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**CABORA
BASSA
& THE
STRUGGLE
FOR
SOUTHERN
AFRICA**





WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
Programme to Combat Racism

CABORA BASSA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, at its session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 1971, adopted the following resolution:

The Central Committee calls upon Member Churches to discourage their Governments and industrial commercial enterprises from supporting schemes like the Cabora Bassa Dam and other such projects which entrench racist and colonial minority regimes in Africa; and also to educate their members and to warn the wider public of the threat that such schemes pose for world peace.

We are publishing the present document in response to the resolution. We wish to acknowledge the work of the Dambusters Mobilising Committee of London, for its help in the preparation of this document.

INTRODUCTION

Four hundred and fifty years ago the Portuguese landed on the east coast of Africa. They penetrated inland along the River Zambesi and 300 kilometres from the river's mouth they founded a trading post, which they called Tete. At that stage they did not venture much further—penetration by land was resisted by the African population and by waterfalls and rapids—and this was the furthest point they could reach. The slaves who rowed the boats up the river called this gorge 'Kebra Bassa'—which means 'where the work stops'. Now, four centuries later, the work has started again—for the Cabora Bassa gorge is an ideal place in which to build a hydro-electric scheme.

Unfortunately the Portuguese are not the ideal people to build it.

Portugal, the poorest nation in Europe (bar Albania), still clings to her colonies in Africa—Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tomé and Príncipe. She claims to have been in Africa 500 years; but it was not until the end of the 19th century that the Portuguese seriously attempted to extend their control—till then limited to the coastal area—inland. Savage wars followed and not until 1918 could Portugal claim to have subdued Mozambique. Eight years later Portuguese democracy, such as it was, expired at the hands of a military coup and in 1928 Antonio Salazar took full control of the government and set about building an 'Estado Novo'—New State—on the model of Mussolini's Italy. Portugal has therefore an undisputed claim to the title of the oldest fascist state still in existence.

Portuguese colonial policy has been brutal in the extreme. Portugal has never adopted an overt policy of discrimination between white and black—instead it discriminates between the 'civilised' and the 'uncivilised'. But the great majority of 'civilised' have always had white skins and all the 'uncivilised' have had black ones. In the colonies, as in metropolitan Portugal, democratic and trade union rights, the freedoms of speech and of the press, are non-existent. In the field of welfare the Portuguese have done nothing for their African subjects—Mozambique's illiteracy rate is a staggering 98 per cent, clinics and health centres are confined to the major towns, diseases such as bilharzia and malaria rage unchecked. The pattern of African economic life has been disrupted—and Africans are subject to vicious regulations regarding forced labour and forced cultivation. All attempts at unarmed resistance have been crushed by the ubiquitous presence of the secret police, PIDE* and by armed force—as at Mueda in 1960, when the police, firing on an unarmed African demonstration, killed 500 people.

Such conditions drove the Africans of Mozambique to take up arms against their oppressors—and in 1964 FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) launched a series of guerrilla attacks against the Portuguese. In response the Portuguese have moved thousands of troops into Mozambique, have erected an elaborate network of armed posts all over the country and have resorted to the indiscriminate killing of the local population and burning of villages in the areas where fighting is taking place.

This is the nature of the regime that intends to build a dam at Cabora Bassa. The development of the wealth of the Zambesi Valley that the dam will facilitate is only part of the reason for building it—Portugal

*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado. (International and Defence of the State Police), now renamed Directorate General of Security (DGS).

wants to create a white fortress in the heart of Mozambique that will prove a formidable obstacle to the advance of FRELIMO.

Portugal has allies in this undertaking. South Africa shares Portugal's aim of halting the African nationalist freedom fighters and of stopping them penetrating its own borders. It also wants to share in the cheap electricity that Cabora Bassa will produce.

Ian Smith's Rhodesia will benefit when the Zambesi becomes navigable up to the Rhodesian border and will gain a much-needed outlet to the sea. Rhodesia is winning new export markets even during the construction of the dam and it will also gain a source of cheap electric power.

Last but not least, Cabora Bassa is providing the countries of Western Europe with a much-needed outlet for their surplus capital and for their heavy industries. These countries are already deeply committed in South Africa. Now they are increasing their stake in Portugal's African territories. As ever-increasing areas of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau are wrested from Portuguese control by the liberation armies, it is likely that Western capitalism will protect its investments by increasing its military commitments in the area.

Today Cabora Bassa is under attack on two fronts. In Britain, West Germany, Italy, France, Sweden, Canada and USA groups have campaigned to stop the participation of Western firms in the project. In some places they have been successful; in others the campaign continues. Inside Mozambique, the FRELIMO army is already threatening the project's supply lines.

What happens at Cabora Bassa is central to the fight for Mozambique and to the future of the whole of Southern Africa. It is also important to the survival of Western capitalism. Action against the West's involvement at Cabora Bassa is not just a blow struck in solidarity with the people of Mozambique. It is part of a wider struggle against a world economic system which exploits the peoples of the colonising countries only to a lesser degree than those of the colonised.

November, 1971.

CHAPTER 1

The Dam's Place in Portuguese Strategy

Cabora Bassa lies over 300 kilometres up the Zambesi Valley in the centre of the northwestern 'bulge' of Mozambique, where Portuguese explorers penetrated up the river valley away from the coastal strip. The Zambesi cuts across Mozambique at its widest point separating the northern third from the southern two thirds.

When the war began between Portugal and the African liberation movement FRELIMO in September 1964 FRELIMO fairly rapidly established control over Mozambique's two northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa. In 1968 it was able to hold its Second Congress inside Niassa province. During 1968 it opened a new front in Tete and quickly built up its political and military organisation among the population of the northern half of the province.

Portugal's first line of defence against FRELIMO ran through the southern part of Niassa¹. It consisted of a line of army posts and was overrun early in the war. Portugal was forced to fall back on its second line of defence, the great natural barrier of the Zambesi River. The upper half of the Zambesi Valley is sparsely populated with no industry and few white settlers. Conditions there are similar to those in Niassa and Cabo Delgado where FRELIMO has been able to take control of the countryside and to mobilise the entire population in the war against the Portuguese.

At Cabora Bassa Portugal is planning to change these conditions and to turn the Zambesi Valley into a densely populated industrial and agricultural area. Together with the industrial development made possible by the Cabora Bassa project will go a network of roads and airfields. Above all development will provide subsistence for a densely settled population. Portugal plans that this will be a population of white immigrants and that they will be trained as a para-military defence force. In the Zambesi Valley Portugal is planning to create a defence network which will reverse the natural disadvantages it faces in fighting a guerrilla war in Mozambique—a hostile population and the lack of a communications infrastructure—and to beat FRELIMO by adopting FRELIMO's own guerrilla tactic, the creation of a friendly white population wholly mobilised in support of the Portuguese forces.

Cabora Bassa could make this possible on a very large scale indeed. The basis of the project is a dam which will cross the Zambesi at the Kebra Bassa rapids, one of its narrowest points, and a power station on the south bank of the river. This first power station is scheduled to produce 1224 megawatts of electricity by 1975 and a further 816 megawatts by 1979, a total of 2040 megawatts. There are plans for a second power station on the north bank of the river, scheduled for completion in the 1990s, which will supply a further 2000 megawatts. If it is completed Cabora Bassa will have a total generating capacity of over 4000 megawatts: it will be the biggest hydro-electric complex in Africa and the sixth biggest in the world.

A Portuguese government survey of the Zambesi Valley, covering an area of 85,000 square miles, has shown that it is very rich in minerals. It has a 12-mile long seam of coking coal near the town of Tete, iron deposits that could produce one million tons a year, and a 35-million ton reserve of titaniferous magnetites from which vanadium can be extracted. It also holds reserves of manganese, nickel, copper, fluorspar, chrome and asbestos².

Cabora Bassa is to be only the first of a series of dams which will be used to irrigate 3,700,000 acres of land. There are plans for a second dam at Mapanda-Uncua, a short distance downstream from Cabora Bassa. At Boroca, above Tete, there are plans for a third dam, and at Lupata, twenty kilometres below Tete, a fourth. The Zambesi Valley already contains some of the richest land in Mozambique and has a flourishing livestock industry. The newly irrigated land could be used for arable farming and to produce sugar, grains, citrus fruits, vegetables, beef, jute and cotton. Once the area has been opened up there are plans to make another 2,100,000 acres of dry farming land and one million acres of present and potential forest land available for settlement.

These plans are under the control of the 'Mission for the Development of the Lower Zambesi' (MFPZ). According to the Anglo-American Corporation's magazine *Optima*:

'Under the Portuguese Ministry of Overseas Affairs, the MFPZ sees the Cabora Bassa dam as the keystone of a vast interlocking structure. Their blue-print envisages a network of mines and factories flanked by farms and forests—a new Rand on a river producing space-age minerals instead of gold'.

