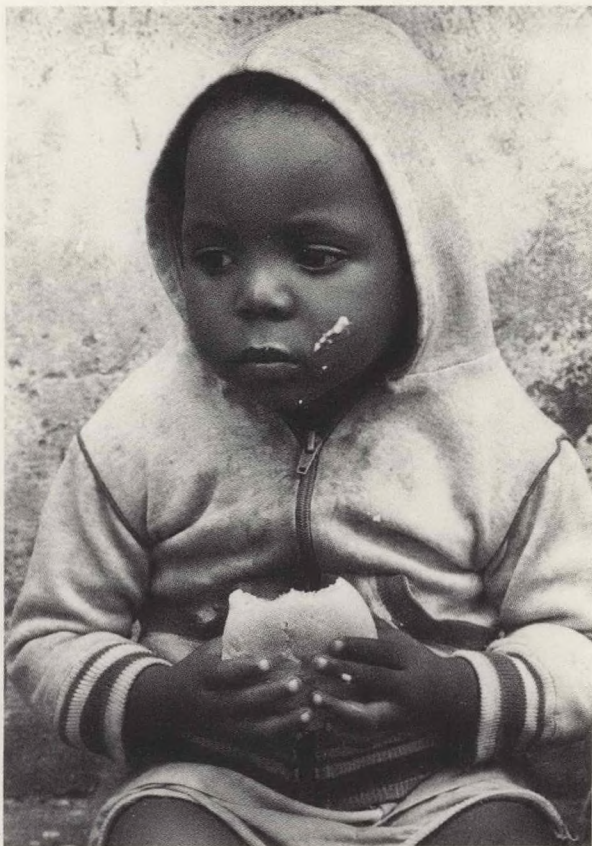


**CHAIN
of
TEARS**



Since 1945 the world has not seen a single day of peace. In some 100 wars and conflicts at least 30 million civilians have died. A high proportion of these innocent victims are children. One of the worst affected areas is Southern Africa.

'Chain of Tears' looks at the plight of individual children in the region, where the film crew spent 3 months with children from Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

Southern Africa has been at war for thirty years. In Angola and Mozambique the fight against the colonial power, Portugal, was replaced by a protracted war between newly independent governments and rebel forces backed by South Africa. Armies have advanced and retreated, roads, bridges and schools have been destroyed. Politicians have debated peace settlements. And all the time on an almost unimaginable scale, innocent victims have suffered and died. Often because the rebels have deliberately and repeatedly opted for non-military targets.

Franisse is a 6 year old Mozambican boy living in a special centre for children who have been in the hands of Renamo bandits. Franisse cannot speak, he was forced to burn down the hut in which his parents slept and watch them butchered as they ran out from the flames.

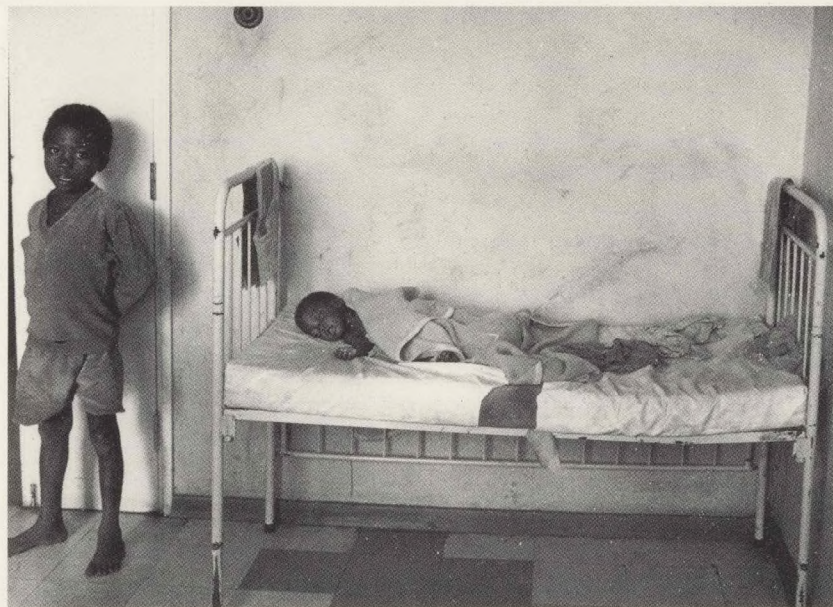
Antonio, 2 years, and Adriano, 6 months, are brothers. Their parents were killed in a UNITA attack on a village in Angola and both children are now in hospital in Huambo. Both have severe leg injuries and Adriano will be permanently handicapped. What will their future be?

