies in 1980, and recovery from which constitutes the principal challenge to national reconstruction, one might argue that the threat of bureaucratism is a secondary issue, and in one sense it is.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the inability of Frelimo to achieve many of the transformations that it so diligently pursued in the first decade of independence can be directly attributed to its failure to deal effectively with the legacy of the Portuguese colonial

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Lovell, *Trotsky's Analysis*, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> Michel Cahen, "État et pouvoir populaire dans le Mozambique indépendant," *Politique Africaine*, 19 (1985), p. 59; see also his *Mozambique - La Révolution implosée: Études sur 12 ans d'indépendance (1975-1987)* (Paris, 1987), especially pp. 154-158. For similar criticism, see John Saul, "Rethinking the Frelimo State," in *Socialist Register 1993* (London, 1993).

<sup>52</sup> The literature is growing, but see *Conspicuous Destruction: War, Famine and the Reform Process in Mozambique - An Africa Watch Report* (New York, 1992).

bureaucracy. Nor have these problems disappeared, as even a casual reading of the Mozambican press reveals. For example, a recent story about a bureaucratic delay in getting funds from the Central Bank of Mozambique to a project designed to encourage local agriculture in Mocula district, in Zambezia Province, echoes Cahen's critique.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, complaints about excessive bureaucracy and the lack of sufficient notary publics in connection with the need for verification of documentation of identity cards for school candidates recall reports about identity card abuses in the period immediately after independence. One man is reported to have waited in line more than six hours to get his son's identity card photocopied, while another, after eight hours, "continued without knowing until what time he was going to remain in that infinite queue."<sup>54</sup> Should Frelimo win the October election, it will still have to resolve this fundamental, hitherto intractable, problem if it is to deliver the fruits of democracy to the people of Mozambique.

I began this paper by counterposing different scholarly perspectives on the bureaucratic legacy of colonial rule in Africa. That the Mozambican case bears out the more pessimistic of these assessments seems indisputable. What is significant, if not unique, about Mozambique is the degree to which the struggle that continues to be waged against what Trotsky called "bureaucratism" and what Jacoby calls "the bureaucratic sickness" bears out the latter's thesis that "The real problem posed by the bureaucratic process is its relationship to democratic values."<sup>55</sup> Although the focus of Jacoby's concern is the survival of bourgeois democracy in the West, his thesis is no less real for the development and survival of democracy in Africa. Finally, there is a lesson here for the democratically elected government of South Africa, which surely must address the fundamental challenge posed to democracy and to fulfillment of the aspirations of all the people of South Africa by the bureaucratic apparatus of the apartheid state. For while it may be historically specific, South Africa is not unique, any more than is Mozambique, although as Hanlon cautions, its leaders often compound their problems by assuming that it is.<sup>56</sup> Neither Mozambique nor South Africa can afford to have its political leaders make that mistake again.

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<sup>53</sup> *Noticias*, 12/10/93, p.3.

<sup>54</sup> *Noticias*, 1/7/94, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Jacoby, *Bureaucratization*, p. 198. See also, Eva Etzioni-Hayek, *Bureaucracy and democracy: A political dilemma* (London, 1983), especially ch. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 243.

# Tempo

UNBENARINDO  
NO BANCO PPS RUS

## O QUE É O ORÇAMENTO DE ESTADO



FUNCCIONARIOS  
BUROCRACIA  
BUROCRATISMO

Figure 1. Tempo, 296 (6/6/1976).



# Tempo

INQUÉRITO  
SOM E ESCURO DE  
13 DE OUTUBRO



DESCANGALHAR O APARELHO  
DE ESTADO COLONIAL

Figure 2. Tempo, 317 (10/31/1976). Dismantle the apparatus of the colonial state [note the symbolically potent helmet]. The sign on the bureaucrat's hand reads "Wait."



Figure 3. Tempo, 296 (6/6/1976). At the top, a bureaucrat states that the bureaucrats will hold a congress to study the best way to improve their public image. When the figure on the left asks how he can sign up, the big chief begins to list off all the documentation that will be required.