Early statements by the Portuguese Ministry of Overseas Territories said that Cabora Bassa would make possible the settlement of one million Portuguese immigrants in the Zambesi Valley. In the face of international opposition the Portuguese government back-tracked and at a press conference held in Lisbon on July 23, 1970 the Portuguese Foreign Minister belatedly claimed that all that was envisaged at Cabora Bassa was the 'natural demographic expansion' which the project would bring about³.

Other Portuguese statements make it clear that Portugal is still planning massive new white settlement in Mozambique. In June 1970 the Governor-General of Mozambique, Arantes e Oliveira, called for more emigrants⁴. Two weeks before the Foreign Minister's press conference, Portugal's Chief of General Staff, General Deslandes, said in an interview to a Lourenço Marques newspaper that 'the grand solution' to Portugal's colonial wars was the settlement in the colonies of one million Europeans⁵.

Towards the end of 1968 the Mozambique administration began moving the African population from the area around the dam site⁶. A Portuguese and a South African anthropologist were sent in to 'advise' on the removals⁷. At the same time the Portuguese army started massive 'mopping up' operations, in which hundreds of Africans were killed. Because of these attacks thousands of people fled over the border to Zambia, where the government, with UN help, set up a refugee camp at Nyimba⁸. Later Portugal claimed that only the African population that would be affected by the flooding of the area behind the dam wall were removed⁹. It did not explain why Africans still in the district were 'concentrated' into 30 'large villages' to be provided with adequate 'defence facilities'¹⁰.

Meanwhile Portuguese workers at Cabora Bassa are being encouraged to settle in the area when their contracts expire. According to the German magazine *Afrika Heute*:

'Portuguese workers who want to participate in the building of the dam will get good wages and social services and a free passage for

themselves and their families. Every 18 months they will be able to go to Europe for a holiday, and after the expiration of their contracts they will have the prospect of land in the Zambesi Valley, with a house and agricultural equipment which will be theirs after a few years work¹¹.

Land is already being cleared for the Portuguese settlement programme: a contract for doing this has been awarded to the Lourenço Marques firm CODAM¹². Further plans for the 'rural promotion programme' and the 'reorganisation of the population in the Cabora Bassa region' were discussed by the Provincial Co-ordinating Commission for the Zambesi development plan when it met in Lourenço Marques in April 1971¹³.

These 'reorganisation' plans have a purely military objective. On the one hand the African population in the area is being moved into Vietnam-style 'strategic hamlets' which will make it easier for the Portuguese to prevent the local people from coming into contact with FRELIMO guerrillas. On the other the new white settlers who are being moved in will play a para-military role in support of the Portuguese army.

Mozambique's Army Chief, General Kaulza de Arriaga, explained the military significance of the 'rural promotion programme' in a newspaper interview in February 1971. He said that a 'military-civilian plan' had been worked out for the defence of the Tete area and elaborated:

'The civilian part of the plan consists of organising a large number of aldeamentos (settlements) which, besides operating as centres of social promotion and poles of attraction, allow us to protect the population from enemy contacts and violence'.

He added that some communities would be placed 'on a self-defence basis' and that this work was progressing 'at a fast pace'¹⁴.

General Deslandes outlined the same strategy for the whole of Mozambique in July 1970. He said that defence must not be a specialised function but the responsibility of every white settler and added:

'Anti-subversion will have to be a generalised action in which all activities, and even all individuals, should be integrated'¹⁵.

As well as massive white settlement Cabora Bassa will make possible the building of a network of roads and air strips which can be used to transport troops where they are needed. Work on these is already far advanced. The backbone of the road network is the link between Cabora Bassa and Tete and on to the railhead at Moatize. This is being paved at the rate of 12 kilometres a month and is scheduled to be finished by August 1972. A suspension bridge over the Zambesi at Tete was scheduled for completion in the summer of 1971.

As well as main roads Portuguese army engineers are working on a complex of tarred secondary roads which will criss-cross the Cabora Bassa region. They are also building air strips at strategic points. In March 1971 the Chief of the Portuguese Air Force, General Machado Barros, accompanied by the Commander of the Tete 'aerial region' paid an official visit to Tete to inspect work in progress: air operations in Tete were said to have greatly increased in the months before his visit¹⁶.

The role that Cabora Bassa is intended to play is summed up by the *Johannesburg Star*:

'What is today desolate and almost unpopulated country will provide a far better living for hundreds of thousands of people, and their

presence and their prosperity will, there is every reason to believe, not only make it easier for the Portuguese to take their own people with them in resistance to terrorism, but also provide protection for others in Southern Africa. Cabora, in other words, makes a great deal of political as well as economic sense¹⁷.

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CHAPTER 2

South African Participation: Verwoerd's Dream Fulfilled

South Africa has a crucial interest in the maintenance of Portuguese rule in Mozambique. White-ruled Mozambique forms a buffer between South Africa and countries like Zambia and Tanzania to the north, which provide a friendly base for South African freedom fighters. Mozambique and South Africa share an extensive border, which at its nearest point is only 390 kilometres from Johannesburg. Mozambique is also economically important to South Africa. A South African-Portuguese agreement guarantees that in return for contracted Mozambican labourers for the South African mines, for whom the Portuguese government receives approximately £1.80 per head, South Africa will import nearly half of all her imports by sea to the Johannesburg area via the Mozambique port of Lourenço Marques.

Since the mid-1960s, South Africa has been trying to weld the white-ruled countries of Southern Africa into an economic and military bloc in which it will play the dominant role. Dr. Verwoerd, in 1964, spoke of 'a Southern African Common Market'. The idea was taken up by South African businessmen and in the summer of 1970 a powerful group, led by Dr. Anton Rupert, met to set up a 'secretariat' which will 'plan and co-ordinate a systematic programme of research into closer economic co-operation between South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and possibly Zambia'¹.

These plans include the creation of a common electricity grid covering the whole of Southern Africa. The South African state-controlled Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) is sponsoring a series of power schemes all over the sub-continent. In Swaziland it is promoting the building of a thermal power station which will be fuelled by Swazi coal. In August 1970 Swaziland reached agreement with ESCOM on the building of a transmission line which will link its electricity grid with that of South Africa. In Lesotho the Oxbow River hydro-electric scheme will supply electricity to both Lesotho and South Africa. On the borders of Namibia and Angola work has begun on the Kunene hydro-electric project. In South Africa power from the huge Orange River scheme will eventually be fed into a common Southern African grid. Cabora Bassa will be only the largest of these schemes.

Militarily also South Africa has been increasing its involvement in the rest of Southern Africa. Regular consultations are held between the heads of security police of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal. South African 'para-military police' have been fighting in Rhodesia since 1967. In Mozambique FRELIMO has reported the presence of South African troops in Tete province. In Angola Portugal depends heavily on South Africa for certain categories of military equipment, especially helicopters². In 1970 MPLA reported the presence of South African helicopters at the Lumege base, the centre of the Portuguese army's crop-spraying and defoliating operations³. By 1970, according to a German military magazine, one third of the South African army was stationed outside South Africa⁴.

South Africa's needs extend beyond simply maintaining the status quo within the white bloc. It is also trying to create new relationships with the independent African countries to the north. Politically it is trying to promote some form of 'dialogue'. Economically it wants to increase its trade and investments in Africa and gain an economic hold over the black states. This will serve two purposes: the cooling down of

African, and therefore international, protest against apartheid and the whittling away of support for the liberation movements; and the gaining of new outlets for South Africa's own expanding economy.

As part of this process South Africa hopes that the independent African countries will buy power from Cabora Bassa. According to the *Daily Telegraph*:

'... (their) view is that Zambia and, later, Tanzania will be hard pressed to ignore the undoubted economic advantages that will result from Cabora Bassa—and that if they involve themselves in its benefits they are bound to think again about supporting the anti-Portuguese rebels in Mozambique and Angola'⁵.

South Africa has also suggested that Cabora Bassa will benefit Zambia by making the Zambesi navigable to the sea and providing a new cheap outlet for Zambia's copper exports. The Johannesburg *Star* commented: 'If Zambia decides to make use of these transport facilities, the Zambian dependence on the transport routes through this African colony of Portugal will increase, and this will considerably strengthen Portugal's hand in pressuring President Kaunda on the question of the terrorist training camps in his country'⁶.

The significance of Cabora Bassa, as part of these developments, was summed up by a London newspaper in 1968:

'Needless to say, the scheme has tremendous political overtones. Not only is this the first ever large-scale economic co-operation of various African territories, the start indeed of a Common Market, but it also means that South Africa has moved her point of involvement from the Limpopo to the Zambesi. She will defend her interests and investments, and, as she has already demonstrated, she will do this physically, if needs be''.

Because of its scale Cabora Bassa only makes economic sense when seen as part of a developing Southern African bloc. The 1224 megawatts of electric power which it will produce when the first phase of the scheme is completed is one hundred times the present consumption of Mozambique. The only African country which consumes electricity on anything like the scale that would be generated at Cabora Bassa is South Africa, which consumes 57 per cent of Africa's electric power. Dr. H. J. van Eck, President of the South African Industrial Development Corporation, explained this to a South Africa Club dinner held in London on October 25, 1968:

'With hydro-electric power-stations the cost of the energy stays relatively high as long as the capacity of the dam is not completely utilised. Low costs are only possible when a market can be found for all the energy. The large quantities of energy from the Cabora Bassa dam cannot be used in the near future in the surrounding areas, because Western technological methods cannot be imposed on an underdeveloped economy in a short time. The necessary proficiency and capital investment for such an energy expenditure are locally not present and it will take many years to develop them. But such a market can be found in South Africa'.