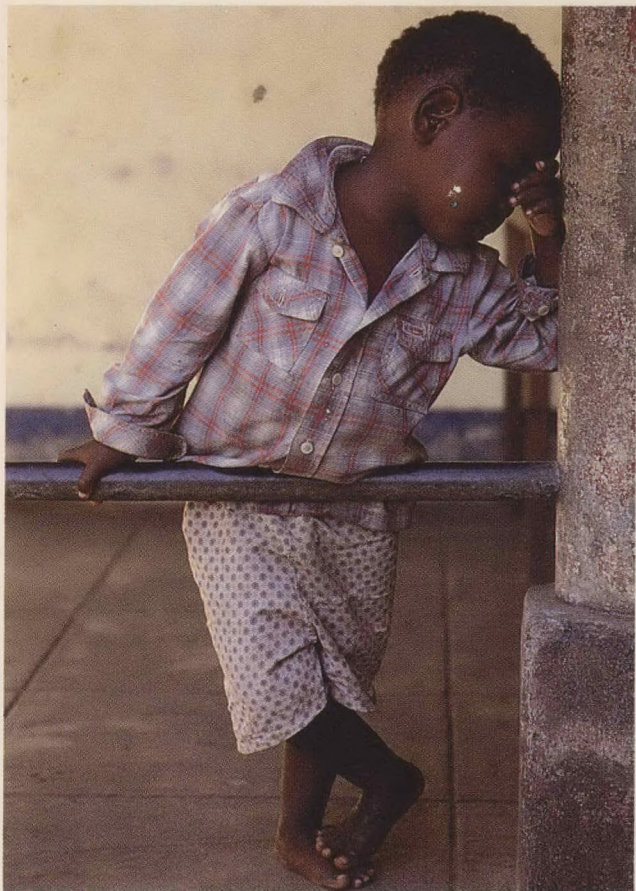
James was 14 when he was first detained in South Africa. He has spent a total of 21 months in prison, 6 of them in solitary confinement.

'Chain of Tears' asks what the future of war torn societies will be, as their children, many of them maimed, brutalised or psychologically damaged, grow up into young men and women.

"Our challenge is how to bring these children to become children, how to make them believe again in life, how to make them believe in peace, even that."

Graca Machel, Minister for Education in Mozambique.





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In 1988 the award-winning film CHAIN OF TEARS exposed the effects of war on children in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. It was shown on Channel 4 in Britain and on many television stations world-wide. But the wars continued and so did the suffering of the children.

The film introduced us to six year old Franisse who was captured by Renamo rebels in Mozambique, he was forced to take part in the murder of his own father and to eat some of his flesh. Eight year old Josefa was one of Angola's 70,000 land-mine victims patiently waiting for a prosthesis at the Red Cross rehabilitation centre.

Children and war have become headline news in Europe in recent years. We are touched by the stories of children from Bosnia, but seldom hear about the hundreds of thousands of children world-wide continuously affected by war.

Last year, we went back to Southern Africa in search of the children from the original film, to discover whether children affected by war can recover. CHAIN OF HOPE is the result.

In Mozambique we found FRANISSE again, now a strapping 14 year old. He has been re-united with the surviving members of his family and goes to school, works in the fields and behaves very much like any other 14 year old. The initiative of family tracing that the Mozambican authorities adopted even before the war had ended has helped children to find their families once again. The film also follows two little girls, Rosita and Delfina, both had been abducted during attacks on their villages and witnessed their mothers and other close family members killed. We followed the girls on their long, emotional journey back home.

In South Africa too, it was very encouraging to see many new initiatives seeking to overcome the effects of violence on children. We met with Tiny and Lebohang both of whom still suffer the long term effects of having been detained and tortured as children and having lost friends and family under the harsh apartheid rule. Yet they are rebuilding their lives in an extraordinary spirit of forgiveness.

In Angola, we filmed in towns which had been under siege for months, where not a single building remained standing and where hundreds of thousands had died of starvation. Every back garden was a little graveyard. In once such city there are 34,000 orphans. And there are still more than enough landmines in Angola for every man, woman and child. We didn't expect to find any of our original children in Angola, but the devastation left us shocked.

Nevertheless it is a story of hope and courage. The resilience of the children and their humour were extraordinary. Far from being hopeless cases and lost causes, it does not take much to make a positive contribution to their lives. As they so movingly articulate in the film, children affected by war have the same hopes and dreams as all children. They can recover, and we should not give up on efforts to help them.

Toni Strasburg
Director

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