

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>List of Maps</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xv

Part I A Tradition of Conflict

1 Marriage of Convenience	3
2 Profile of a Leader	14
3 Southerners and Those from Afar	21
4 Mondlane's Dilemmas	24
5 Independence War	29
6 Zambia Backs Frelimo Dissidents	37
7 Mondlane and Che Guevara	42
8 The Rise of Samora Machel	46
9 Student Unrest	51
10 Crisis within Frelimo Mounts	55
11 Mondlane Assassinated	58
12 Frelimo after Mondlane	63

Part II Independence

1 Portugal Transfers Power to Frelimo	71
2 Jorge Jardim – Myth and Reality	75
3 The Long Arm of Frelimo	80
4 Totalitarian State	85
5 Political Police	90
6 Re-education	95
7 M'telela – the Last Goodbye	100
8 Coup Attempt	104
9 Destroying the Sequels	108
10 Revolutionaries and Traditionalists	116
11 Frelimo and Religion	120

Part III Resistance

1	The conflict with Malawi and Rhodesia	127
2	<i>Magaia</i> Pamphlet	133
3	The Voz da África Livre	139
4	Renamo, the Early Days	144
5	The Quest for Autonomy	149
6	Gorongosa	154
7	Matsangaice Killed	160
8	Cristina Marginalized	164
9	The Renamo Program	167
10	Renamo Survives the Wind of Change	171

Part IV The Turning Point

1	South Africa Backs Renamo	179
2	Renamo Reviews the 1979 Program	185
3	Cristina Killed	189
4	Heading for Maputo	193
5	The Invasion that Never Was	199
6	The Frelimo Government Counter-Attacks	205

Part V Rumours of Peace

1	A Different Kind of Operation	213
2	The Nkomati Accord	218
3	The Pretoria Talks	226

Part VI Foreign Intervention

1	Zimbabwe's Role Expanded	235
2	The Malawian Connection	239
3	Changing of the Guard	243
4	Britain and Tanzania Assist FAM	248
5	Renamo's Response	252
6	Recruits and Collaborators	257
7	The Washington Lobby	261

<i>Epilog</i>	269
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<i>Notes</i>	273
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<i>Index</i>	295
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Part I

A Tradition of Conflict

1

Marriage of Convenience

In the relatively short existence of Portugal as a Republic, the Armed Forces intervened in the country's political affairs twice. After the monarchy fell in 1910, Portugal entered a period of political instability, which over the next 16 years saw 44 changes of government (an average of three governments every year), eight presidents and 20 uprisings.¹ This prompted the Armed Forces to stage a coup in May 1926. Ultimately, the coup led to a Fascist dictatorship, which ruled Portugal for nearly 50 years, first under António Salazar, and then, upon his departure for health reasons in 1968, by Marcello Caetano.

The Armed Forces support for the regime which stemmed from the 1926 coup was unquestionable, save the occasional signs of dissatisfaction, which the loyalists suppressed. The situation changed when the Portuguese government, faced with a war in three of its African colonies, called upon the Armed Forces to play a more active role in the defense of what the regime saw as a 'multicontinental nation', stretching from Minho in northern Portugal, to Timor in Asia. Rather than being confined to barracks or used in extraneous governmental tasks, the Armed Forces were suddenly faced with a new reality altogether. Owing to their direct contact with the colonial wars, the Armed Forces began to change their perception of nationhood.

As the wars gained momentum, it became clear that the Armed Forces were heading for a collapse. Portugal's position had become critical in Guinea-Bissau where Amílcar Cabral's PAIGC guerrillas had made great inroads. Yet, the Portuguese government refused to consider a political settlement because it believed that that would inevitably pave the way to the crumbling of its empire. As Prime Minister Caetano told General António de Spínola, then Guinea-Bissau's governor general and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces stationed there, he would prefer a

withdrawal through an honorable military defeat than an agreement with terrorists.²

For the Armed Forces, the longer they stayed in Africa, the greater the chance of being caught in a quagmire, with humiliating consequences. This they were not prepared to let happen, especially after the 1961 events in Portuguese India. The Salazar regime preferred to sacrifice Portugal's military presence in Goa, Damão and Diu than to submit to the sovereignty demands of India. In their view, the Portuguese Armed Forces, as an elite institution, were being threatened by the stubbornness of the country's politicians. The regime's continuation, which the Armed Forces had propped up for the last 48 years, was no longer a viable proposition. Thus, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) brought down the Caetano government on 25 April 1974.

Initially, the new Portugal was divided into three factions. One was embodied in General Spínola's call for a Lusophone federation. The second was for the colonies' immediate independence so as to permit Portugal's integration into the European Union. The third, Marxist-oriented MFA officers, merely wanted power transferred to the nationalist organizations of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. In the ensuing power struggle, a younger generation of officers gained the upper hand, thwarting Spínola's neocolonial alternative.

The colonial crisis was settled in the traditionally undemocratic manner of Portuguese institutions, of which the apparently progressive MFA was an integral part. After all, the genesis of the MFA had not been ideological, but classist in the sense that its leaders were brought together by a dispute over promotions. Without a sufficient officer corps to lead the colonial wars, the Caetano government decided to promote non-career officers over professional soldiers, causing unrest and dissatisfaction within the military establishment.

No arrangements were made to ensure a democratic basis for the future African countries. Power was transferred to the nationalists, who were regarded as the authentic representatives of the people, a claim based on their years of fighting for independence.

In Mozambique's case, power was transferred to the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), under the terms of the Lusaka Accord of 7 September 1974. The accord had been partially negotiated between MFA and Frelimo officials without the knowledge of the Portuguese president, and the foreign minister, Mário Soares. Spínola was unaware that the MFA issued orders to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique to disengage from operations against Frelimo and withdraw. Other groups were excluded from independence negotiations because

the MFA regarded them as either puppets or last-minute opportunists, although no political opposition had been allowed in Portugal and in the colonies during the deposed regime. Coremo, or Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique, a Frelimo dissident guerrilla movement, was not invited to the peace talks. On 25 June 1975, the colony became the People's Republic of Mozambique. No provisions were made for elections.

The formation of Frelimo was announced for the first time in Accra on 29 May 1962 by the União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique (Udenamo) and the Mozambique African National Union (MANU).³ For several months, the two organizations of exiled Mozambicans had been holding unity talks in their Tanzania base. A third organization, the União Nacional Democrática de Moçambique Independente (Unami), joined before Frelimo's official debut in Dar es Salaam in June 1962. It was more a marriage of convenience imposed on the Mozambicans than a genuine united front against Portuguese colonialism, ultimately contributing to divisions within the colony's independence movement. Interference by African governments with different agendas for continental issues had been a determining factor in the marriage.

Formed in Rhodesia in November 1960, Udenamo was the first of the three Mozambican independence movements to advocate violence to bring about independence. Udenamo was influenced by Zimbabwean politics, and its members had a history of involvement with Joshua Nkomo's National Democratic Party. Adelino Gwambe, a 20-year-old Mozambican from Inhambane, led the organization. As a campaign for the independence of Mozambique could not be waged from white-ruled Rhodesia, Gwambe and his followers left for Tanzania, where, in view of its forthcoming independence, Udenamo would be better positioned to wage an armed campaign against the Portuguese.

Once based in Dar es Salaam, Udenamo continued to attract Mozambicans. In April 1961, Udenamo's vice-president, Fanuel Mahluza, wrote to Eduardo Mondlane, a US educated Mozambican anthropologist working for the UN Trusteeship Council in New York, inviting him to join the organization. Mondlane did not accept the invitation. He had his own agenda, which did not conform to Udenamo's. Mondlane, who had established close links with the Kennedy administration, had just completed a tour of Mozambique, where, in addition to the red-carpet treatment accorded to him by a Portuguese government eager to win him over, he saw that nationalist sentiment was strong.

During a two-day meeting at the State Department in Washington, DC in May, Mondlane gave a full account of his February-March 1961

stay in Mozambique.⁴ Although Mondlane had successfully applied in 1960 to be transferred from the UN Trusteeship Council to the Addis Ababa-based Economic Commission for Africa, he now wanted the United States to locate a non-UN position for him, which would permit him to support his family while carrying on nationalist activities, and to give him funds to operate a nationalist organization that would seek a non-violent solution in Mozambique. Mondlane was concerned over the possibility of a war being waged from Tanzania because, as he put it in a report on his Mozambique tour given to US Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles, 'one shudders at the consequences of such an eventuality, judging by Portugal's reaction to a similar situation in Angola'. Mondlane suggested in his report that the

United States should be in a position to encourage Portugal to accept the principle of self-determination for the African peoples under her control; set target dates and take steps towards self-government and independence by 1965; and help formulate and finance policies of economic, educational, and political development for the people of Portuguese Africa and to prepare them for an independence with responsibility.⁵

Mondlane struck a favourable chord in the State Department. In a note to National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy at the White House, Bowles described Mondlane as 'a moderate person with the potential for top leadership in Mozambique'.⁶ Reporting on the May meeting at the State Department, William Wight, Jr, the deputy director of the East African Division in the Department, noted that Mondlane 'seemed genuinely friendly to the United States and genuinely desirous of seeking a non-violent solution in Mozambique if such a thing were possible'.⁷

Mondlane not only saw himself as leader of Mozambique's independence cause, but also the unifying force of all anti-Portuguese liberation movements, although an organization seeking that goal had already been established in Casablanca in April 1961 as the *Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas*, CONCP.