South Africa and Portugal reached a preliminary agreement on South Africa's purchase of power from Cabora Bassa in 1967. At talks held in Pretoria from July 19 to July 26, 1967, South Africa agreed to buy the greater part of the electricity produced.

Final agreements were signed on September 19, 1969 in Lisbon.

ESCOM undertook to buy a minimum of 680 megawatts of electric power from Cabora Bassa from 1975, 1070 megawatts from 1977 and 1470 megawatts from 1981⁸. According to a Portuguese magazine this means that South Africa will consume 80 per cent of Cabora Bassa's output of power⁹.

The power will be carried from Cabora Bassa to South Africa by two parallel transmission lines which will run 1410 kilometres through Mozambique, near its border with Rhodesia, and then 520 kilometres inside South Africa itself. The electricity will be fed into South Africa's present grid through the new Apollo sub-station already under construction near Pretoria.

South Africa is also vital to the project as a supplier of know-how and equipment. The Anglo-American Corporation is the leader of the ZAMCO consortium which won the contract for building the dam, and has supplied the administrative apparatus for it. Ted Brown, a Director of Anglo-American, is the President of the consortium.* On the site itself South African firms will supply mining experience and specialised drilling and blasting techniques. Their particular role is the blasting out of the diversion channels which will carry the Zambezi's waters while the dam is being built, and the cavern which will house the electricity generators.

Because of their geographical proximity, South African firms have also won most of the sub-contracts for the supply of the huge amounts of machinery and materials that the project will use. South Africa is expected to supply 65,000 tons of steel for the building of the transmission lines¹⁰. The Chemical Services Group of Johannesburg holds the main contract for the supply of industrial cleaning materials for the project¹¹. Where Western firms, such as the US company Fuller Equipment, hold sub-contracts, they hold them through their South African subsidiaries. Fuller Equipment's South African agents, Process Projects are the main contractors for the supply of cement plants for Cabora Bassa, the first of which is being built at Dondo, near Beira¹².

In December 1969 the magazine *Southern Africa* reported that equipment had started to move up from Johannesburg:

'The first convoy, in a series that will continue for nearly five years, left the Rand last week with materials and equipment for the Cabora Bassa dam project in Mozambique. The first of the convoys which are to be run thrice weekly by Globe Transport of Germiston over the next four and a half years, comprised three giant Henschel trucks and trailers, each worth R26,000, carrying nearly R80,000 worth of equipment and materials for the multi-million rand project'¹³.

Finally, as FRELIMO guerrilla operations against Cabora Bassa intensify, South Africa can be expected to assume the main military responsibility for the project's defence. FRELIMO forces observed one battalion of South African troops in Chioco and several companies in Chicoo, Mague and Zumbo in 1968¹⁴. Subsequent reports have put South Africa's strength in Tete at at least two battalions. A German newspaper suggested in 1969 that South Africa had asked Portugal for permission to camp South African troops along the route of the electricity transmission line from Cabora Bassa, but that Portugal had refused¹⁵.

* Mr. Brown is on record as saying about the Portuguese: 'They are tough, disciplined people. There may be something to be said for living under a dictator after all. The Portuguese have no student riots. There are no long-haired layabouts'.

According to the military correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*:

'If the Portuguese forces become unable to protect Cabora Bassa and its 1400 kilometres long transmission line against FRELIMO attack, a contingent of South African troops, now stationed in Rhodesia, may, one day, participate in the hunt for the guerrillas'¹⁶.

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CHAPTER 3

Sanctions Busting: Rhodesia's Stake in the Dam

'The enormous Cabora Bassa project will not only be useful for Mozambique but for all of us here in Southern Africa: as far as we have the same ideas with regards to the maintenance of peace and the upholding of our Western democracy. And because Mozambique and especially Cabora Bassa is so near to our borders it will be beneficial for Rhodesia in various ways.'

—Ian Smith in an interview with a Lourenço Marques newspaper.¹

Rhodesia, as well as South Africa, shares Portugal's strategic interest in the project. The southern part of Tete province borders on Rhodesia. Guerrillas from the liberation movements of Zimbabwe have been infiltrating into Rhodesia and establishing underground cells there among the rural African population. If FRELIMO controlled Tete province south of the Zambesi, they would have a new access route through Tete into Rhodesia.²

This point was underlined by the Rhodesian magazine *Property and Finance* in August 1967. It wrote that Rhodesia should support the Cabora Bassa project as 'a solid barrier against any possible terrorist infiltration from further north' and added:

'The international business interest which will inevitably arise will be yet another buffer against hostile propaganda levelled at the three white areas of Africa—if only because it will generate business self-interest abroad, and, in doing so, make the uninformed realise what white initiative and skill is achieving in an otherwise "Dark Continent"'.³

Rhodesia is also interested in buying electricity from Cabora Bassa. A four-man delegation, led by Rhodesia's Secretary for Transport and Energy, Colonel A. Leslie, visited Lisbon in November 1967⁴. According to various Rhodesian reports, the country will have a shortfall of electricity by 1975. Radio Salisbury stated in July 1968:

'If the Cabora Bassa scheme becomes as cheap as the Portuguese claim, it seems very probable that Rhodesia will obtain its energy from this source, instead of handing out large sums of money for the second stage of the Kariba dam, in order to increase production.'

It is also well-placed to supply equipment and goods. A pamphlet produced by the National Export Council of Rhodesia, *The Way to Cabora Bassa* tells Rhodesian businessmen:

'With this tremendous market situated so advantageously close to our production centres we would be foolish to permit competitors to steal a march on us. Rhodesia is ideally placed as a manufacturing centre to provide all the varied needs of a large community working on the project—from food-stuffs to feed them, through the clothing they will wear and the chairs they will sit upon, up to the vast quantities of cement to be poured into the dam and the timber shuttering to close it.'

The Council estimates that Cabora Bassa should provide a market for £120 million worth of Rhodesian goods over the next five years.

Rhodesia also provides one of the best access roads to Cabora Bassa. The road from Salisbury, only 300 kilometres from the dam site and the nearest big city, is being improved. Air Rhodesia has asked the government for permission to open a line to Tete, the nearest air strip

¹See Chapter 8 for details of Rhodesian military co-operation with the Portuguese.

to Cabora Bassa, and to extend the line to Cabora Bassa as soon as possible⁴.

A BBC Television team which visited Cabora Bassa early in 1971 reported that Rhodesian goods, including Gibcan prunes and Flame Lilly sweetcorn were on sale in the supermarket at Songo, the township above the dam site.

Rhodesia will also benefit from the making of the Zambesi navigable from the Rhodesian frontier to the sea by means of an artificial lake behind the dam and a further series of dams lower down the river. There are plans to build a new port at Cuama which would provide facilities for ships of up to 40,000 tons.

The UN Security Council resolution on Sanctions against Southern Rhodesia is explicit in its definition of what is a breach of sanctions. The resolution is binding on all member states of the UN. It forbids:

'any activities by their nationals or in their territories which would promote or are calculated to promote the export of any commodities or products from Southern Rhodesia.'

Another clause prevents

'the sale or supply by their nationals or from their territories of any commodities or products . . . to any person or body in Southern Rhodesia or to any other person or body for the purposes of any business carried on in or operated from Southern Rhodesia, and any activities by their nationals or in their territories which promote or are calculated to promote such sale or supply.'

From these clauses alone it is clear that a company of any nationality, though it may be operating outside its national territory, will be in breach of sanctions if it or its subsidiary is anywhere in the world engaged in a project in which Rhodesian products are also involved, or from which the Rhodesian economy can be said to benefit. The evidence shows that Cabora Bassa is in this category, and companies are acting illegally by continuing to participate in the construction of the dam in any capacity.

The UK Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guiné has commented:

'We submit therefore that it is quite clear, that if any national of any Member State of the United Nations carries on any activity anywhere, and as a direct consequence of that activity goods are exported from Rhodesia, then that is a breach of the Resolution and the Member State in question has a duty to prevent the activity from being continued'⁵.

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CHAPTER 4

Awarding the Contracts: Caetano Woos the West

South Africa and Rhodesia are Portugal's natural allies at Cabora Bassa. But from the start Portugal has been eager to bring in a third ally, the NATO countries of Western Europe and North America.

The preliminary survey work for Cabora Bassa was done by a Portuguese firm, Hidro-Tecnica Portuguesa, which reported in 1966. Even before it had completed its survey the Portuguese government had begun to contact the corporate giants of the West, including Siemens and English Electric. By 1967 five international groups of companies were showing interest in the project. Finally three consortia emerged. They were:

Cabora Bassa Builders, a group of US, French, Swiss, Portuguese and South African companies led by the US firm Morrison-Knudsen, with its headquarters in Paris.