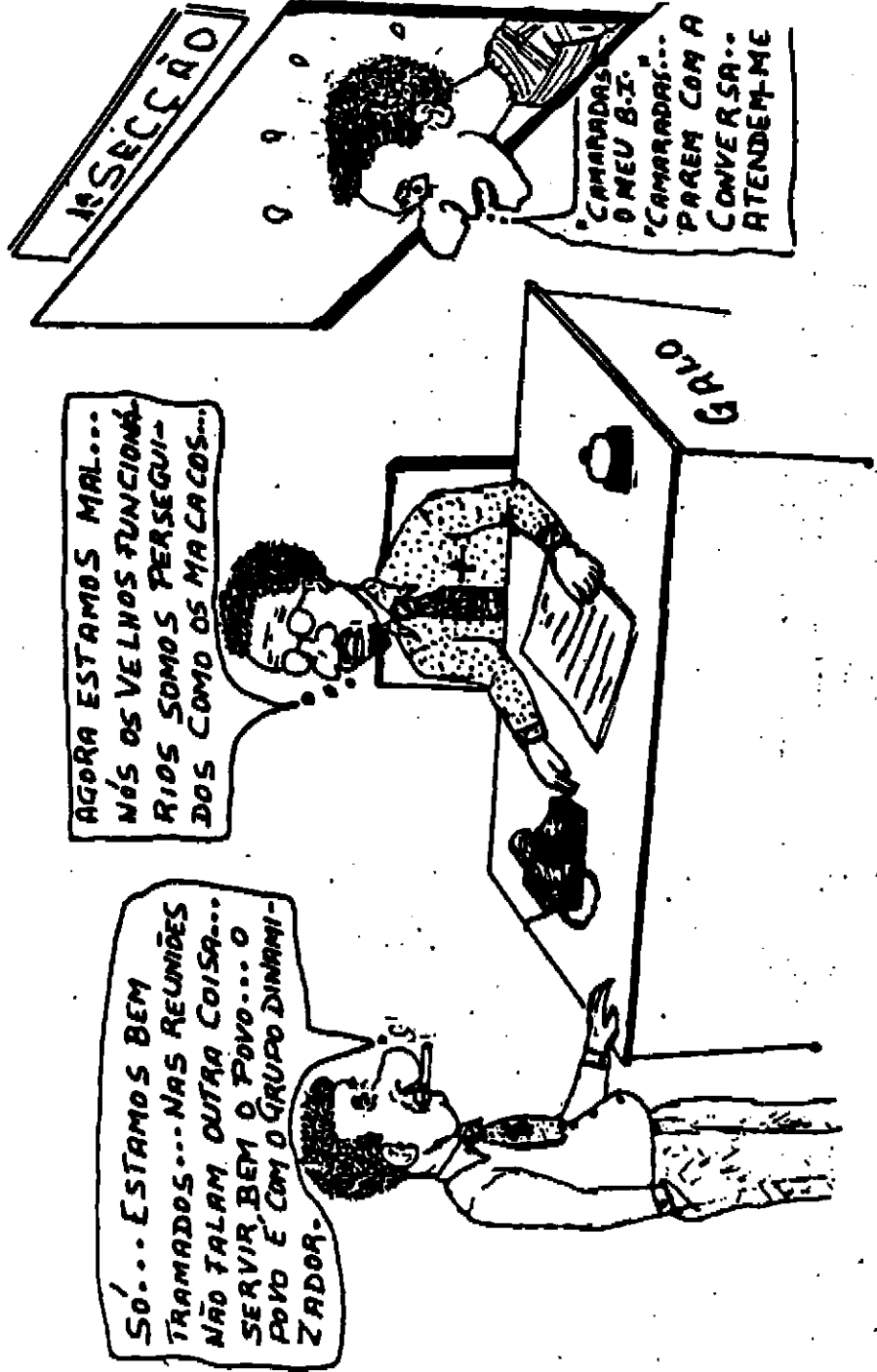


Figure 4. While the two bureaucrats complain about their own problems, the man at the window tries to get their attention so that he can get his Identifying Card.

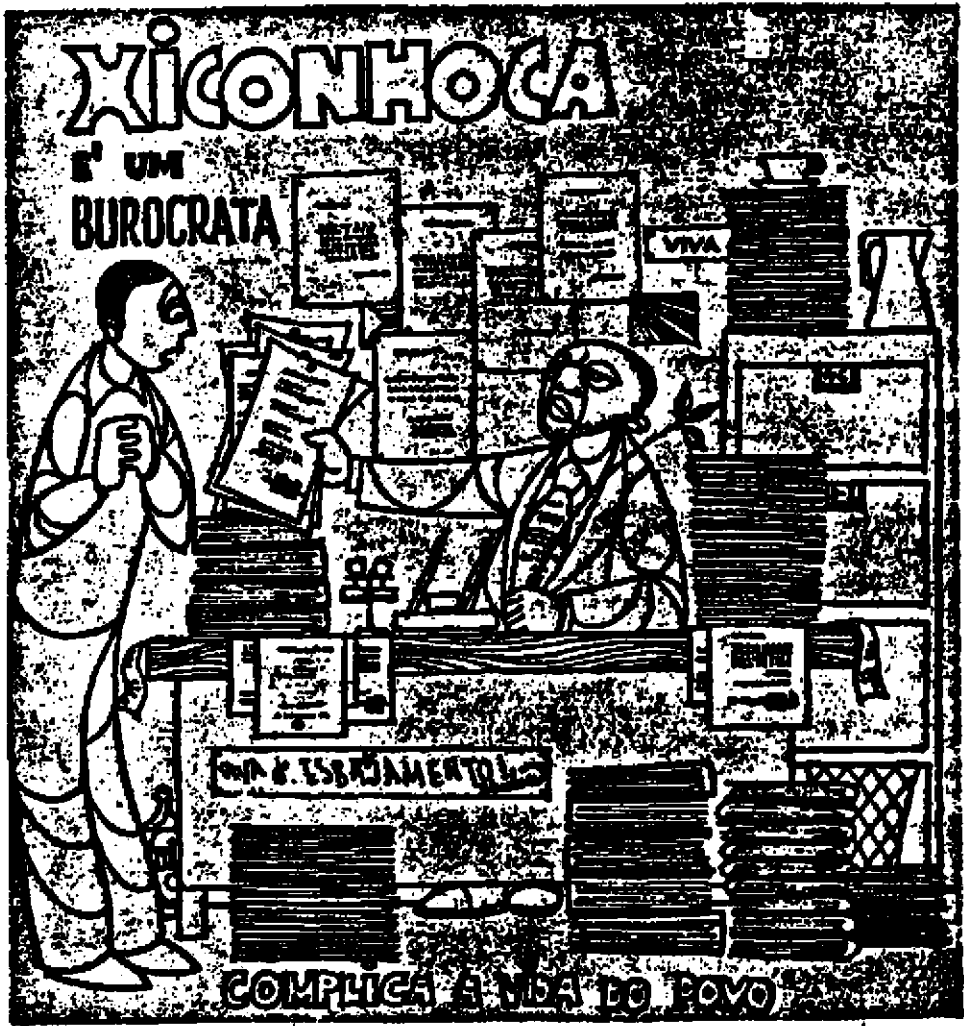


Figure 5. Xiconhoca is a bureaucrat. He complicates the life of the People. The sign on his desk says "Long live waste."



Figure 6. Xiconhoca is a bourgeois. He despises the People.