During another meeting at the State Department in February 1962, Mondlane said he did not regard the ideological schisms within the various nationalist movements opposed to Portugal as a stumbling block for his overall plan. He knew Mário de Andrade, a leading member of Angola's MPLA movement, from his student days in Portugal as a non-communist. The other MPLA members as well as the PAIGC were, as he put it, 'salvageable' from their communist stance.⁸

This view differed from that of Marcelino dos Santos who had joined Udenamo in April 1961. A 32-year-old Mozambican mulatto,⁹ Marcelino dos Santos studied electronic engineering in Lisbon. There he came into contact with students from other Portuguese colonies, notably Lúcio Lara and Agostinho Neto of Angola, as well as Rui Nazaré and Orlando Costa, two intellectuals from India, who, he admits, had a profound influence on his political thinking. His stay in Portugal was cut short after quarrelling with a Portuguese lecturer during a test. Marcelino dos Santos left for France in 1951 to continue his studies, but then changed to political science. He moved not only in French leftist circles, but in Eastern bloc countries as well. In 1953 he attended the Bucharest youth festival, and in the following year visited China where he met Chou En Lai. In 1955 he traveled to Warsaw for another youth festival. He was in Moscow for the 1957 World Youth Festival, causing a row with the Portuguese Communist Party delegation whom he accused of consisting of agents of the Portuguese political police, the PIDE.¹⁰ Marcelino dos Santos was expelled from France in January 1960, claiming the French had acted at the request of PIDE. He moved to Morocco, becoming involved in the preparations for the founding of CONCP. In that capacity, he invited Gwambe to represent Udenamo at the CONCP's founding conference.

Gwambe's decision to appoint Marcelino dos Santos there and then as Udenamo's deputy secretary general undoubtedly provided the organization with its most capable intellectual and organizer, but also with a dedicated Stalinist. His appointment was to have far-reaching consequences not only in the subsequent armed struggle against the Portuguese, but also in independent Mozambique. It was Marcelino dos Santos who drafted Udenamo's constitution, structuring it under the principles of 'democratic centralism'.

As Udenamo expanded its links further afield, its leaders saw signs of uneasiness on the part of their hosts. Tanzania's Julius Nyerere government was concerned over the organization's links with Ghana, established through the Ghanaian Bureau of African Affairs when Udenamo operated from Rhodesia. Ghana, the first country to assist Udenamo financially, extended regular invitations for the organization's senior officials to visit Accra. It funded Gwambe's visits to Conakry and Helsinki, and provided an office for the Udenamo representative in Accra. The Tanzanians viewed Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah as too radical a leader for their taste. They resented what they believed to be Nkrumah's blatant effort to bring the Mozambican nationalists under his sphere of influence. Fearing that he could in fact pose a threat to Nyerere's desire

to become the champion of southern Africa's nationalist cause, the Tanzanians took action.

The Nyerere government opted for MANU, essentially an organization of Makonde people with roots in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, bordering Tanzania. Some of its members had been born and reared in Tanzania, others in Zanzibar and Kenya. In the early 1960s, there were an estimated 250 000 Mozambicans, notably Makonde, living in Tanzania. They worked primarily in plantations, but were also involved in trade union and political activities. Rashidi Kawawa, who became secretary general of the ruling Tanzanian party, TANU, was a Makonde from Mozambique. Oscar Kambona, the Tanzania home affairs and foreign minister, was another Mozambican. A Mozambican Makonde was the president of the Tanganyika Territory African Civil Service Association. Mozambican Makonde in the three countries were affiliated with the Makonde African Association (MAA). In Cabo Delgado itself, the Makonde campaigned politically as the Sociedade dos Africanos de Moçambique, and were behind the events that preceded the Mueda massacre of June 1960.

In January 1961, the MAA branches in Dar es Salaam, Mombasa and Zanzibar, led respectively by Matthew Mmole, Samuly Diankali and Ali Madebe, merged as MANU. The presidency and vice-presidency of the new party were given to Mmole and Lawrence Malinga Millinga, both born in Tanzania. The similarities between MANU and TANU were not only in the name. Some in MANU aimed at the unification of Cabo Delgado with Tanzania for a greater Makonde homeland.

Udenamo felt that the prospect of an armed struggle looked unlikely. The Tanzanian government discontinued food supplies and other assistance that it had been giving Udenamo. Tanzania declared Adelino Gwambe *persona non grata* for stating in a news conference on the eve of that country's independence that arrangements had been made for Udenamo to start the armed struggle in Mozambique. He had to leave for Accra, but was allowed to return to Tanzania soon afterwards. When Ghana invited Udenamo to attend the May–June 1962 African Freedom Fighters Conference in Accra, the Tanzanians refused to issue travel documents to the Udenamo delegation. These had to be organized by the Ghanaian High Commission in Dar es Salaam.

It was not only the Tanzanian government that had grown distrustful of Nkrumah. Marcelino dos Santos was not at all impressed with Nkrumah for regarding him as not truly representative of the black people of Mozambique since he was a mulatto. To prevent a worsening of relations

with Tanzania, and bearing in mind the strategic importance of that country for the attainment of Mozambique's independence, Marcelino dos Santos advised his fellow leaders to merge with MANU. Gwambe rejected the idea outright; Marcelino dos Santos reacted by threatening to leave Udenamo and join MANU. But at several meetings of Udenamo's Executive Committee held throughout October 1961, it was decided that, in order to overcome the prevailing situation, Udenamo and MANU should unite. In order to gain MANU's sympathy, Udenamo officials made use of their financial resources to virtually bribe members of the Makonde organization to join them. In another move, Udenamo included MANU leaders in its delegation to the African Freedom Fighters Conference in Accra.

At a ceremony held under the auspices of the Tanzanian government in Dar es Salaam on 24 May 1962, Udenamo and MANU finally 'decided to bring unity of all patriotic forces of Mozambique by means of forming a common front', pending the return of the respective leaders from Accra.¹¹ Much to the irritation of the Tanzanians, Gwambe told a news conference in Accra five days later that the decision to merge was in response to Nkrumah's call for the closing of ranks for the liberation of Africa.¹² As proposed by Mahluza, the front was to be known as the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique.

With unity talks between Udenamo and MANU under way, José Baltazar da Costa Chagonga, the leader of Unami, arrived in Dar es Salaam. In 1959, Chagonga had founded the Associação Nacional Africana de Moatize, ostensibly a cultural association of Moatize coal mineworkers as well as Mozambican migrants in Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia. In reality, the association promoted nationalist ideals among its members. An advocate of peaceful change, Chagonga had been petitioning the Portuguese to review unsavoury labor practices in the colony. This resulted in his detention. Upon his release, Chagonga fled to Malawi where in May 1960 he renamed his organization Unami.

The joyful mood of the Mozambican nationalists while in Ghana contrasted sharply with the showdown in store for them in Dar es Salaam in the days preceding the official debut of Frelimo. Mondlane, who had resigned from his UN post to become a professor at New York's University of Syracuse, arrived in Dar es Salaam in the first half of June.

Discussing his planned trip to Tanzania with State Department officials in Washington on 8 February 1962, Mondlane reiterated his intention to lead the Mozambique independence movement, and that he would be willing to negotiate with Portugal, but could only accept 'the negotiations of equals'. Mondlane said he had approached Angola's

UPA guerrilla leader, Holden Roberto, to enlist the support of Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba for the movement he intended to lead. As Mondlane told the State Department officials, Bourguiba was deeply concerned with communist penetration in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly worried by Soviet arms shipment to the area. Mondlane did not seem to regard Udenamo and MANU as a major obstacle to his plans. He saw Gwambe as a second-rate figure, and MANU a group artificially stimulated by the Tanzanians with no organization within Mozambique. Mondlane noted that any successful MANU-oriented insurrection in Mozambique would be an 'outside job', and might result in the cession of Cabo Delgado and Niassa to Tanzania.¹³

In Dar es Salaam, Mondlane encountered strong resistance to his plan among the Udenamo and MANU leaders. Gwambe was committed to taking upon himself the leadership of Frelimo and soon starting the war of independence with the backing of Ghana where Mozambicans had reportedly undergone military training. For Mondlane, time was running out. He had to be back at Syracuse before the end of June.

On 18 June, a despondent Mondlane called on Thomas Byrne, the acting American chargé d'affaires in Dar es Salaam, to report his dismay at Gwambe's complete commitment to Nkrumah and to communist bloc countries. Mondlane alleged that the Udenamo leader was a regular recipient of substantial funds from Ghana and the USSR, and that he had recently received \$14 000 from the Ghanaians. Mondlane was also disturbed to learn that Mmole and his lieutenants were in Gwambe's pay. Mondlane realized that there was a degree of discontent among Udenamo's rank and file over the tight control that Gwambe had over the organization's financial resources. Mondlane informed the chargé d'affaires that he had raised this issue with Kambona, pointing out to him that a continuation of the existing arrangement, whereby Gwambe had ample resources while both the Udenamo and MANU treasuries were empty, meant that the Mozambique nationalist movement belonged to Gwambe and he in turn could deliver it to his Ghanaian and Russian paymasters. Mondlane urged Kambona to consider the advantage of securing funds from Western sources in order to free the Mozambique movement from Gwambe.¹⁴

Mondlane's recommendations were music to the Tanzanians' ears in view of their reluctance to have an organization based in their country, but under Ghanaian influence. Moreover, by this time the Tanzanians realized that of all the Mozambicans who had flocked to Dar es Salaam, Mondlane was the one who possessed the best qualities to head an independence movement: mature, well-educated, articulate, able to

move in diplomatic circles, and committed to a negotiated settlement with Portugal, an option they initially preferred for Tanzania felt impotent to deal with possible Portuguese military retaliation.

To counter Gwambe's financial clout, on his way to Syracuse Mondlane planned to stop over in Cairo, Tunis, Geneva and London and raise funds. 'As soon as he reaches the United States', reported Byrne, 'Mr Mondlane plans to get in touch with Deputy Assistant Secretary [of State for African Affairs] Wayne Fredericks.'¹⁵ Mondlane planned to be back in Dar es Salaam in September when he would make his final bid for the Frelimo leadership.