Cabora Bassa Construction Consortium, a group of British, Italian, South African and Portuguese firms led by the British English Electric Company, with its headquarters in London.

Consorcio Hidroelectrico do Zambeze (ZAMCO), a group of French, German, South African and Portuguese and one Italian and one Swedish firm, led by the Anglo-American Corporation, with its headquarters in Paris.

The three consortia handed in their tenders on March 10, 1968. Cabora Bassa Builders bid \$340 million; Cabora Bassa Construction Consortium bid \$248 million; and ZAMCO bid \$246 million. The contract was supposed to be awarded on June 12, but the Portuguese government delayed until July 10, when it announced that it had provisionally awarded the contract to ZAMCO.

In September 1968 Marcello Caetano succeeded Salazar as Prime Minister of Portugal. Caetano was reluctant to allow the South African-led ZAMCO consortium to go ahead with the building of the dam. He wanted greater US or West European involvement in the scheme. He was encouraged in thinking that he could get this by talks held with West German Chancellor Kiesinger on his visit to Lisbon in October 1968. West Germany wanted to offer Portugal some compensation for the fact that it was no longer prepared to build a Luftwaffe base at Beja in Portugal. This compensation could take the form of a loan for the construction of Cabora Bassa. Later, when it was under pressure to withdraw, the West German government made it clear that it supported the political objectives of the scheme. According to the West German Consul-General in Lourenço Marques:

'A German withdrawal from the project, purely because of destructive threats from the resistance groups, and the Russians and Chinese who are behind them, would have spectacular political consequences. Politically it would be very damaging for Portugal, a NATO ally and would bring to light the weakness of the West. Therefore, every chance of co-operating to maintain peace in Southern Africa must be seized by us'.

Alternatively Caetano wanted greater American involvement. The magazine *African Development* suggested:

'The American consortium, Cabora Bassa Builders, has a special attraction for the Portuguese government. If the Americans could be

involved in such an enormous project as Cabora Bassa, it is going to be very improbable that they would allow Mozambique to fall into the hands of a leftist liberation movement. This is a political and military advantage with which the South Africans cannot compete². On a visit to Mozambique in April 1969 Caetano told the Press:

'The assignment of the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam to ZAMCO was only provisional. The time which was assigned to setting up a definite contract has expired. In the discussion of details the interests of the group did not coincide with those of Portugal'³.

On May 7 the Portuguese government wrote to all three consortia asking for confirmation of their tenders, financial arrangements and delivery times.

But the three consortia stood by their original tenders, and on September 2, 1969, the Portuguese government announced that ZAMCO would get the contract after all.

The South Africans were annoyed and the Johannesburg *Financial Mail* wrote scornfully:

'The only ones who seem to have got an advantage from all this postponement are the airlines, who have transported innumerable delegations between Pretoria and Lisbon. Neither the actors, nor the scenario have been markedly changed since the contract was supposed to be signed in October last year. In spite of rumours that small changes have been introduced, ZAMCO has won the contract against exactly the same competition'⁴.

The final contract was signed in Lisbon on September 19, 1969. It consists of four parts: one between the governments of Portugal and South Africa; one between Portugal and ESCOM; one between Portugal and ZAMCO; and one between ZAMCO and ESCOM. One of its most unusual features is the provision made to protect ZAMCO against FRELIMO attack. Article 24 of the contract between Portugal and ZAMCO describes as force majeure:

'war (declared or not), hostilities, invasion, insurrection, sabotage, usurpation of military or civil power, civil war, uprising or disorder. In which case all damage will be compensated by the Portuguese state'⁵.

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CHAPTER 5

The International Campaign: Winning the Middle Ground

On September 2, 1969, the same day that Portugal announced that it had awarded the contract to ZAMCO, the Swedish firm ASEA announced that it had withdrawn from the consortium. In a communique issued by its Board of Directors the company stated that it was unwilling to run the risk of prosecution under Swedish law on sanctions against Rhodesia.

ASEA's withdrawal was the result of the pressure of public opinion in Sweden, and not of any action by the Swedish Social Democratic government. All along the Swedish government refused to take a stand on the issue. When it first looked as though ASEA might be involved in Cabora Bassa in 1967, and at the beginning of 1968, the Swedish economy was at a low ebb. The directors of ASEA said that if they were forced to back out of Cabora Bassa they would have to make 500 workers at the company's plant in the small town of Ludvika in central Sweden redundant. The government, which had always made full employment one of the main planks of its electoral programme, was unwilling to take responsibility for this¹. Soon after ASEA's withdrawal the Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander stated:

'Only ASEA knew exactly all the facts and the government did not know enough to say anything'².

The Swedish trade unions also failed to oppose ASEA's involvement. According to the *Observer* Foreign News Service:

'The Swedish Metal Workers' Union announced that, while in principle they disapproved of the Portuguese regime, and supported the Africans in their fight for independence, they could not engage in a blockade which might affect their own members. The only concrete result, the union said, would be that another company would step in to replace ASEA. In a word the union backed the ASEA directors. So did the Swedish government. In principle the ruling Social Democrats disapprove of the Salazar regime, but in this particular case, they saw no reason to stop ASEA, since the company had contravened no Swedish law'³.

But the extra-parliamentary Left in Sweden and the youth wing of the Social Democratic Party made Cabora Bassa into a major political issue. They invited FRELIMO representatives to Sweden and at a press conference in Stockholm held at the beginning of 1968, FRELIMO declared that operations against Cabora Bassa had already started.

ASEA's part of the ZAMCO contract was worth £14 million. It was to supply mercury valves which would convert alternating current into direct current to be fed into the transmission line from Cabora Bassa to South Africa. ASEA was one of the few companies with the technical know-how to do this. According to the *Financial Mail* the only other companies with adequate knowledge and experience were GEC-English Electric and the US company Westinghouse⁴. The West German firm, Siemens, was however in the process of developing the technique.

After ASEA's withdrawal GEC-English Electric tried to take its place. In an interview given to the Swedish press in October 1969 GEC-English Electric's Chairman Lord Nelson said:

'Personally I have great difficulty in understanding why ASEA left ZAMCO . . . We are very happy to get a new chance at the eleventh hour to win the game we had previously lost . . . We are completely

prepared to take ASEA's place in the consortium; we have done all the preliminary work . . . There is no public feeling against us in Britain, and no legislation to prevent us taking part'⁵.

But Lord Nelson was over-optimistic. The *Economist* wrote:

'English Electric is fishing in the troubled waters of the Zambesi for a £15 million contract to supply transforming equipment for the proposed Cabora Bassa dam . . . The Rhodesians see massive business in the £135 million Mozambique dam which will be sited less than 200 miles from Salisbury. For a start they hope to supply most of the cement—up to 8,000 tons a month—needed during the four years of construction . . . British efforts to persuade other nations to close the sanctions loopholes will lose much of their credibility if Lord Nelson presses on'⁶.

In November 1969 talks were held between GEC-English Electric and the British government. According to the *Times*:

'GEC-English Electric wants to know whether participation in Cabora Bassa would constitute a breach of the United Kingdom sanctions against Rhodesia'⁷.

Meanwhile Labour MPs were trying to pressure the government into stopping GEC-English Electric from going ahead. In the House of Commons on December 4 the government was asked about its attitude to the project. In the House of Lords a debate was initiated by Lord Gifford, Chairman of the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guiné on December 15. During the Lords debate it became clear that nothing could be expected from the Labour government. The government spokesman Lord Shepherd, said:

'If I may, I will deal first with Her Majesty's Government's attitude with regard to self-determination of the people of Mozambique. It is this. While we recognise their right to self-determination, we maintain, as we must maintain, that the question of carrying out the principle of self-determination rests, not in principle but in timing, with the administering power . . . Our sanctions legislation is directed only against Southern Rhodesia and not against Portugal or any other country. Therefore, it is not Her Majesty's Government's policy to discourage or prevent British companies from engaging in legitimate trade or dealings in Mozambique . . . It is far too early to know how this dam will affect the economy of Rhodesia . . . if British firms were to participate either as contractors for the construction of a power station or for the supply of machinery, they could not be held responsible for any decision the owners of the power station might take in 1974 or later to supply power to Southern Rhodesia'⁸.

However, the debate had already been overtaken by events. On November 26, 1969 a GEC-English Electric spokesman stated in London that there was now 'little chance' that GEC-English Electric would take part in Cabora Bassa and that if it did so its part would be 'minimal'. He said that this decision was the result of commercial discussions, in which the question of sanctions did not arise. But D. R. Love, the official who led GEC-English Electric's negotiations with ZAMCO, stated:

'We have been thoroughly embarrassed by the publicity accorded to our attempts to get involved in Cabora Bassa. It has reduced the possibilities of English Electric participating in the project'⁹.

Finally it was announced that Siemens, which was already a member of the ZAMCO consortium, had taken over ASEA's share of the contract.

