

Constructing a History of Independent Mozambique, 1974-1982: A Study in Photography¹

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The taking and publication of photographs played an important role in Mozambique's independence and in the years after 1975. As settlers departed Mozambique in the wake of riots and the Portuguese handover of power, the newly independent government, Frelimo, assumed control of abandoned commercial studios and other photographic equipment. Frelimo used legal and technical distinctions to create a group of photographers who traveled with and photographed its leader President Machel, while the other photographers, lumped under the heading 'commercial', were responsible for studio portraits also known as headshots. In one respect, press photographs allowed Frelimo to document and transmit its political ideologies to public audiences. In another respect, commercial studio portraits, which individuals carried on identification cards in their wallets, permitted Frelimo to categorise populations as employed versus unemployed or as possible enemies of the state. These contrasting forms of image making illuminate the reality that Frelimo supplemented the 'more positive' political power represented through press photographs of President Machel with 'more negative' forces of self-identification and public shaming. This article uses photographs and oral histories with photographers, journalists and government leaders to explore the inter-relationship between press and commercial photography from 1974 to 1982, a time of transition for the Frelimo government from a liberation movement into a political party. By exploring the uneasy and tenuous relationship that ensued between institutions and technologies that supported photography's practice in Mozambique, this article considers how Frelimo's control over photography – and photographers' own compliance – impacted on the historical and visual representation of Mozambique's independence.

Introduction

The taking and the publication of photographs played a role in how events involving Mozambique's independence unfolded. After ten years of combat, representatives from Portugal and the liberation movement, *Frente da Libertação de Moçambique* (The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, Frelimo²), gathered in Lusaka, Zambia over the first days of September 1974. Faced with mounting international pressure

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2 Please note that 'Frelimo' in capital letters (i.e., FRELIMO) refers to 'Frelimo' as a liberation movement. 'Frelimo' in lower case letters refers to 'Frelimo' as the governing state of an independent Mozambique. For consistency, I use 'Frelimo' to refer to both the liberation struggle and the independent governing authority in Mozambique.



Figure 1: *A Tribuna*, 'Não Admitiremos Nada Contra A Democracia', 17 September 1974, Front Page, Available at Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), Maputo, Collection: *A Tribuna*.

and popular dissent at home, Portugal entered the meeting with the goal of negotiating a ceasefire. For Frelimo, Mozambique's full independence was the only option. On September 7, 1974, Portugal and Frelimo announced the terms of the transfer of power – the Lusaka Accord – that would culminate in Mozambique's independence. However, within hours of receiving news of the agreement, and presumably as photographs and articles of the meeting started to reach newsstands, anti-independence militants, known as 'Dragons of Death', raided Mozambique's national radio station in the capital city of Lourenço Marques.³ Factions opposed to Mozambique's independence sought to delegitimise Frelimo's rise to power by using media reports and photographs to advocate for rioting and the victimisation of blacks.

In the days after the start of the unrest, the exiled group Frelimo and its sympathisers, many of whom staffed the editorial boards of Mozambique's media agencies, used the workings of photographic images to transmit Frelimo's political ideology. Ten days after the Lusaka Accord, the daily newspaper, *A Tribuna*, printed a headline that was a statement by the incoming Prime Minister, Joaquim Chissano, who would be responsible for the transition of power: 'We [Frelimo] will admit

3 I. Christie, *Machel of Mozambique* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, Ltd., 1988), 85.

nothing against democracy'. The sub-headline read, 'Reaffirming the anti-racial political line and the proposition of no interference in other countries'.⁴ The same article included two photographs, which according to their captions depicted a press conference in Lourenço Marques that included delegations from the Republic of Portugal, the Organisation of the African Union and Tanzania (Figure 1). Four days later, on September 21, 1974, *A Tribuna* reported, 'Frelimo is an organisation destined for all of Mozambique without distinction of race, colour or belief', a direct quote from the soon-to-be President, Samora Machel, who was then speaking to the diplomatic corps in Tanzania (Figure 2).⁵ The article also contained the headshots of the transition government that Frelimo later claimed represented all the ethnicities and races in Mozambique (Figure 3). Inside their front pages, *A Tribuna* and other daily papers featured editorials titled, 'Who's afraid of Frelimo' and 'With Eyes to the Future: Calm Reasons to Stay in Mozambique', each of which included photographs of white settlers and text that detailed their frustrations with being 'confused with' colonisers.⁶ Editorial boards frequently published headlines and pictures that characterised Frelimo as anti-racist and anti-discriminatory, and, before and after Mozambique's official independence, Frelimo was keen to situate its power within this particular rhetoric.