Subsequent developments enabled Mondlane to secure his position as Frelimo leader on 25 June. With Gwambe away in India between 17 and 23 June, Mondlane was able to rally the support of Mozambicans in Dar es Salaam, virtually unopposed. He reviewed his earlier position, and decided to meet Mozambicans in Dar es Salaam as a Udenamo member. Mondlane, who had always shown concern over the educational elevation of his fellow countrymen, lured Udenamo and MANU members to his side with genuine promises of scholarships in the United States. Until then, Gwambe had discouraged Mozambican refugees from contacting the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam for scholarship requests, claiming that Portuguese agents would kidnap them while en route to the United States. Still according to Byrne, Mondlane had informed him that he had persuaded the Ghanaians, through the Ghana High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam, of Gwambe's unsuitability as Frelimo leader. Mondlane also stated that Gwambe's lieutenants and MANU officials had promised to oppose Gwambe on condition that Mondlane found alternative sources of income to finance their activities.¹⁶

On 28 June, Mondlane made yet another call on chargé d'affaires Byrne, asking him to inform Fredericks of his desperate need for funds in order to consolidate Frelimo's independence from Ghanaian and Communist bloc countries. Mondlane added that he had spent over \$1000 of his personal funds towards that goal.¹⁷

Mondlane's behind the scenes canvassing was a success. His name was included in the list of candidates to the presidency of Frelimo's Supreme Council due to be elected on 25 June. After Gwambe and Mmole had signed a declaration agreeing to transfer all assets owned and controlled by their organizations to the Supreme Council of Frelimo immediately after the election of this body, a 20-man ad hoc committee composed of an equal number of Udenamo and MANU members nominated Mondlane, Simango and Chagonga as candidates to the post. Gwambe

refused to stand for election as long as Mondlane was part of the organization.

Mondlane received 116 votes from a total of 135 ballots cast. Ethnic considerations, more than his academic and professional qualifications, prevailed in Mondlane's election. With Gwambe out of the race, Udenamo members from southern Mozambique preferred to have a southerner as Frelimo leader rather than Reverend Uria Simango, a Ndau from the central region, despite the latter's long-standing membership of Udenamo. Simango secured the vice-presidency of Frelimo, and other Udenamo members gained key positions in the organization. David Mabunda and Paulo Gumane received the posts of secretary general and deputy secretary general respectively. The foreign affairs secretariat was assigned to Marcelino dos Santos, and the defense and security secretariat to João Munguambe with Filipe Magaia as his deputy. The administration department was given to Silvério Nungo. Gumane's wife, Priscilla, was appointed Women's League secretary. Leo Milás became Frelimo's information and publicity secretary. Milás, who lived in the United States and had established links with Udenamo shortly after the organization surfaced in Dar es Salaam, accompanied Mondlane to Tanzania. Mmole was elected treasurer, and Millinga became Frelimo's executive secretary of the Scholarship Committee.

After the elections, Mondlane, in a move apparently to have Gwambe removed from the scene, told Kambona that he and his wife, Janet, were under surveillance of armed men owing allegiance to Gwambe, claiming that the latter had informed the Portuguese of Mondlane's travelling plans so that he could be abducted while in transit in Rome. The Tanzanians ordered the arrest of Gwambe on 27 June, but fell short of declaring him *persona non grata* again upon his release. Kambona assured Mondlane that Gwambe would not be allowed to re-enter the country once he left on 3 July to attend a World Peace Council meeting in Moscow.

As for his relations with Ghana, Mondlane felt that they were bound to improve since he was now the elected Frelimo leader. He told Byrne that the Ghanaian High Commission in Tanzania had even invited him to visit Accra, giving him air tickets.¹⁸

Byrne commented in a cable to the Department of State:

Dr Mondlane's position as leader of the Mozambique Liberation Front appears at the moment to be strong. His future prospects will depend to a great extent upon how successful he is in obtaining money to carry on the party's activities here. Another as yet unclear

factor is the sincerity of Kambona's assurance of support. If Ghana is now shifting its support from Gwambe to Mondlane, the latter's position should be secure.¹⁹

Index

- AAM (Associação Académica de Moçambique), 79, 86–7
- Abecassis, 75, 78
- Abecassis, Manuel, 137–8
- Abraão, Lino, 49
- Abudo, Juma, 152
- Accra, 5, 7–9, 12, 19
- ADEV (Associação Desportiva Estrela Vermelha), *see* Snasp
- Adriano, Faustino, 253, 292 n
- Afghanistan, 141, 262
- African–American Institute, 18, 51
- African Studies Center, 111–2
- Agricom (Empresa de Comercialização de Produtos Agrícolas), 114
- AIM (Agência de Informação de Moçambique), 259
- Alcino, *see* Oliveira, Paulo
- aldeamentos*, 31–2, 34, 36, 117
- Aldridge, Leo Clinton, *see* Milás, Leo
- Alfazema, 158, 240
- Alfinete, José Manuel, 184
- Algeria, 14–15, 18, 24, 48, 54
- Aloni, David, 88, 281 n
- Alouette, 236
- Alto Benfica, 248
- Amade, Marcos, 147
- Amaramba, 130, 136
- Amatongas, 201, 205, 256
- American African Public Affairs Council, 263
- Amnesty International, 103, 282 n
- Amodeg (Associação Moçambicana de Desmobilizados de Guerra), 257
- ANC (African National Congress)
Mozambique's assistance to, 127, 171, 181
and Nkomati Accord, 224
relations with Cuba, 44
- Ancuaze, 202
- Anderson, George, 43, 277 n
- Andrade, João Abílio, 66
- Andrade, José Júlio de, 101
- Angoche, 67
- Angola
Cuban withdrawal from, 142, 224, 262, 267
independence war, 34–5
Mozambique's assistance to, 106
MPLA's relations with Cuba, 44
former Portuguese residents in, 152
US policy on, 262
- Angónia, 111
- António, Manuel, 250
- Antunes, Melo, 74
- APIE (Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado), 110
- ARA (Acção Revolucionária Armada), 235
- Armed Forces Movement, *see* MFA
- Aron, Raymond, 262
- Arouca, Domingos
contacts with Rhodesia, 167–9, 287 n
as Fumo leader, 166
links to South Africa, 172, 182, 186
under Portuguese detention, 30, 72
relations with Jardim, 168
and Renamo, 142, 167–9, 172, 186, 287 n
- Arouca, Regina, 287 n
- Assikala, Abel, 101, 102
- Ataide, João, 246
- Augusto, Filipe, ix, 286–7 n, 289 n
- Azores, 25
- Balamanja, Peter, 17
- Banda, Basílio, 73
- Banda, Kamuzu, 123, 128, 240–1, 246
- Banhine, 195–6
- Baraza la Waze*, *see* Council of Elders
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), 89, 204, 255, 41 n
- Beira, 93, 104–5, 171, 202, 227, 236
Air Force Base, 260

- Beira (*cont*)
 corridor, 154, 160, 173, 193–4,
 200–1, 236, 252, 254, 256
 port, 199, 205, 220, 240, 254
- Bell helicopters, 236
- Benghazi, 235
- Berlin, 25, 221
- Biafra, *see* Nigeria
- Bila, Fernando Timóteo, 66
- Blantyre, 129, 240, 270
- BMATT (British Military Advisory
 and Training Team) *see* Great
 Britain
- Bob, Mazunzo, 40
- Bomba, Adriano, 187–8, 190, 192
- Bomba, Boaventura, 187–92
- Bomba, Carolina, 54 n, 281 n
- Bonn, 246
- BOSS (Bureau of State Security), 81
- Botha, P. W., 181
- Botha, Roelof, 222, 229–30
- Botswana, 179, 235
- Boullosa, Manuel, 76
- Bourguiba, Habid, 10
- Bowles, Chester, 6, 273 n
- Brazil, 137
- Brezhnev Doctrine, 262
- Brito, Luís, 213, 216, 290 n
- BTI (Brigada Técnica de Investigações),
see Snap
- Buchanan, Patrick, 266
- Bulgaria, 240
- Bundy, McGeorge, 6, 273 n
- Bunga, 236
- Burlison, John, 200
- Burt, Peter, 138, 145, 150, 286–7 n
- Burton, Dan, 264–5, 294 n
- Bush administration, 250
- Búzi, 174, 197
- Byrne, Thomas, 11, 12
- Cabaço, José Luís, 245
- Cabo Delgado, 49, 61, 63, 83, 102, 104,
 118, 121
 Frelimo guerrilla operations in,
 29–32, 34–6, 46, 71
 liberated areas, 109
 Liberation Front, 151
 Operation Production, 215
- Portuguese military operations in,
 31–4, 117
 Renamo operations in, 158, 226–7
- Cabral, Amílcar, 5
- Cadeado, Bernardo, 161
- Caetano, Marcello, 3, 4
- Cahora Bassa, 34, 193
- Caia, 238
- CAIL (Complexo Agro-Industrial do
 Limpopo), 111–2
- Calção, José Domingos Cuanai, 184
- Caliate, Zeca, 165, 287 n
- California, 262
- Cambona, Olímpio Osório Caisse, 184,
 286–7 n, 289 n, 293 n
- Canhamba, António, 49
- Caniçado, 197
- Caniço, José, 104
- Camberley, 236
- Canada
 Renamo representative in, 189
 Training Mission in Tanzania, 59
- Cangamitole, 238
- Cantineiros, 112
- Cape Verde, 80
- Carillo, Roberto, 200
- Carlucci, Frank, 266
- Casa, 236
- Casa Banana, 158, 163, 236, 238
- Casal Ribeiro, Judite, 103, 282 n
- Casal Ribeiro, Maria Flora, 282 n
- Casal Ribeiro, Raúl
 executed, 101–2, 282 n
 and Filipe Magaia, 47
 imprisoned at M'telela, 100
 leaves Frelimo, 66
- Castro, 154
- Catholic Church, 185
 impact of Frelimo policies on, 121
 and the Naparama
 counterinsurgency unit, 251
- Nkomati Accord, 228
 sponsors peace talks, 269–70
 urges peace settlement, 228, 246
 views on Operation Production,
 216–7
- Catholic Commission for Justice and
 Peace, 255
- Catur, 31, 66, 218