By the beginning of 1970 it must have seemed to Portugal that the problems surrounding the project were over. In November 1969 work had begun on the cutting of the first tunnel through which the waters of the Zambesi would be diverted while the dam was being built. In November there had been 75 workers at Cabora Bassa: by April 1970 there were 310¹⁰. Work on the township of Songo which was to house the workers at Cabora Bassa was well advanced. But in May President Kaunda of Zambia, acting on behalf of the East and Central African states who, except for Malawi, had condemned the project at their Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Lusaka the previous year, visited first Italy and then West Germany and urged their governments to withdraw.

Italy responded and on May 19, 1970 the Italian Embassy in Lusaka confirmed that the Italian government would no longer take part in the scheme. The government had previously undertaken to provide £19 million worth of export credits for the Italian firm Societa Anonima Elettificazione (SAE), which, through its South African subsidiary Powerlines, was a member of the ZAMCO consortium. The Italian government's decision did not mean that Powerlines was automatically forced to withdraw, only that it must look elsewhere for financial backing. President Kaunda's appeal was taken up by Italy's largest trade union organisation, the CGIL, which demanded that the government force Powerlines to pull out. The government refused and Powerlines looked for alternative sources of credit. In October 1970 all three of Italy's trade union confederations, the CGIL, CISL and UIL made a joint protest to the Italian Foreign Minister, Aldo Moro, about the alleged presence of 200 Italian workers at the Cabora Bassa site, and asked the government what it proposed to do to ensure their safety.

By the end of the year there were conflicting reports about SAE's participation. According to South African sources a South African company, Transmission Lines Construction, has taken over SAE's place in the ZAMCO consortium. According to SAE itself the South African company is acting only as sub-contractor to SAE.

Meanwhile Zambia had turned its attention back to West Germany and to France. On May 19 President Kaunda called the West German and French ambassadors to State House, Lusaka, and urged them to advise their governments to follow the Italian government's example. He later told the Press that for states intending to participate in Cabora Bassa:

'This is a question of a conscious and deliberate decision—are they going to support apartheid by spreading it even further north or are they going to see reason and invest their money elsewhere?'¹¹.

Inside West Germany also, there was opposition to the scheme. When President of the World Bank McNamara visited Heidelberg in the spring of 1970 Heidelberg SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) mounted a demonstration against Western imperialism in Africa, and especially against German involvement in Cabora Bassa. An SPD* member of the West German parliament, Hans Matthofer, argued that West Germany would lose out economically in the rest of Africa if it remained in Cabora Bassa:

'The consequences for the German economy of the anger of the African countries are incalculable. According to the Tanzanian

*Social Democratic Party.

ambassador in Bonn, a boycott by the African countries of the firms participating in the construction is just one of the means. In Libya it is already rumoured that the German firms supporting colonial policies in Africa will be nationalised'.

First the French and then the West German Cabinets met to consider the Zambian appeal. On June 17 France announced that it would remain in the project. On July 30 West Germany followed suit. According to the *Quarterly Economic Review* French support for Cabora Bassa was in exchange for continued use of the French missile-tracking station in the Azores¹².

Meanwhile at the UN, the Committee of 24 passed a resolution calling on all governments to withdraw from Cabora Bassa and also the Kunene scheme and deplored the participation of some Member States in the projects.

Although the West German government had formally rejected President Kaunda's request, confusion about its intentions continued. A special emissary, Herr Heinz Kuehn, sent by the West German government to explain its decision to President Kaunda, returned home convinced of the justice of Kaunda's case. He told a press conference on September 2 that the African countries were justified in believing that Cabora Bassa represented an attempt by the white peoples of Southern Africa to extend their sphere of influence northwards to the Equator and said: 'We could very easily be involved there (Mozambique) in a new Biafra or Algeria'¹³.

In the autumn of 1970 President Kaunda paid a second visit to Europe where he received considerable support from non-governmental organisations in the countries he visited. Among the delegations that met him was one from the World Council of Churches which expressed its solidarity with Zambia's stand in the Cabora Bassa campaign.

The West German government remains unwilling to challenge the giant firms involved in Cabora Bassa and to withdraw. But it is clear that it now considers its decision to back Cabora Bassa to have been a political mistake which it is anxious not to repeat. In April 1970 the Managing Director of the Dresdner Bank, one of the leaders of the banking group which raised finance for Cabora Bassa, said that the West German government had told the German banks that it would no longer guarantee supplier credits to German firms taking part in schemes in Southern Africa such as Cabora Bassa¹⁴.

West German firms have also run into difficulties because of rapidly escalating costs. German firms' tenders for the project were based on 1967 prices: the final contract allowed for price rises of up to 12.5 per cent during the period 1967 to 1975 while the work was being carried out. But last autumn representatives of the firms announced that the charges they were incurring had already gone up by more than this amount. If costs continue to spiral and if the West German government does refuse to extend further credit guarantees for Cabora Bassa there is a real chance that the firms will still be forced to withdraw.

Opposition to the scheme from inside West Germany has become increasingly broadly based. In July 1971 the Association of German Scientists produced a detailed memorandum arguing against German participation in the scheme.¹⁵

In the first half of 1971 the focus of the international campaign against Cabora Bassa moved across the Atlantic to Canada and the USA.

It became known that Alcan had won a contract to sell about 12,000 metric tons of aluminium to a Portuguese firm Quintas y Quintas to make cables for the transmission lines from Cabora Bassa. In Montreal anti-apartheid groups attended Alcan's AGM where they were told that the dam would benefit the African people and that power from it would not be sold to Rhodesia. The meeting ended in uproar.

On May 6, 1971 General Electric Company of America announced that it had withdrawn from a contract to supply \$55 million worth of electric equipment for Cabora Bassa because 'it appeared that financial assistance from US sources would not be arranged in time to meet the project's construction schedule'¹⁶. GEC had applied to the US government Export-Import Bank for a loan to finance its contract, and the Bank had at first agreed to give it. But its decision was subject to political approval by the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policy and the Council's decision was still pending when General Electric announced its withdrawal.

But US firms are still involved in smaller sub-contracts. Ingersoll Rand is supplying machinery via its South African subsidiary¹⁷. Bell Helicopters, a company based at Fort Worth, Texas, has sold five helicopters to the Zambesi Development Office for 'logistical support' in the Cabora Bassa area¹⁸.

In two years the Italian government and Swedish and US companies have all withdrawn from the Cabora Bassa project. They have been forced to do so because of the strength of the forces working against Cabora Bassa. They have calculated that it is not worth their while to alienate independent African countries and run into more opposition at home for the sake of a project which is already under FRELIMO attack and which may never be completed.

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CHAPTER 6

British Involvement: Barclays, United Transport, ICI et al

The story of British involvement in Cabora Bassa and the campaign against it has an interest beyond the borders of Britain alone. It reveals in particular the strength and cohesion of Western economic involvement in Southern Africa as a whole, and shows that while no British firm is a member of the ZAMCO consortium British interests are nevertheless heavily committed in both economic and political support of the project.

The Conservative General Election victory in June 1970 marked a new stage in British firms' attempts to take part in Cabora Bassa. The *Rand Daily Mail* wrote:

'The recent change in the British government can only benefit those who want to see Cabora Bassa succeed. It is doubtful whether the Conservatives will look upon the scheme as "a colonial monster" or for that reason discourage British firms from entering into subsidiary contracts with German, French, Portuguese or South African firms which have already successfully tendered for various aspects of the dam'¹.

In October 1970 a government-sponsored British National Export Council mission visited the Cabora Bassa site and the Board of Trade announced that a £5 million export credit had been made available to firms exporting to Portugal and Mozambique. At the end of the year Maurice Macmillan MP said in a written answer to a Parliamentary Question that the government would *not* 'take all measures at (their) disposal to prevent British financial participation . . . in Cabora Bassa'².

But already under the Labour government several firms had become involved. Barclays Bank DCO was the first to admit this openly and in December 1969 a DCO spokesman said, 'We are admittedly in this but I cannot disclose the amount. We are however tailenders. Anglo-American is the opening bat'³. Later Barclays revealed that its involvement was to the tune of £1.2 million and that this consisted of performance bonds extended to a South African civil engineering firm which held a sub-contract at Cabora Bassa. Barclays DCO also has close connections with Anglo-American: they share two directors, Harry Oppenheimer and Sidney Spiro and Anglo-American is Barclays DCO's biggest single customer.

Early in 1970 United Transport, a Chepstow-based firm, began transporting equipment and supplies for work on Cabora Bassa's diversion tunnel from Johannesburg to the dam site. According to the *Rand Daily Mail* United Transport holds three of the major transport contracts for Cabora Bassa and over the next four years its capital outlay on the project will be more than £580,000. It is building up a special fleet of bulk road carriers to transport cement from the railhead at Moatize to the site.

United Transport's involvement has already cost the company its business in Zambia. In November 1970 President Kaunda announced that because of the company's part in Cabora Bassa it would be asked to dispose of its 49 per cent interest in the United Bus Company of Zambia.

