

An apple a day keeps Marxists away . .

The tropical sun beat down relentlessly upon the tarred streets of Maputo, tempered somewhat by the moist winds blowing in from the Indian Ocean. But even the humidity could not dampen the tension that seemed to have gripped everyone from the top echelons of the People's Party to the lowliest of peasants.

The reason for the despondency was not hard to find: everybody these days was going to bed on a somewhat light stomach. It was a long time since the rains last lashed the usually lush valleys and plains of Mozambique.

Rains, by the way. Not the destructive havoc wreaked by the thunderstorms that accompanied a cyclone called — what, Domoina? Another cyclone, as though told of how easily Domoina had laid waste the peasants' farms in Mozambique, followed soon.

This latter destructive force also went by the beautiful name of a girl. It was called Imboa.

As though the cyclones had not been enough, the three-year drought continued to kill whatever crops the farming community had tried to raise. Everybody was simply starving in Mozambique, though it was not a scourge unique to that land alone.

All these thoughts played slowly in the mind of Samora as he sat beneath a huge multi-coloured umbrella in the garden of his palace. Even though the shade provided by the huge parasol was large and cool enough, he still wore his dark green military cap.

He stroked the fuzz of beard on his chin and tried to come up with solutions, but each time something crossed his mind it was as speedily discarded. Angrily he beckoned Joaquim, his Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"Joaquim, I think you would be doing a far better job if you concentrated on what was happening right here at home than in other lands. What do you expect the peasants to eat in this time of extreme distress? Do you expect them to eat cake," barked Samora while he simultaneously suppressed a cold shiver at the thought of what that last remark had led to in France.

Joaquim had been sitting not far from his peer, also lost in his own thoughts. If Samora had been thinking about the drought and the cyclones and hungry stomachs, Joaquim was thinking of full bellies elsewhere.

He had just returned from Pretoria and Cape Town where he had been feted at some of the most fantastic places he had ever been to in all his life, and was eagerly awaiting a return trip. Only he did not know when that would happen.



Nkomati Pact: A bite of the apple

Dead men tell no tales

"I understand that the people are hungry, Comrade, but I have a promise of six million tons of the choicest of Cape apples if only you will be prepared to be seen with your arch-enemy Boater in public. I have it here, in writing, that if you can sign some document or other we will all begin eating a little bit more," Joaquim said.

Samora knew it too, knew fully well that if he signed along the dotted line he would in a way be "opening sesame" for himself. But unlike Joaquim, he was also aware that such a seemingly innocent exercise like scrawling his initials on papers drafted in Pretoria had its own dangers.

"I have always said it will definitely be a long spoon that I will need to sup with any devil. I have also always stressed the care to be taken when accepting bullets coated with sugar, for they are as lethal as those of lead. Have you not yet learnt that it is foolhardy to accept any gifts from the Greeks?" inquired Samora.

"Be very careful, Comrade. Boater is not a Greek. He and his people have made it clear that they will die to preserve their national identity. He is Afrikaner," retorted Joaquim, classics never having been one of his passions.

Samora ignored him and thought of another obstacle.

"If we sign that thing, Joaquim, do you realise we will have nobody left to blame? Whom will we start calling the "forces of darkness" and "running dogs of the system?" Whom will we start labelling an "imperialist aggressor?" Whom will we accuse of colonialism, because having signed will have made us their colony? Think bright, man, and earn your escudos," said Samora.

But the lure of the apples had got hold of Joaquim, and he was not to be put off by any amount of chiding. Just as the Biblical Eve fell for the magical charms of the fruit, so did the gullible minister for other lands.

"The apples, Samora, the apples! Just think about it! Six million tons of those sweet little things! My soul! Six million tons, Samora! Six



Samora Machel

million," he cooed.

Samora's taste buds were already tingling to the imagined taste of the fruit, though he would not admit it outright.

Instead he said: "Alright. I will sign the imperialist-inspired papers. I will sign for the apartheid apples. It will be done in the name of peace, and we might just appease the peasants. But what if Lenin turns in his grave once he discovers that we are given apples by the capitalists and colonialists of this world?"

Joaquim did not bother about what Lenin might do. He was a firm believer in the theory that dead men tell no tales. All he wanted to hear had been said, and the apples would soon be rolling over the waves of the Indian Ocean in their millions.

Quick as a flash he bolted inside Samora's palace and made for the telephone. His hands were trembling and he could scarcely hold the instrument because of his excitement.

He dialled Pretoria and as soon as the connection was made he rasped into the mouthpiece, "Is that Baas Boater, please? I want to speak to Baas Boater!"

The man on the other end said, "It is Baas Botha. Praat, jong!"

Joaquim could no longer hold his excitement: "Oh, my baas! Oh, my great baas! When can I come to see you again? Today, perhaps? This afternoon? Please, baas!"

"In connection with what is it, man? You is not talking properrly, and I am



P.W. Botha

in a big hurry because, you see, you people mut ansverr that we must meet at the Nkomati place otherrwise we come again and destroy yourr places. You see?"

But Joaquim had seen too much destruction of his fatherland to care about any more bombings. He was not about to tell "Boater" over the phone what he had.

He wanted a good excuse to go to Pretoria for some more good food and wines and he would not throw away such a magnificent opportunity by saying anything over the telephone.

"Baas, I have good news. I want to ...," he started, but was cut short.

"Alright man. I am sending an Impala fighterr plant to pick you up now, see? I will be waiting for you and I want good news. The radio and television peoples here want news positively, see? There are also these newspaperrr peoples, see?"

Joaquim was by now beside himself. He said: "Baas, I am coming. please have the T-Bone steak, the rice, custard and jelly, ice-cream, milkshakes, strawberry jam, those yellow peaches in syrup, the koeksusters that the Missus bakes so nicely ..."

The other man was equally delighted, but for other reasons. He saw that the carrot and stick method was still an effective weapon, even though bombs every now and then settled most disputes even if the disputes were of an imaginary nature.

"Right, Joaquim, right. You will eat like a good boy tonight. Totsiens."