- Cavalo, 236
- CDU (Christian Democratic Union),
see Germany
- Celestino, Chinagana Agostinho, ix,
290 n
- Central Intelligence Organization, *see*
CIO
- Chagonga, Baltazar da Costa
and Mondlane, 19–21, 37–8
and Unami, 9
- Chai, 31
- Champalimaud, António, 81
- Changara, 255
- Charre, 30
- Chatama, Daniel, 54
- Chavago, Albino, 184
- Chemba, 201
- Chibabava, 173–4
- Chibuto, 208
- Chicarre, 162, 182, 195, 199–201, 205
- Chichôlane, 195–6
- Chidoco, 157, 195, 201
- China, 26, 59
assists Coremo, 39
assists Frelimo, 27
imposes conditions on Mondlane,
27
Marcelino dos Santos visit to, 7
Mondlane's stand on Sino–Soviet
dispute, 67
Mozambique's stand on Sino–Soviet
dispute, 127
News Agency, 141
- Chippinge, 254
- Chibabava, 207
- Chicarre
FAM attack on, 200–1
Renamo headquarters, 163, 176,
183, 194–6
- Chidoco, 174, 196, 201
- Chigubo, 207, 220
- Chimanimani, 145
- Chimoio, 41
Renamo operations, 154, 199, 220,
256
ZNA Task Force presence in, 258–9
- Chinete, 160
- Cinhara, Jacob, 139–40, 282 n, 285 n
- Chioco, 165
- Chipande, Alberto
conspires against Machel, 222
as defense minister, 225
on guerrilla activity in Cabo
Delgado, 226–7
after Machel's death, 243–4
- Chiputo, 101
- Chirara, 145
- Chire, 30, 118, 202, 248
- Chirwa, 136
- Chisango, Shepherd, 259
- Chissano, Joaquim Alberto
becomes prime minister, 81
challenges Samora Machel, 222
denies talks with Renamo, 231
faces Simango's opposition, 64
as Frelimo's security chief, 49, 55
on marxism–leninism, 265
as party chief and head of state,
243–6, 249
and peace talks with Renamo,
269–71, 294 n
and Renamo, 210, 231
training in USSR, 66
and the United States, 249, 266
- Chitaússe, 207
- Chiteje, Joseph, 28, 38
- Chitengo, 200
- Chiúre, 227
- Chiuta, 136, 237
- Chókwè, 114, 210
- Chona, Mark, 77, 79
- Chou En-lai, 7
- CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), 19,
39, 47, 142
- CIM (Contra-Inteligência Militar), 91
- CIO (Central Intelligence
Organization)
Cristina's links with, 139, 144, 150
and Jardim, 150–1
under Ken Flower, 150, 153, 173
and Mozambique, 81, 130, 138, 152,
173, 259
and Renamo, 147, 153, 168
stand on Uria Simango, 81
views on Matsangaice, 144–7, 152
- Clark Amendment, 262
- CNE (Comissão Nacional de Eleições),
272

- Cóbuè, 29
 Combumune, 197
 Comecon, 111, 221
 communal villages
 Comoros, 158
 CONCP (Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas), 6–7
 Congo, 25, 45
 Conservative Caucus, 263
 Coventry, Dudley, 163
 Coremo (Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique), 73, 130
 CIA report on, 39
 established, 38
 military operations, 39
 and the PAC, 39–41
 and Portugal, 4
 relations with China, 39
 Corromana, 218
 Costa, Brás da, 136
 Costa, Jorge, 95, 98, 101, 229
 Costa, Rajabo, 190
 Cotonou, 235
 Council of Elders, 53, 61
 Craveirinha, João, 66, 279 n
 Craveirinha, José, 30
 Cristina, Orlando, 222–3
 assassinated, 191, 288–9 n
 background on, 133–8
 and the Bomba brothers, 187–92, 288–9 n
 and the CIO, 139, 144–5, 150, 152
 and Dhlakama, 166, 183–5
 disseminates the *Magaia* pamphlet, 137–8, 285 n
 and Evo Fernandes, 185, 187, 190
 with Frelimo, 134
 goals in Renamo, 164–6
 and Matsangaice, 144–6, 149, 286–7 n
 and the Mecanhelas Self-Defense System, 136
 and the PRM, 202–3, 289 n
 relations with Arouca, 168–9
 relations with Jardim, 134–8, 150, 185, 190, 280 n
 as Renamo secretary general, 184–5, 190, 261
 in Rhodesia, 133, 137–9
 role in the GE, 135
 role in the *Voz da África Livre*, 139–40, 144–6, 286 n
 seeks funding for Renamo, 150–3, 169
 in South Africa, 182–3
 visits to Europe, 185–6, 190, 288 n
 Crocker, Chester, 223–4, 262–3, 265, 267, 290 n
 Cuamba, 218, 249
 Cuba, 25
 in Angola, 142, 224, 262
 assistance to Mozambique
 intelligence, 90–1
 military assistance to Mozambique, 160, 173–4, 240–1
 relations with Frelimo, 44–5, 67
 relations with Mozambique, 94, 127, 224
 Cunene, 67
 Cuzi, 155
 Czechoslovakia, 127, 141
 Dabalo, 61, 65
 Damião, Henrique, ix, 290 n
 Dangabvuro, 254
 Dar es Salaam, 134
 DCE-GVP, *see* Snasp
 de Andrade, Mário, 6
 de Arriaga, Káulza, 32, 77, 276 n
 de Bragança, Aquino, 221–2
 Defense Sales Limited, 249
 d'Hondt, 271
 Democratras de Moçambique, 79, 92, 109
 Democratic Union Movement, 134
 de Resende, Bishop Sebastião Soares, 52
 de Rivera, Primo, 75
 de Sousa, Barros, *see* Cristina
 de Sousa, Valentim, 235, 291 n
 de Souza, Rebelo, 60, 278 n
 DGS, *see* PIDE
 Dhlakama, Afonso, 256, 287 n
 Arouca's views on, 168–9
 becomes Renamo leader, 161–3
 in Europe, 185–6, 288 n
 and Jardim, 183, 185

- joins Renamo, 148
 military role in Renamo, 148, 160, 173
 relations with South Africa, 172, 182–3
 and the United States, 264, 266, 294 n
 views on Cristina, 166, 191
- Dhlakama, Samuel, 66, 279 n
- Diankali, Samuly, 8
- Dias, Máximo, 72, 142
- Dindiza, 220
- DIP (Departamento de Informação e Propaganda), 88
- Dique, Raúl Luís, 182, 202
- Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), *see* South Africa
- Djoudi, Noureddine, 24
- DMI (Directorate of Military Intelligence), *see* South Africa
- Dole, Bob, 265–6, 294 n
- Dombe, 173, 193, 207
- Domingos, Manuel, 183, 288 n
- Domingos, Raúl, ix, 159, 184, 187–8, 286 n, 288–9 n
- Domoina, 227
- Dona Ana, 238
- Dondo, 104–5, 135, 154
- dos Santos, Armando Khembo, ix, 187–8, 190, 202–3, 280 n, 289 n
- dos Santos, Augusto, 32–3, 276 n
- dos Santos, Marcelino, 170, 243
 attempt on the life of, 59
 and Frelimo, 9, 12
 and Frelimo dissenters, 82, 244–5, 287 n, 292 n
 in Frelimo's Presidential Council, 63–4
 as Frelimo's vice president, 65, 67
 Ghana's views on, 7–8
 and Operation Production, 214, 290 n
 relations with Eastern bloc, 7, 26–7, 45, 111, 127, 221, 279 n
 and Udenamo, 7, 9
- DPCCN (Departamento de Prevenção e Combate às Calamidades Naturais), 194, 268
- DSL (Defense Systems Limited), 249
- du Pont, Pierre S., 266
- Dyke, Colonel Lionel, 236
- Dyuwayo, André Mathadi
 Matsangaice, *see* Matsangaice
- Dyuwayo, Luís Matsangaice, 145, 286 n
- Dyuwayo, Oliver, 147
- Dyuwayo, Saugweme, 145
- Dzimba, Gaspar, 114
- Dzonzi, Júlio, 40
- Eduardo, Tomé, 200–1
- Elinamo (Exército de Libertação Nacional do Monomotapa), 30
- English, Richard, 255
- Enoque, 107
- Erepomo (Exército Revolucionário Popular de Moçambique), 39
- Eritrea, 262
- Espungabera, 157, 173, 193, 200, 207
- Etatará, 218
- Fábrica, 236
- FAM (Forças Armadas de Moçambique), 120, 157–8, 165, 169, 235
 alleged collaboration with Renamo, 259–60
 British military assistance to, 249
 chemical and bacteriological warfare, 255–6
 child soldiers, 257–8
 counterinsurgency measures, 209, 227–8, 250–1, 271
 and Malawi, 238, 240–1
 military operations in; Cabo Delgado, 226; Gaza, 205–9; Inhambane, 196–7, 200, 206–8, 256, 267; Manica, 158, 173–4, 200–1; Maputo, 235, 260; Niassa, 226; Nampula, 250–1; Sofala, 158, 174, 206, 237, 252, 255, 269; Tete, 158, 165, 235, 240; Zambézia, 208, 241, 249–50, 252, 268
 mutiny, 105
 operation Cabana, 205–10, 218
 operation Leopardo, 173