African Explosives and Chemical Industries, a South African company in which ICI is the joint largest shareholder, confirmed that it is one of two suppliers of industrial explosives for Cabora Bassa⁴. AE & CI

expects the demand generated by Cabora Bassa to be so great that it is building Mozambique's first ever explosives manufacturing plant at a cost of £300,000⁵.

Other British firms have set up plants in Mozambique in the hope of cashing in on the general industrial expansion that they hope Cabora Bassa will generate. Babcock and Wilcox has set up a new Mozambique subsidiary. British Leyland is building an assembly plant for Mini-moke jeeps outside Lourenço Marques.

But by the spring of 1970 the publicity given to some of these companies by the campaign against Cabora Bassa was sufficient to make other interested firms pull a security curtain around their activities. In February 1970 South Africa House in London announced that Guest Keen and Nettlefolds had set up a new plant in Mozambique specifically to supply equipment for Cabora Bassa, and that the equipment included concrete mixers, dumpers and vibrators which would be made with South African components and raw materials. GKN hastily denied that it had any knowledge of the purpose for which its new factory's output would be used, but admitted that it had taken legal advice on whether involvement in Cabora Bassa could lay it open to prosecution under Rhodesian sanctions legislation.

Later the *Daily Telegraph* wrote that Cabora Bassa was 'the target of an intensive campaign of obstruction which has its origins with the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London. For this reason discussion of the awards of contracts is highly confidential'⁶.

The campaign against Barclays Bank in particular has been singularly effective. Barclays' share of student bank accounts fell from 48 per cent in 1969 to 33 per cent in 1970⁷. Several substantial organisations, including the Student Christian Movement and the Hillfields Community Association withdrew their accounts and the majority Labour group on at least one local authority, Lambeth Borough Council, decided to press for the removal of the Council's account, worth £37 million. It is impossible to estimate the number of demonstrations which have been held in the last two years outside Barclays branches, but they must number several hundred. Only Barclays knows how many individuals have closed their accounts.

In April 1971 protesters again attended Barclays Annual General Meeting, this time in force. Shortly before Barclays had announced that its £1.2 million performance guarantee had lapsed in the previous August. But at the AGM Barclays Chairman John Thomson confirmed that Barclays was still involved at Cabora Bassa, 'via a long line of credit extended to a customer'. Barclays had also placed an advertisement in a Portuguese financial magazine which said 'Barclays Bank. Presence maintained at Cabora Bassa'⁸. Barclays later denied all knowledge of this advertisement, but has been unable to explain its appearance.

Protesters also attended ICI and GKN's Annual General Meetings in May and United Transport's in August. ICI's Chairman defended the company's record and said that Mozambique was 'an expanding area of operations'. GKN's Chairman ruled a representative of the National Union of Students out of order and refused to comment on his company's participation.

The Transport and General Workers' Union at its 1971 Biennial Delegate Conference passed a resolution opposing the construction of the dam.

Cabora Bassa had become a political issue on the right as well as on the left. The Conservative Party's pro-Portuguese right-wing began to push for greater British participation as a political gesture in support of the Portuguese. On a visit to Mozambique in April 1971 Patrick Wall visited the Cabora Bassa site.

By the autumn of 1971 it was clear that more British firms were becoming involved. A Portuguese newspaper reported that an Italian-British group had begun work on a 600-mile section of the transmission line which would carry electricity from Cabora Bassa to South Africa¹⁰. A Brighton firm of consulting engineers, Preece, Cardew and Rider announced that they were advising on the laying of over 900 miles of transmission line¹¹.

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CHAPTER 7

The Work Begins: Mines, Factories and Infrastructure

Meanwhile work is going ahead at the Cabora Bassa site. The township of Songo, built specially to house the workers at Cabora Bassa, already shows in microcosm all the features of the racist kind of 'development' that the dam is designed to promote. Songo stands on the edge of the plateau high above the Cabora Bassa gorge. Every day its black and white workers are transported down the cliff and ferried upstream to the dam site.

By the beginning of 1971 there were about 5,000 people living at Songo, 3,700 of them African and 1,500 European, mostly South African and Portuguese, but with technicians from France, Germany, Italy and Britain¹. Europeans live in pre-fabricated houses fitted out with ultra-modern equipment which includes a device that kills mosquitoes with infra-red rays. Africans live in bachelor barracks a little way away from the main township.

Both black and white workers are subject to stringent security checks². Every worker entering or leaving the site is searched for explosives and other sabotage instruments. Shortly before the BBC Television team visited Songo early in 1971 an African worker had been caught with stolen detonators in his pockets. He was taken away to be questioned and was later released.

Since work began on the project in November 1969 there have been claims and counter-claims about whether it is being completed on schedule. In July 1970 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that progress on the project was at least three months behind the work-plan³. But in July 1971 the ZAMCO consortium announced that the Zambesi had been diverted and that this 'crucial first stage' of the work had been completed eight days ahead of schedule. It stated also that work on the south bank hydro-electric plant was nearly finished⁴.

In South Africa work on the sub-station Apollo which will feed electricity from Cabora Bassa into the South African grid began in April 1971.

The mining and industrial boom that the Portuguese expect to follow from Cabora Bassa is already beginning. South African, Japanese and West European firms have begun prospecting in Tete and in neighbouring provinces for iron, fluorite, nickel and copper. In November 1970 the Companhia Moçambicana de Minas SARL (Comocmin), a subsidiary of the South African mining giant Johannesburg Consolidated Investments signed a contract for the exploitation of 'mineral and radio-active deposits' in the Tete area⁵. In March 1971 a prospecting team from the Japanese firm Sumitomo announced that it had discovered iron ore reserves of at least 200 million tons in the north of Mozambique and that 100 million tons of this was high grade ore. The company's Johannesburg representative stated that negotiations with the Portuguese government on the terms under which Sumitomo would exploit the ore were underway and that its plans depended on the availability of electric power from Cabora Bassa⁶.

In May another South African company announced that it would begin prospecting for nickel in Manica e Sofala province, to the south of Tete, and that if it was successful the production of nickel in Mozambique could begin by 1974⁷.

Secondary industries are springing up to supply the huge new demand for industrial materials that Cabora Bassa is generating. Songo already has its own oxygen and acetylene plant. A factory which will make building materials for pre-fabricated housing is being built at Dondo on the rail line between Beira and Tete and is scheduled to begin production in August 1971. The plant's machinery is coming from West Germany⁸. A new cement plant being built at Dondo will supply millions of tons of cement for building the dam⁹. As far away as Lourenço Marques new factories are being built to supply light engineering equipment and building materials. At Moatize, the railhead for Cabora Bassa, a new power station, capable of supplying 1,750 kilowatts, was inaugurated in March 1971¹⁰.

Tete, the nearest town of any size to the Cabora Bassa site, has turned into a boom city with hotels, office blocks and a new hospital being built to cater for an influx of prosperous white workers. The Tete municipality's 1971 budget is £24,000 up on 1970 and the extra money is being spent on additions to the town's electricity and water supplies¹¹.

Tete's communications with the outside world are being improved. Since February Portuguese airlines have been calling once a week at Tete and the airport is being extended.

Portugal's plans for Cabora Bassa are already unfolding. But as the work progresses other factors are making it increasingly unlikely that the scheme will ever be completed.

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CHAPTER 8

FRELIMO: Progress towards Victory

While groups in the West have been campaigning against the participation of Western capital in Cabora Bassa, FRELIMO has been attacking on the ground.

From the beginning FRELIMO's attitude to the dam has been quite simple:

'Cabora Bassa is a crime. It is a crime, not only against the Mozambican people, but also against the entire people of Southern Africa and of Africa as a whole'¹.

Recognising the seriousness of the threat posed to it by the dam, FRELIMO has said that it must never be completed. Accordingly guerrilla activity in Tete province has been rapidly escalated over the past two years.

The front in Tete was opened in March 1968 and a year later liberated zones existed in the north of the province and FRELIMO had already begun establishing schools and medical posts there. Portuguese alarm at FRELIMO's growing strength in Tete was reflected in the decision to make the whole area round the dam site a prohibited region which no-one can enter without identifying themselves. These measures do not seem to have alleviated Portuguese feelings of insecurity and periodically Portuguese commandos comb the bush to the north of Cabora Bassa, fearing a FRELIMO attack at any time.

1970 saw the heaviest fighting of the war in a series of Portuguese offensives in all three embattled provinces. In Tete Portuguese troops were flown in helicopters in what were supposed to be surprise strikes against FRELIMO bases in the north of the province. Army Chief Arriaga announced plans to build a tarred road along the Zambian border and claimed that this would eliminate FRELIMO guerrillas from Tete as they were mostly based over the border in Zambia or only 'just inside' Mozambique². In fact these offensives resulted in heavy losses to the Portuguese, a deterioration of morale in the Portuguese army and total failure to shake FRELIMO's base of popular support in Niassa, Cabo Delgado or Tete.

Having established a commanding position in northern Tete and having successfully resisted the Portuguese offensive, at the beginning of 1971 FRELIMO extended the struggle southwards, instructing its militants already south of the Zambesi

'(a) to intensify the mobilisation of the people; (b) to consolidate the political and military structures of FRELIMO; and (c) to begin guerrilla operations'.

FRELIMO explained:

'The mobilisation of the people and the establishment of those structures most necessary to the struggle has of course been going on over an extended period. The task envisaged was merely one of intensifying and reinforcing such initiatives. What was new in the directions was the order to start the armed struggle in that region; and this move to carry the fighting in Tete south of the Zambesi is of very profound importance'³.

Guerrilla operations immediately began over a wide area. In the period November 1970-January 1971 half of all Portuguese casualties were accounted for by fighting in Tete and a Portuguese communique

admitted that FRELIMO's operations in the south of the province extended right up to within 35 kilometres of Cabora Bassa.

FRELIMO's mobilisation of the African population was referred to by the Portuguese as 'terrorisation'. And the Portuguese admitted that this was taking place on an extensive scale in southern Tete. In February 1971 General Arriaga said that FRELIMO guerrillas were 'terrorising' the African population especially southwest of Cabora Bassa⁴.

The Portuguese responded by making Tete the main area of operations in its 1971 dry season offensive⁵. FRELIMO reported that by August there were at least 20,000 Portuguese troops in the province⁶.

Portuguese army communiques continue to report clashes with guerrillas south of the Zambesi. In May the Army said that 'terrorist activity' was increasing in the Tete district⁷. In June a communique stated that 'violent actions' aimed at creating 'an emotional climate in sensitive areas' had been carried out by FRELIMO 'in the vicinity of Cabora Bassa and its approaches'⁸.

These communiques involve the Portuguese in an insoluble contradiction: if they are winning a series of astounding victories in Tete (as their communiques also claim) how is it that FRELIMO has been able to extend its forces southwards, thus breaching Portugal's major line of defence, the Zambesi River itself. For Portugal's whole military strategy has been largely based on the assumption that FRELIMO forces would not be able to cross the Zambesi—an assumption that is now clearly untenable:

'Thus in the end, the Portuguese were driven to consider the great natural barrier of the Zambesi River, lined as it is along its entire length with forts, their most unassailable, their ultimate perimeter of defence; now this 'Maginot line' has been breached in its turn. Nothing could demonstrate more dramatically the national character of our struggle nor the impossibility of the task which confronts the Portuguese'⁹.

So now the Portuguese face the nightmare possibility that Cabora Bassa might be attacked from the north and from the south. There are two alternative methods of attacking the dam—a direct physical attack, or the slower, but arguably less costly method of strangling Cabora Bassa by cutting off the project's supply lines and means of communication. Already FRELIMO mines exact a heavy toll on the roads of Tete.

On three separate occasions in April and May FRELIMO attacked the main road between the town of Tete and Cabora Bassa. On the first occasion freedom fighters ambushed a convoy of civilian cars escorted by military lorries and captured high-precision equipment and eight files containing construction plans for the dam. Three weeks later a FRELIMO unit attacked a shop on the main road which supplied the Portuguese with provisions and where several Portuguese soldiers were billeted. In May a unit ambushed another convoy which included lorries which were supplying fuel to the airbase of Chitima, one of the bases built for the defence of Cabora Bassa¹⁰.

That all three of Southern Africa's white minority regimes are worried by the latest developments in Mozambique was shown by a top level meeting in Salisbury of the heads of the Rhodesian, South African and Portuguese security services in February 1971.* One of the subjects

*South Africa's representative, General Van den Bergh, was a wartime friend of Balthazar Vorster: they were interned in the same camp for their pro-Nazi activities.

that this conference was thought to have discussed was how to counter FRELIMO's activities in Tete and protect South African investments in Cabora Bassa.

Only two months after this the first reports of Rhodesian casualties in Mozambique were received—a FRELIMO mine destroyed a Rhodesian truck, killing three of its occupants. According to FRELIMO the Rhodesian soldiers had entered Mozambique to go to the aid of Portuguese soldiers at the post of Mukumbura, just inside the Mozambique border which was under attack by a guerrilla unit¹¹. Authorities in Salisbury denied that the men were on active duty. They said that they had 'entered Portuguese territory for friendly contact with Portuguese border authorities'¹².

In reprisal for the killing of the Rhodesian soldiers and the embarrassment which it caused them, the Portuguese army resorted to wholesale massacres of the population in villages near the border. These began on May 4th with the murder of one peasant in the village of Changwa. In the next few days peasants were killed in at least four villages and the entire populations of five more villages fled into the bush¹³. Two villages were completely destroyed by Portuguese soldiers. The Portuguese have also warned that they will kill anyone seen crossing the Zambesi and that they will burn all the boats they find. Scattered leaflets warn the population:

'The troops have to defend the population from bandits. But when the troops see people on the river they do not know if they are local people or if they are bandits. The troops are going to set fire to all boats. Don't cross the river. Run away from the bandits. Otherwise, you will die'¹⁴.

The tone of speeches made by General Arriaga has become almost hysterical. Arriaga has said that the dam will be built 'whatever the cost and whoever may get hurt'¹⁵. Not the sort of statement calculated to reassure European investors in the project but nevertheless an accurate reflection of the seriousness of the military situation in Tete. The Portuguese acknowledged this on July 27, 1971 by taking the unprecedented step of putting Tete under a military governor, Brigadier Rocha Simoes¹⁶.

But FRELIMO are under no illusions about the difficulties of the task which faces them. Cabora Bassa will be defended with all the fanatical fury of which the Portuguese are capable and will inevitably drag the Smith and Vorster regimes further into the conflict:

'This is a scheme of vital importance to the continuing existence of colonialism, settlerdom and imperialism in Southern Africa; we can easily foresee a reinforcement of Portuguese military power in Mozambique specifically directed against our forces operating south of the Zambesi. And what better pretext for the entry into action of those South African troops already stationed close to the dam site in Tete; thus a moment of significant escalation in the Southern African struggle may be approaching'¹⁷.

But despite this and despite all the battles that lie ahead, there can in the long run be only one outcome to the conflict—the victory of the liberation fighters and the destruction of every vestige of white supremacist rule in Southern Africa.

FRELIMO says:

'Unquestionably we are stronger than ever and this is a strength which derives from many factors: we are determined; we are united by conscious adherence to our revolutionary ideology; we are obtaining every day greater understanding and greater support from the progressive forces throughout the world. Armed struggle in Tete south of the Zambesi is an important step and with each step we are closer to our goal'¹⁸.

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APPENDIX I

THE ZAMCO CONSORTIUM

The members of the ZAMCO consortium are:

South Africa

Anglo-American Corporation

LTA

Shaft Sinkers (subsidiary of LTA)

Vector Projects and Construction (VPC)

Powerlines (subsidiary of SAE)

West Germany

Hochtief

Siemens

AEG-Telefunken

J. M. Voith

Brown, Boveri & Cie

France

Compagnie Générale d'Electricité (CGE)

Alsthom

Compagnie de Construction Internationales (CCI)

Neyrpic

Cogolex

CGEE

Italy

Societa Anonima Elettrificazione (SAE)

Portugal

Sorefame SARL (subsidiary of Alsthom)

The consortium is divided into four sub-consortia, each of which is responsible for part of the work:

1. A group for the construction of the dam, led by CCI.
2. A group for the building of the power station, led by Siemens.
3. A group for the building of the transmission terminal which will convert the electricity from alternating current into direct current, led by AEG-Telefunken.
4. A group for the construction of the high-tension transmission lines which will carry power from Cabora Bassa to South Africa, led by SAE.

APPENDIX II

FINANCE

The total cost of the project has not been made public, but it is estimated at well over £150 million.

The project is being financed by:

1. Export credits:

France	£36.7 million
West Germany	£36.7 million
Italy	£22.9 million*
South Africa	£14.6 million

2. Loans:

Loan capital for the scheme is being raised by a group of banks which includes Union Acceptances of South Africa, Banque de Paris et Pays Bas of France, Deutsche Bank of Germany, and Banca Comercial Italiana of Italy. The Bank of America and the Portuguese banks Pinto & Sotto Mayor, Totta Alianca and Fonseca & Burney have also been involved in financing the scheme¹.

* Italy has now withdrawn.
1 *O Seculo* 1.7.68.

APPENDIX III

THE CABORA BASSA WORK SCHEDULE

The project consists of four phases:

1. The construction of the dam, the installation of the south bank power station with three generators of 408 megawatts each, the high-tension cable to South Africa and the terminal station at each end of the line: to be completed by April 1, 1975.
2. The addition of a fourth generator of 408 megawatts and the alteration of the South African terminal station: to be completed by January 1, 1977.
3. The addition of a fifth generator of 408 megawatts: to be completed by January 1, 1979.
4. The construction of a second power station on the north bank of the river, with a capacity of 2040 megawatts.

The fourth phase falls outside the contract. It is not expected to be completed before 1990¹.