- FAM (*cont*)
 operation Punishment, 201
 and Renamo, 160–2, 173–5, 182,
 193–4, 196–8, 200–1, 205–10,
 225, 238, 246
- Faustino, Adriano, ix, 292 n
- Feijão, Lucinda Serras Pires, 285 n
- Fernandes, Evo
 assassinated, 246
 and Cristina, 187, 190
 and Jorge Jardim, 185, 168
 Pretoria talks, 228–30, 291 n
 as Renamo secretary general, 165,
 261
- Fernandes, Gilberto, 203
- Fernandes, Pinto, 168
- Ferreira, João, 19
- Ferreira, Pinto, 77
- Feruka, 254
- Fíngoè, 237
- Fino, Leão, 294 n
- fireforce, 237
- First, Ruth, 221
- Flower, Ken, 150, 153, 173, 286 n
- FNLA (Frente de Libertação Nacional
 de Angola), 106
- Fombe, João, 157, 161, 184
- Fondo, Domingos, 196, 200–1
- Fonseca, Artur da, 266
- FP-25, 235, 250
- France, 151, 185
- Franque, Mário, 157, 161, 174, 184,
 195–7, 199
- Fredericks, Wayne, 11, 17, 43
- Free Europe, 142
- Freedom Research Foundation,
 261–2
- Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de
 Moçambique)
 Central Committee, 37, 46, 51, 63–5,
 67
 Congress sessions, 15–16, 49, 55,
 103, 213–14, 264
 Defense and Security, 49, 101–2
 established, 5
 Executive Committee, 57, 65, 83
 leadership, 11–12, 63, 65, 67
 National Command, 49
 and Non-alignment, 127
 Political Bureau, 85, 87, 210, 243,
 245
 Political Council, 17
 Presidential Council, 63–5
 relations with Cuba, 44–5, 67
 Supreme Council, 11
- Frelimo Army
 military operations in: Cabo
 Delgado, 32, 34–6, 49–50, 67,
 136; Gaza, 30; Inhambane, 30;
 Lourenço Marques, 30; Manica,
 34, 71, 104; Nampula, 30;
 Niassa, 32, 34–6, 49–50, 67, 136;
 Sofala, 34, 104, 105; Tete, 30, 34,
 67; Zambézia, 49, 67, 82, 136
- Fresamo (Frente de Salvação de
 Moçambique), 166
- Fumo (Frente Unida Democrática de
 Moçambique), 142, 166–9, 186
- Funipamo (Frente Unida Anti-
 Imperialista Popular Africana de
 Moçambique), 17
- Fussa (Frente Unida do Sul do Save),
 168
- Gabon, 190
- Gamito, Hermenegildo, 101
- Gapecom (Empresa de
 Comercialização de Gado e Peles),
 114
- Garágua, *see* Chicarre
- Garcia, Ressano, 206, 227
- Gaza, 114, 122, 132, 176, 227
 FAM operations in, 205–9
 Frelimo operations in, 30
 Renamo operations in, 158, 172,
 175–6, 182, 199, 205–10, 220
- GE (Grupos Especiais), 135, 139
- GEP (Grupos Especiais Pára-quedistas),
 135
- Germany
 Berlin Clause, 221
 Christian Democratic Union, 186
 East, 227
 Kiel, 189–90
 and Renamo, 185–6, 189
 Wolfgang Richter, 186
- Gersony, Robert, 267–8, 294 n
- Ghana, 7–13, 15, 18

- Gilé, 238, 247
- Girmoio, Francisco, 182, 256
- GLCB (Grupos de Luta Contra Bandidos), 91
- Gomes, Costa, 33, 276 n
- Gonarezhou, 207
- Gondola, 199, 201
- Gorongosa, 154, 237
 - FAM operations in area of, 160–61, 238
 - Renamo moves to, 155
 - Renamo presence in area of, 157–1, 171–3, 200–2, 207, 220, 252, 255
 - ZNA raids on, 236, 238
- Goy-Goy, 155, 173
- Gravata, 155
- Great Britain, 133, 140, 169, 236, 242, 247
 - military assistance to Mozambique, 235, 249, 258
 - and Rome peace talks, 270
- Grudja, 199–200
- Guardia Civil, 250
- Guebuza, Armando Emílio
 - challenges Samora Machel, 222
 - demoted, 225
 - as Frelimo's education secretary, 51
 - as interior minister, 93, 99, 117, 121
 - after Machel's death, 243–5
 - and Operation Production, 213–14, 217, 290 n
 - on religion, 121
- Guevara, Che, 44–5
- Guia de Marcha*, 87, 115, 120
- Guinea-Bissau, 3, 34–5
- Gumane, Paulo, 12, 16, 28, 37–8, 73, 82, 100–1, 103
- Gumane, Priscilla, 103, 280 n, 282 n
- Gumo (Grupo Unido de Moçambique), 72
- Guro, 199, 255
- Guru, 202
- Gurué, 129–30
- GVP (Grupos de Vigilância Popular), 91, 169
- Gwambe, Adelino
 - with Coremo, 38–40
 - and Mondlane, 13, 16, 38–9, 274 n
 - relations with Ghana, 7–9, 13
 - in Tanzania, 8, 9, 12
 - as Udenamo leader, 5, 7
- Gwenjere, Mateus Pinho, 65, 67
 - abducted, 83–4
 - and Mondlane, 69
 - as PCN member, 73
 - and Simango, 53
 - support for students, 52–4
- Hammanskraal, 158
- Harare, 235–6, 253–4
- Hawk, 236
- Helms, Jesse, 266, 294 n
- Heritage Foundation, 263
- Hoedspruit, 181
- Hoile, David, 263
- Homoïne, 267
- Honwana, Fernando
 - and Nkomati Accord, 222
 - Pretoria talks, 228–9, 291 n
- Honwana, João, 82
- Honwana, Judas, 82
- Honwana, Luís Bernardo, 30
- Honwana, Raúl, 88, 281 n
- Hunguana, Teodato, 215, 265
- Hunter, 236
- ICS (Instituto de Comunicação Social), 118
- Ile, 130
- Ilumba re-education camp, 99
- IM (Instituto Moçambicano), 18, 51–4, 187
- IMF (International Monetary Fund), 221
- Inchope, 154, 160
- Incomáti, 21, 210
- India, 75, 93
- Inhamasichi, 159
- Inhambane
 - FAM operations in, 196–7, 200, 206–8, 256, 267
 - Frelimo operations in, 30
 - Renamo operations in, 158, 196–7, 200, 205–10, 218, 220
- Inhaminga, 154, 201, 227, 238
- Inharrime, 197
- INLD (Instituto Nacional do Livro e do Disco), 121

- Interface, 92
 Interpol, 58
 Iran-Iraq war, 221
 Islander, 236
- Jalasse, 129
 Jamba, 263
 Jambe, 199–201, 207
 Jangamo, 220
 Japan, 60
 Jardim, Jorge
 background on, 75–7
 and Cristina, 134–7, 190
 Democratas de Moçambique stand
 on, 79–80
 and Renamo, 150–1, 168, 183, 286 n
 views on Mozambique, 76–9, 222,
 280 n
- Jehova, Johan, 107
 Jehovah's Witnesses, 97, 122–3
 João, Chanjunje, 246
 João, José Luís, 184
 John, Magurende, 157, 199–201
 Johannesburg, 166
 Jornal do Povo, 118
 José, Ricardo, 220
 Juma, Major General Matias, 235
 Jumo (Juventude Moçambicana) *see*
 Remo
- Kadangure, Ernest, 241
 Kadewell, Wills, 66, 279 n
 Kalimaga, M, 58, 60
 Kambeu, Arcanjo Faustino, 40, 73
 Kambona, Oscar, 8, 13, 47
 Kambulatsisi, 199
 Kangwa, A, 38
 Kantelu, Atanásio, ix, 98–9, 282 n
 Kasten, Robert, 263
 Katiyo Tea Estates, 253
 Kaunda, Kenneth, 38, 76–7, 79, 168,
 241
 Kavantame, Lázaro, 47, 50, 58–61, 67,
 100–1
 Kawawa, Rashidi, 8, 58
 Kemp, Jack, 266, 294 n
 Kennedy, John, 5, 24, 25
 Kennedy, Robert, 17–8, 43, 53
 Kenya, 8, 50, 82
- Mozambican refugees in, 54, 61, 73,
 84, 169, 187
 peace talks in, 269–70
 and Renamo, 188, 246–7
 King, Betty, 18, 57, 61
 King, Tom, 249
 Knot, Operation Gordian, 32–3
 Kongwa, 48
 Kupenga, John, ix, 159, 161, 200,
 286–9 n
 Kwambirwa, Lucas, 182
- Lara, Lúcio, 7
 Las Palmas, 137
 LCB (Lucha Contra Bandidos), 91
 Leitão, João, 222, 229
 Lenin, V. I., 108, 283 n
 Letaba, 181, 183
 Liberdade Ward, 248
 Libya, 235, 258, 267
 Lichinga, 31, 100, 103, 136, 218
 Lidimo, Lagos, 91, 102, 208
 Ligonha River, 218
 Limpopo, 111–2, 117, 130, 197, 205–6,
 209–10, 252
 Lindi, 60
 Lisbon, 182, 186, 246
 Lopes, Mateus, 246
 Loubser, Kobus, 179
 Lourenço Marques, 30, 59, 137
 Luabo, 248
 Luciro, 203
 Lucite River, 174
 Lugela, 129
 Lugenda River, 30, 32
 Luís, Janota, 139
 Lumbela, 66
 Lúrio River, 136, 218, 226–7
 Lusaka, 181
 Lusalite, 135, 137
- Mabate, 163, 174
 Mabote, Sebastião, 196, 210
 Mabudo, 201
 Mabunda, David, 12, 17, 19
 Macamo, Orlando, 148
 Machado, Antero, 190
 Machado, Joaquim, 50
 Machaíla, 220