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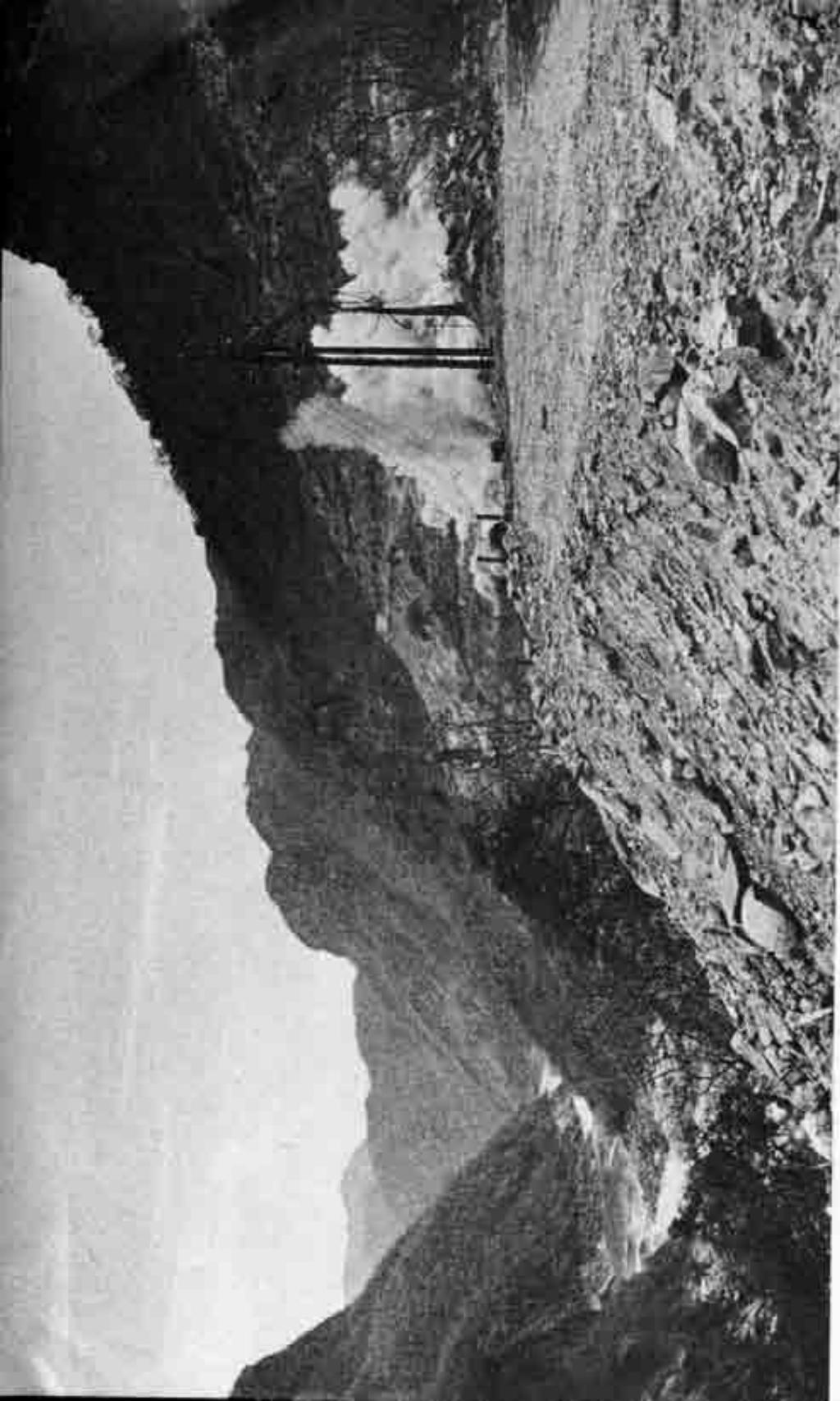
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Published by the World Council of Churches Programme to Combat
Racism, 150 Route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.



The Cabora Bassa dam site seen from the air. On the side of the cliff engineers have blasted out a hairpin bend road which is the only means of access to the site of the dam.



Smoke rises from the Zambesi Valley as engineers blast out the diversion tunnel which will channel the waters of the Zambesi while the dam is being built.



Earth movers, cranes and heavy trucks move in at Cabora Basso. Engineers are blasting a platform for the huge transformer station.



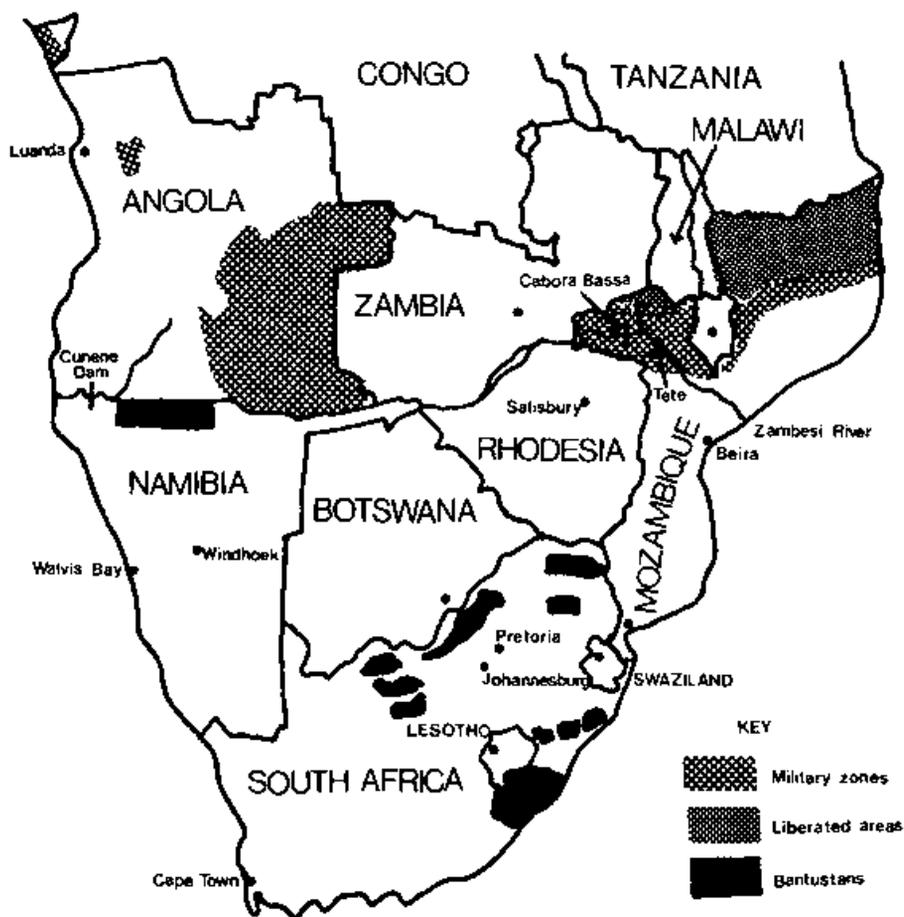
This man was caught with stolen detonators in his pockets. He was taken away and questioned because the authorities suspected him of trying to sabotage the project.

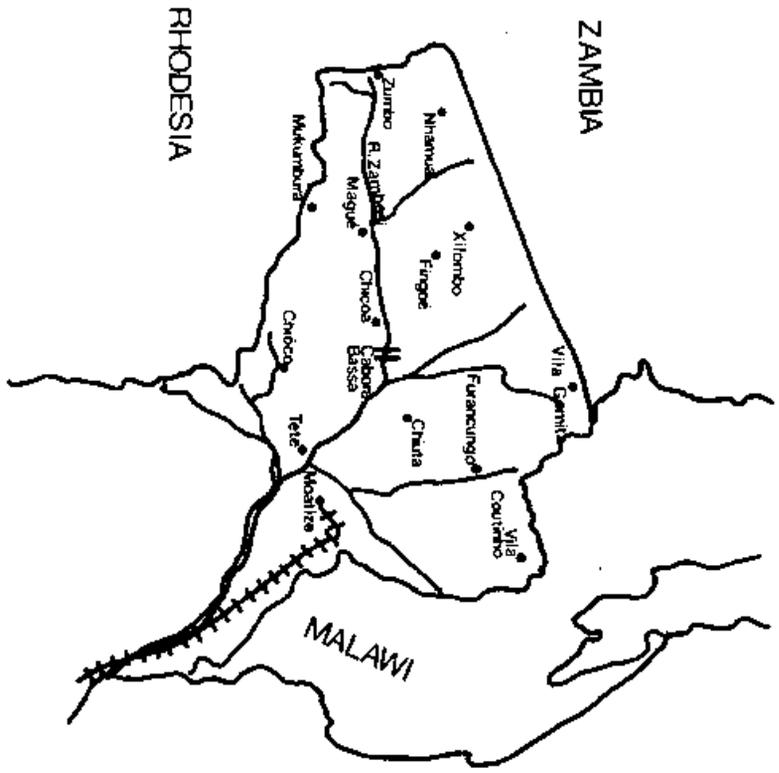


Learning to read in a liberated area in the north of Teje.



A FRELIMO unit on the march through the scrubland in the north of Teto.





TETE PROVINCE

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- ++++ RAILWAY

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