- Machava, 181, 248
 Machava, Gabriel, 40
 Machaze, 148, 155, 175
 Machel, Samora, 169
 coup attempt against, 105–6
 and Eastern bloc, 127, 221
 as Frelimo leader, 66–7, 83, 127
 as Frelimo's defense chief, 48–50
 head of state, 85, 87–8, 109–11, 118, 281–5 n
 Jardim's views on, 137
 killed, 241–2
 and Malawi, 240–1
 on measures against Renamo, 205, 207–9, 231, 236, 289 n
 on Operation Production, 217, 290 n
 opposition to, 140–1, 222, 244
 post-Machel era, 243–5
 in the Presidential Council, 63, 64
 Pretoria Talks, 229–31, 291 n
 and re-education, 93, 96, 102
 on religion, 120, 122
 Rhodesian stand on, 131
 on Snap, 90–1
 and South Africa, 171–2, 224, 287 n
 and students, 54
 United States and, 262–4
 Machipanda, 160, 207
 Machungo, Mário, 72, 111
 Macia, 210
 Macomia, 31
 Macossa, 154, 201
 Madebe, Ali, 8
 Madeira, Joaquim, 202
 Madrid, 250
 Magaia, Fernando, 122
 Magaia, Filipe Samuel
 in Algeria, 48
 and dissident faction, 47
 as Frelimo's deputy defense chief, 12
 killed, 47–8, 52–3, 64, 100, 139
Magaia pamphlet, 133, 137
 Magno, Alexandre, 66
 Magomburi, 193
 Magude, 122, 210
 Mahachi, Moven, 254
 Mahluza, Fanuel, ix
 with Coremo, 38–40
 detained, 98, 282 n
 at Pretoria talks, 230, 291 n
 and Renamo, 187–90, 288 n
 and Udenamo, 5, 9
 Mahoney, Richard, 25
 Mahose, Kamati, 167
 Maia, Manuel da, ix, 47, 292 n
 Makulube, António, 73
 Malawi, 9, 21, 30, 38, 82, 158, 170, 199, 204, 220
 Mozambican refugees in, 36, 52, 268
 and Mozambique, 123, 127–8, 138, 238–40, 245, 270
 and PRM, 128, 203
 relations with Frelimo, 66, 82, 136
 and Renamo, 239–40, 246
 and South Africa, 158, 239
 Sumane in, 128
 Young Pioneers, 136
 Maluana, 256
 Mambyili, 207
 Mananga, 84
 Manave, Aurélio, 54
 MANC (Mozambique African National Congress), 17, 38, 73
 Mangaze, Mário, 96, 281 n
 Manje, Languane Vareia, ix, 157, 174, 184, 194–7, 201, 260, 287 n, 289 n, 293 n
 Manjichi, Manuel, 196
 MANU (Mozambique African National Union), 8, 29, 226
 Mandimba, 218
 Manga, 202
 Maniamba, 32
 Manica, 107, 117, 131, 145, 215, 220
 FAM operations in, 158, 173–4, 200–1
 Renamo operations in, 148, 150, 154–5, 157, 162–3, 173–6, 182, 193–6, 199–201
 Manjacaze, 197
 Mape, 31
 Mapulanguene, 210
 Maputo, 154, 179–81, 228, 238–9, 241–2, 250, 256
 Maputo Province, 102, 197, 215, 226, 248
 FAM operations in, 235, 260

- Maputo Province (*cont*)
 Renamo operations in, 158, 172,
 209–10, 220, 227, 248
- Marangue, José, 282 n
- Maria, António Isaac, 99, 282 n
- Marondera, 254
- Marromeu, 248
- Marrupa, 30
- Martins, Hélder, 19
- Maríngué, 201–2, 220, 236, 255,
 260
- Marques, José Marques, 184, 197
- Massala, 269
- Massangena, 200, 220
- Massingire, 206
- Masvingo, 207
- Matabeleland, 207, 236, 255
- Matola, 113, 248
- Matola, J., 83
- Matsangaice, André
 arrives in Rhodesia, 144
 and CIO, 144, 152
 and Cristina, 144
 as Renamo leader, 154–5, 157,
 159–63, 165–7, 194
- Matsinhe, Mariano, 222, 225, 243–5
- Mavago, 220
- Mávuè, 200
- Maximiano, Lúcia, 86, 281 n
- Maxixe, 267
- Mazimechopes River, 210
- Mbateya, Eduardo, 66, 279 n
- Mbaua, Agostinho, 49
- Mbeya, 130
- Mbule, Nasser, 73
- Mbuzini, 242
- Mecanhelas, 129, 135–7, 165, 218
- Mecubúri, 115
- Megaza, 203, 248
- Meluco, 227
- Meque, Calisto, 182, 199, 202–3
- Messalo River, 29, 31–2
- Metangula, 100, 220
- Metaveia, 218
- McNamara, Robert, 18
- McPherson, Peter, 266, 294 n
- MFA (Movimento das Forças Armadas),
 4, 72, 74, 77
- mfecane*, 21
- Midlands, 140, 236
- MiG-17, 241
- Milange, 39, 129, 149, 218, 238, 240,
 248
- Milás, Leo
 expelled from Frelimo, 28
 as Frelimo's defense chief, 28
 as Frelimo's information chief, 12
 and Mondlane, 12, 28, 275 n
- Military Revolutionary Tribunal, 102,
 129
- Miller, David, 264
- Millinga, Lawrence, 8, 12, 16
- Miteda, 31
- MiG-21, 241
- Mi-25, 236
- Mkalapa, 49
- MML (Movimento Moçambique
 Livre), 80, 140
- Mmole, Matthew, 8, 16
- MNR, *see* Renamo
- Moamba, 181, 227, 235
- Moatize, 199
- Mocímboa da Praia, 31
- Mocuba, 203–4, 248
- Moiane, Dinis, 49
- Moisés, Nota, 187–8
- Molumbo, 218
- Momade, Ossufo, 184, 201, 218
- Mombasa, 8, 84
- Mombole, Afonso, 100, 103
- Monamo, *see* Dias, Máximo
- Mondlane, Eduardo Chivambo
 assassinated, 58–62
 CIA on, 19, 39, 47
 early background, 14
 as Frelimo leader, 12, 13, 46, 127–8,
 141, 276 n, 278 n
 on military developments in
 Mozambique, 29, 35, 276 n
 and Mozambican politicians, 5–13,
 15, 17, 37, 39, 53, 73
 and Portugal, 10, 14–5, 31, 35–6,
 274 n
 relations with: Algeria, 15, 24;
 China, 26–8; Cuba, 15, 44–5,
 277 n; Ghana, 10, 12–13, 15, 18,
 39, 44; Tanzania, 6, 10, 15–16,
 27–9; USSR, 10, 18, 27–8, 264;

- United States, xv, 5–6, 9–19,
 26–9, 42–3, 273 n; Zambia, 38
 views on Angola, 6, 25, 26
 visit to Mozambique, 14–5
 and the UN, 5, 14, 26
- Mondlane, Janet Rae
 and Gwambe, 12
 book on Mondlane, 88, 281 n
 on Mondlane, 128, 281 n, 285 n
 and Moreira, 15
 as Mozambique Institute principal,
 41
- Mônguê, 30, 82, 129
- Moniz, Botelho, 25
- Monteiro, Casimiro, 59
- Monteiro, Óscar, 101, 110, 225
- Montepuez, 31, 226–7
- Mopeia, 129
- Morais, Hermínio, ix, 252–4, 292 n,
 293 n
- Moreco (Mozambique Revolutionary
 Council), 28
- Moreira, Adriano, 14–15, 274 n
- Morombodze, 161
- Morrumbala, 39, 203, 238
- Mount Darwin, 254
- Mozambique Government
 dissent, 104–5, 221–2, 225, 243–5
 domestic policy, 85–9, 106–8
 economic program, 108–15
 foreign policy
 China, 127
 Cuba, 224
 Malawi, 127–8, 245
 Rhodesia, 128, 130–2
 South Africa, 179–81, 224–5, 241–2,
 267
 judiciary, 85–6, 90, 95–6, 101–2, 272
 Nkomati Accord, 218, 229, 239
 political reforms, 270–1
 political system, 87–9
 religion, 120–3, 152
 talks with Renamo, 269–71
 United States, 223–4, 235, 249–50,
 262–7
 USSR, 171, 221, 242, 265, 271
 villagization, 116–19
- Mozambique Information Office, 263
- Mozambique Institute, 255, 263
- Mpakati, Dr Attati, 128
- MPLA (Movimento Popular de
 Libertação de Angola), 106
- M'sawize re-education camp, 97–8, 123
- M'telela re-education camp, 100–2
- Mtwaru, 60–1
- Muacanha, 218
- Muadia, 202
- Muandiuu, 202
- Muanza, 171
- Muaquia, 202
- Muchanga, Pedro, 227
- Mucojo, 31
- Mucuti, 157
- Mueda, 29, 31–2, 118, 226–7
- Mugabe, Robert, 153
- Muhate, 66
- Muhlanga, Josefate, 65
- Muhlanga, Lucas, 157, 162–3, 175
- Muidumbe, 31, 227
- Muikho, 226–7
- Muindumbe, 227
- Mujibas, 252, 259
- Mulunguisse, 196
- Mungári, 199
- Munguambe, João, 12, 17, 48
- Munguambe, Salomão, 72
- Mureremba, 202
- Murupa, Miguel, 66, 73, 279 n
- Mussapa River, 157, 174
- Mussindo, Manuel, ix, 291 n
- Mussulude, 203
- Mutambara, Manuel, 147
- Mutarara, 30, 130, 149, 199, 238, 240
- Mutare, 193
- Mutassa, 145
- Muxamba, 236
- Muxungué, 157
- Muzenda, Simon, 254
- Muzorewa, Abel, 169
- Nacala, 218, 226, 240
- Nachingwea
 April 1975 trials, 82, 100
 Frelimo training camp, 48–52, 54, 67
- Nairobi, 186, 188, 190, 269–70
- Naisseko re-education camp, 122–3
- Nalazi, 220
- Nalyambipano, Salésio, 91, 102

- Namaacha, 206
 Namanjavira, 248
 Namarrói, 129
 Namaua, 118
 Namecala, 226
 Namibia, 127, 142, 179
 Nampula, 114, 134, 225
 FAM operations in, 250–1
 Frelimo operations in, 30
 Renamo operations in, 158, 218, 226–7
 Namúli, 101, 202
 Nangade, 50
 Nangololo Mission, 29
 Nantuengo, 30
 Naparama, 250–1, 271
 Napulua, Januário, 66
 NATO, 24, 25, 43
 Ncube, Welshman, 255
 Ndau, 12, 22, 148, 208, 250
 Ndeio, Francisco, 104
 Ndimeni, Eli, 66
 Neto, Agostinho, 8
 Neto, Diogo, 77
 Nevins, Gillian, 282 n
 Ngungue, 158, 248, 260
 Nhamatanda, 176, 250, 256
 Nhandandanda, 240
 Nhaunga, Joaquim, 66
 Nhongo, General Rex, 241
 Niassa, 29, 30, 66, 83, 118, 128, 133–4, 136, 139, 225
 Frelimo operations in, 32, 34–6, 49–0, 67, 136
 Operation Production, 214–17
 Portuguese operations in, 34
 PRM operations in, 129–30
 re-education camps in, 96–7, 99–103, 122
 Renamo operations in, 103, 158, 170, 218, 220, 226–7
 Nicaragua, 262
 Nigeria, 53
 Njanje, Luís, 49, 280 n
 Nkoloso, Mukuka, 40
 Nkomati Accord, 218, 229, 239
 ANC reaction to, 224
 events leading to, 222–4
 and Renamo, 225, 261
 and the United States, 223–4
 Nkrumah, Kwame, 7
 Nleya, Edwin, 259
 Norquist, Grover, 266
 North Korea, 207, 236
 Nqumayo, Albert, 82
 Nunes, Horácio, 189–90
 Nungo, Silvério, 12, 63–4
 Nyamapanda, 254
 Nyanga, 249
 Nyerere, Julius, 7, 8, 16, 19, 27, 29, 84

 OAU Liberation Committee, 53
 Odzi, *see* Renamo
 OJM (Organização da Juventude Moçambicana), 121
 Oliveira, Aires de, 146, 286 n
 Oliveira, Languane, 161
 Oliveira, Paulo, 246
 Omar, 71
 ONJ (Organização Nacional de Jornalistas), 89
 Operation Production, 213–17
 Operation Tanzania, 214

 Pafúri, 206–7
 PAIGC (Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde), 3, 5
 Pais, Major Silva, 153
 Palma, 31
 Panda, 267
 Papomo (Partido Popular de Moçambique), 40
 Patriotic Front, 166
 Paulino, Rocha, 218, 220, 226
 Paulo, Joaquim Rui de Figueiredo, 184
 PCN (Partido de Coligação Nacional), 73–4, 80, 82–3
 Pebane, 268
 Penhalonga, 145
 People's Assembly, 85–6
 People's Militia, 157, 163, 168, 201, 205
 People's Shops, 113
 Pereira, Manuel José, 282 n
 Pereira, Raposo, 92
 Phalaborwa, 158, 197
 Phiri, Gimo, 129, 202–3, 285 n, 289 n

- PIC (Polícia de Investigação Criminal), 90, 92–3
- PIDE (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado), 41, 59, 134, 136, 153
- Pinda, 202, 248
- Pinto, Vieira, 217, 228, 290 n, 291 n
- Pires, Pedro, 89, 281 n
- Ponta d'Ouro, 248
- Porto Amélia, 31
- Portugal, 109, 118, 135, 165, 235
 - Armed Forces, 3, 34–6, 134
 - Armed Forces Movement, 3, 71–2 and Caetano, 3
 - Communist Party, 66–7, 134
 - grants independence to colonies, xv, 4, 71, 74, 80, 137
 - intelligence services, 134, 191
 - military response to Frelimo, 31–3, 47, 72
 - and Mondlane's assassination, 59–60
 - and Renamo, 185, 250
 - under Salazar, 3
 - Social Democratic Party, 185
- Pretoria, 163, 172, 181–2, 191, 246
- Pretoria talks, 226, 229, 235
 - draft cease-fire agreement, 230
 - Pretoria Declaration, 229–30
- Primeiro de Maio communal village, 112
- PRM (Partido Revolucionário de Moçambique), 128–30
 - and Renamo, 149, 191, 202–3
- pseudos, 237, 252
- Pungué River, 21, 227
- Quelimane, 204
- Quental, João, 223, 288 n, 290 n
- Quiterajo, 31
- Radio Deutsche Welle, 89
- Radio Liberty, 142
- RBC (Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation), 133, 140, 142
- Reagan, Ronald, 249–50, 262, 264–5, 294 n
- Rebelo, Jorge, 66, 89, 92, 281 n
- Récio, Álvaro, 222, 228–229, 291 n
- Re-education
 - camps, 91, 94, 97–103, 116, 122, 144, 146–9
 - concept, 83, 95–6, 103
- Remo (Resistência Moçambicana), 146–7, 152, 166, 187
- Bomba brothers, 187–8
- Jumo, 191
- Renamo
 - child soldiers, 257–8
 - and the CIO, 147, 153, 168
 - designation, 143, 145
 - under Dhlakama, 161–3
 - FAM's view of, 244, 259–60
 - led by Matsangaice, 145, 154–5, 157, 159–63, 165–7, 194
 - membership, 154, 157, 176
 - military operations in: Cabo Delgado, 158, 226–7; Gaza, 158, 172, 175–6, 182, 196–7, 199, 205–10, 220; Inhambane, 158, 196–7, 200, 205–10, 220; Manica, 148, 150, 154–5, 157, 162–3, 173–6, 182, 193–6, 199–201, 253; Maputo, 158, 172, 209–10, 220, 227, 248; Nampula, 158, 218, 226–7, 250; Niassa, 103, 158, 170, 218, 220, 226–7; Sofala, 148, 154, 157, 160–3, 171, 173–6, 194, 197, 202, 236, 238, 252, 259; Tete, 165, 199, 202, 238, 253; Zambézia, 158, 191, 202–5, 218, 220, 238, 246–8, 250, 252, 268; Zambia, 250; Zimbabwe, 236, 253–5
 - military structure, 196–7, 252–3, 259
 - modus operandi*, 152, 159, 252–3, 257, 259
 - moves into Mozambique, 154–7
 - and the Nkomati Accord, 223–6
 - Odzi training camp, 147, 149, 155, 157, 160–1, 163, 165, 171, 181
 - peace talks, 269–71
 - political structure, 184, 188
 - Pretoria talks, 229–31
 - and the PRM, 149, 191, 202–3
 - program of action, 167–70, 186, 188, 264

- Renamo (*cont*)
 radio communications network, 158
 relations with: France, 151, 185;
 Germany, 185–6, 189; Malawi,
 239–41; the Middle East, 152;
 Portugal, 185, 250; South Africa,
 151, 157, 159, 163, 171–2, 174,
 181–3, 187, 191–3; United
 States, 151, 223, 261–8
- Resistance International, 262
- Resistência Moçambicana, *see* Remo
- Resistência Nacional Moçambicana,
see Renamo
- Revolutionary Council, 128
- Reuvé River, 160, 199, 236,
- Rhodesia, 133, 139–40, 158, 161, 167,
 176, 179, 181
 Frelimo enters through, 30
 Relations with Mozambique, 128,
 130–1
 and Renamo, 144–8, 154, 163
- Ricalta, 228
- Richter, Wolfgang, 186
- Rivalta, Pablo, 45
- RNM, *see* Renamo
- Roberto, Holden, 10, 17, 25, 47
- Rocha, José Daniel, 92
- Rodrigues, Carlos Adrião, 109, 283 n
- Roio, 222
- Rotanda, 117
- Rovuma River, 220
- Ruarua re-education camp, 91, 100,
 102
- Rudolfo, Manuel, ix, 290 n
- Rusk, Dean, 43
- Rutamba, 54
- Sacudzo re-education camp, 94, 145–9,
 155, 157, 168
- Sadjunjira, 200, 202
- Salamanga, 248
- Salazar, António de Oliveira
 and Indian possessions, 4
 rules Portugal, 3, 190
 and United States, 24, 25, 43–4
- Salimo, Mário, *see* Cristina, Orlando
- Salisbury, 131, 137, 139, 152, 169, 203,
 285 n
- Samatenje, 159
- Samuel, Henriques Ernesto, 184
- Sanchez, Colonel Arys, 91
- Sandhurst, 249
- Santos, Alcântara, 245
- Sardinha, Zeca, 155
- SAS (Special Air Service), 175
 operations against Renamo, 236
 training of Renamo guerrillas, 147,
 154, 163
- Save River, 21, 67, 176, 182, 194–7,
 200–1, 205–8
- Savimbi, Jonas, 262–3
- Schaaf, Thomas, 263, 266
- Scotland Yard, 58
- SEII (Serviços Especiais de Informação
 e Intervenção), 77
- Selous Scouts, 237
- Semião, Joana, 72–3, 82, 100–1, 280 n
- Sena, 202, 207, 250
- Serapião, Luís, 294 n
- Sereco (Serviços de Reconhecimento),
 90
- Shangaan, 22, 207
- Shultz, George, 265–6, 294 n
- Sibanda, Brigadier Philip, 236
- SIIP (Serviço de Informação Interna do
 Partido), 92
- Sijaona, Lawi, 58
- Sikasula, Rankin, 38
- Silva, José da, 113, 283 n
- Silva, Rui, 147
- Simango, Celina, 102–3
- Simango, Lutero, 282 n
- Simango, Samuel Brito, 280 n
- Simango, Uria Timóteo, 11, 67, 169–70
 abducted, 82
 criticizes Frelimo, 49, 64, 66, 278 n
 leads Frelimo faction, 47
 in Frelimo's Presidential Council,
 63–5, 279 n
 as Frelimo vice president, 12, 63
 and Mondlane's assassination, 59, 60
 in re-education camp, 100–2
 in Rhodesia, 81
 and South Africa, 81
 trial at Nachingwea, 83, 280 n
- Simbine, Gabriel, 66, 279 n
- SISE (Serviço de Informação e
 Segurança do Estado), 270

- Sitatonga, 157, 163, 173–5, 193
 Sithole, Daniel José, 282 n
 Sithole, Ndabaningi, 254
 Sixpence, Jorge, 155
 Slovo, Joe, 181
 Smith, Ian, 130, 140, 167
 Snap (Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular), 169
 disbanded, 270
 established, 90, 102
 front companies: ADEV, 92;
 Interface, 92; Socimo, 92, 222
 and Homoine massacre, 267
 officials, 101–2
 and re-education camps, 90, 98, 100
 structure: BO, 91; BTI, 91; CIM, 91;
 DCE–GVP, 91
 Soares, Mário, 4
 Socimo (Sociedade Comercial e Industrial de Moçambique),
 see Snap
 Sofala, 117
 FAM operations in, 158, 174, 206,
 237, 252, 255, 269
 Frelimo operations in, 34, 104, 105
 Renamo operations in, 148, 154,
 157, 160–3, 171, 173–6, 197,
 202, 238, 252, 259
 ZNA operations in, 237–8, 269
 Songambe, Mustafa, 47
 Songea, 47, 48
 South Africa, 19, 105, 110, 137, 140,
 179–84, 206, 240, 258
 economic relations with
 Mozambique, 179–82
 Machel's death, 241–2
 Military Intelligence, 80, 153, 158,
 166, 172, 179, 182, 187, 191–2,
 224
 and Mozambique's independence,
 80, 179
 and Nkomati Accord, 222–3, 224,
 229, 267
 policy on Rhodesia, 80, 179
 Portuguese community in, 152, 188
 Pretoria talks, 229–30
 and Renamo, 151, 157, 159, 163,
 171–2, 174, 181–3, 187, 191–3,
 197, 199–200,
- SADCC (Southern Africa Development
 Co-ordination Conference), 240
 St Egidio Community, 270
 SARDC (Southern African Research
 and Documentation Centre), 236,
 254
 SMO (Serviço Militar Obrigatório), 257
 Spain, 250
 Special Task Force, *see* Zimbabwe
 Spetsnaz, *see* USSR
 Spínola, António de
 and Caetano, 3
 on Lusophone federation, 4, 71,
 MFA, 4, 71, 74, 280 n
 and Mozambique's independence,
 74, 279 n
 Stasi, 90
 Sumane, Amós, 28, 40, 128–9
 Swaziland, 30, 41, 137, 206, 241–2
 Sweden, 101
 Symington, James, 18, 274 n
- Tabora, 61
 Tacuane, 30, 203–4
 Tambara, 199
 Tancos, 66
 TANU (Tanganyika African National
 Union), 18, 58, 60
 Tanzania, 71, 83, 105, 134, 136, 214,
 241
 armed forces mutiny, 27
 and China, 28
 investigation into Mondlane's
 death, 58–62
 military assistance to Mozambique,
 175, 235, 248–9, 252, 268
 and Revolutionary Council, 127
 Tava, Cassamo Issufo, 281 n
 Telli, Diallo, 39
 Tenda, Matias, 40, 129
 Tengua, 248
 Tete, 21, 102, 117, 128, 131–2, 139,
 157, 220, 250
 Coremo operations in, 39–40
 FAM operations in, 158, 165, 235,
 240
 Frelimo operations in, 30, 34, 67
 Portuguese operations in, 34, 130,
 136

- Tete (*cont*)
 PRM operations in, 129–30, 149
 Renamo operations in, 165, 199, 202, 238
 ZNA operations in, 237, 255
 TGF (Tropas de Guarda Fronteira), 206–7
 Thai, António Hama, 245
 Thawe, Barnabé, 64
 Thomashausen, André, 186, 294 n
 Thornhill Base, 236
 TIS (Tanzania Intelligence Service), 62
 Tobias, Paulo, 157
 Tobias, Simão, 48
 Tome, 197
 Tomo, Virgílio, ix, 290 n
 TPDF (Tanzania People's Defense Force), 248–9, 252, 268
 Trindade, João, 281 n
 Tripoli, 235
 Tristão, Manuel Lisboa, ix, 48, 50, 73, 277 n, 278 n, 280 n
 Tsequete, Abel, 202,
 Tudo, Luís Arranca, 50
 Tunisia, 10
- Udenamo (União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique), 5, 7, 40, 63
 Udenamo–Moçambique, 37
 Udenamo–Monomotapa, 30
 Ulónguè, 238
 Ululu, Vicente, 187
 Unami (União Nacional Africana de Moçambique Independente), 9, 37–38
 Unar (União Nacional Africana de Rumbézia), 40
 Unemo (União dos Estudantes de Moçambique), 51
 UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), 238
 UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), 106, 192, 262–3, 267
 United Nations, 5, 14, 26, 84, 110, 270–1
 United States, 103, 132, 190, 242
 Agency for International Development, 265–6
 and Mondlane's assassination, 59–62
 and Nkomati Accord, 223–4
 policy on Mozambique, 141–2, 151, 223–4, 235, 249–50, 262–7
 relations with Mondlane, 42
 relations with UNITA, 192, 262
 stand on Renamo, 151, 189, 223–4, 261–8
 UPA (União dos Povos de Angola), 10, 17, 25–6
 USSR, 18, 27–8, 59, 67, 111, 141, 151, 160, 171, 223, 242, 262–5
 economic relations with Mozambique, 221
 military assistance to Mozambique, 173, 175, 181, 206, 240–1
 Spetsnaz (Special forces), 181, 206
- Van der Byl, Piet, 131, 285 n
 Varela, 157
 Varela, Águas, 77
 Vasco da Gama, 133
 Veil, Simone, 262
 Veleia, Joaquim, 130
 Veloso, Jacinto
 defects from Portuguese Air Force, 19
 negotiations with South Africa, 222–3
 Pretoria talks, 229–30, 291 n
 as security minister, 91, 222, 281 n
 Viajem, Amade, ix, 289 n, 292–3 n
 Victor, Anselmo, ix
 Videira, Armindo, 77
 Vieira, Sérgio
 demoted, 245
 and execution of political prisoners, 101
 Nachingwea trials, 82–3
 as security minister, 225
 Vila Cabral, 32
 Vila Fontes, 201–2
 Vila Franca do Save, 160, 176
 Vila Nova, 238
 Vilanamuali, Rui, 49
 Vilankulu, Artur, 40, 190
 Voice of America, 89
 Voice of Zimbabwe, 132

- Vorster, John, 80, 179
 Vos, Jon de, 264
 Voz da África Livre, 138–49, 162, 164–6, 168–9, 174, 183
 and Renamo, 143–9, 152, 155, 187, 189, 202–3
 in South Africa, 153, 157, 172, 191, 198
- Wallop, Malcolm, 264
 Waterkloof, 157
 Washington, 142, 246, 261–3, 265
 Wells, Melissa, 266
 Wheeler, Jack, 261–3
 Wolpe, Howard, 263
 World Anti-Communist Alliance, 263
 Wayne, Roberto, 162, 287 n
 Wight, Jr, William, 5, 273 n
 Williams, Mennen, 16, 17, 18, 42–3, 274 n, 277 n
 Wisner, Frank, 262–3
 Wizimane, Martins Gamito, ix, 290 n
 World Bank, 221, 271
- Xai-Xai, 197
 Xavier, Matias, 101
- Yao, 30, 133–4, 136
- Zaire, 130, 241
 Zambeze River, 21–2, 41, 117–18, 173, 199
 Zambézia, 30, 102, 123, 128, 165
 Coremo operations in, 39
 FAM operations in, 208, 241, 249, 268
 Frelimo operations in, 49, 67, 82, 136
- Popular Front, 151
 Portuguese operations in, 135
 PRM operations in, 129–30, 149
 Renamo operations in, 202–4, 158, 202–5, 218, 220, 238, 246–8, 252, 268
 TPDF operations in, 248–9, 252, 268
- Zambia, 34, 36, 40, 130, 179, 240–1
 assists Coremo, 39, 41
 detains Coremo members, 72
 military operations in Mozambique, 250
 Mozambican refugees in, 238
- ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army), 131
 Zanzibar, 8, 96
 ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), 130–1
 ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union), 44
 Zifa (Zimbabwe Freedom Army), 254
 Zimbabwe, 127, 132–3, 163, 166, 197, 201, 203, 220, 240, 259
 faces Renamo attacks, 253–254
 and Frelimo
 guerrilla bases in Mozambique, 237
 military assistance to Mozambique, 175, 193, 200, 206–7, 235–8, 240–41, 250, 252–3, 268
 and Renamo, 173–4, 236–8, 255
- Zinave, 196
 Ziu-Ziu River, 118
 ZNA (Zimbabwe National Army)
 5th Brigade, 255
 Special Task Force, 235–8, 248, 258–9
 Zóbuè, 30, 199
 Zotov, General Nikolay, 206
 Zumbo, 238