From the time of the liberation struggle in Mozambique (ca. 1964), Frelimo claimed that it was not biased against whites. As evidence of this position, officials emphasised that Frelimo's effort to liberate Mozambique was not a war against the Portuguese people but instead was one against the institution of colonialism. And after independence, Frelimo invited many white natives and settlers, such as José Forjaz, to remain in Mozambique. Almost thirty-five years after this event, Forjaz, who served in the colonial Portuguese military before participating in Frelimo's solidarity effort, reflected, 'It was not easy [at and after independence] to have the knowledge that you belonged for so many years to an oppressive class and race and suddenly [Frelimo] would come and embrace you and ask you to stay. It was difficult to accept for most people and most people were not enlightened [to the political situation].'⁷ But, despite what appeared to some in the outside world as an olive branch, this rhetoric of anti-racism was one dimension of a much larger strategy through which Frelimo's ruling elites visualised and pronounced Frelimo's power and legitimacy first, as a liberation movement and later as an independent governing authority.

Shortly after Mozambique's official independence in June 1975, Frelimo integrated the photographic technologies and studios abandoned by departing settlers into a governing bureaucracy that mirrored the one constructed by the Portuguese. According to Jorge Rebelo, who was to hold the position of Minister of Information at independence, 'we [Frelimo] didn't know [at independence] who [was] who.... [T]here was the risk that some journalists, sent to captivity under the colonisers, would produce some articles that would damage the image of Frelimo and independence. So, we [Frelimo] felt like we had to control the media'.⁸ In the same

4 *A Tribuna*, 'Não Admitiremos Nada Contra A Democracia' (We will not admit anything against democracy), 17 September 1974, 1.

5 *A Tribuna*, 'A Frelimo é uma organização destinada a todo o Moçambique sem distinção de raça, cor, ou credo (Frelimo is an organisation destined for all of Mozambique without the distinction of race, colour, or belief), 21 September 1974, 1.

6 See *A Tribuna*, 'Quem tem medo da Frelimo' (Who's afraid of Frelimo), 21 September 1974, 2; and *A Tribuna*, 'Com os olhos no futuro: Razões serenas desfilar em Moçambique' (With eyes on the future: Calm reasons to stay in Mozambique), September 1974.

7 José Forjaz interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, August 2010 and January 2011.

8 Jorge Rebelo interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008.



Figure 2: *A Tribuna*, 'A FRELIMO É UMA ORGANIZAÇÃO DESTINADA A TODO O MOÇAMBIQUE SEM DISTINÇÃO DE RAÇA, COR OU CREDO', 21 September 1974, Front Page, Available at AHM, Maputo, Collection: *A Tribuna*.



Figure 3: *A Tribuna*, 'A FRELIMO É UMA ORGANIZAÇÃO DESTINADA A TODO O MOÇAMBIQUE SEM DISTINÇÃO DE RAÇA, COR OU CREDO', 21 September 1974, Front Page, Available at AHM, Maputo, Collection: *A Tribuna*.

interview, Rebelo remarked, 'No, after independence, censorship continued. But now, the censors were us [Frelimo].'⁹ On the one hand, Frelimo's increased control over the technology and institutions responsible for the production and distribution of photographs allowed Frelimo to establish a platform through which it could frame its public image and to identify possible enemies. However, and on the other hand, as Rebelo's quote alludes, Frelimo's oversight over its public image would fundamentally change the politics, technical logistics and technologies associated with the practice of photography in Mozambique, and, in effect, the very terms under which photographers, their subjects and audiences viewed Mozambique's past as a colony and its future as an independent nation.

At one level, this article uses the tenuous relationship of photographic technologies and the very institutions that supported photography's practice in Mozambique as one context to consider how press photographers managed the dissonance that ensued from 1974 to 1982 between the material, discursive and ideological realities of Frelimo's political project. At another level, this text brings the perspective of commercial studio photographers and their subjects into the picture. In his article, 'The Black Photo Album', photographer Santu Mofokeng writes of how portraits of black subjects in apartheid South Africa were critiques of the more visible documentary photography.¹⁰ After colonial rule in Mozambique, studio portraits by commercial photographers continued their function of critique and opposition. This particular line of inquiry into the roles of the press and commercial photography builds on an existing body of literature on Frelimo's struggle for political legitimacy after Mozambique's independence, not only through the use of memory and violence, but also the manipulation of images.¹¹ Where this article dovetails and advances this literature is with respect to an exploration of how and why people internalised a certain way of seeing Frelimo's political ideology. Unlike João Paolo Borges Coelho, who argues that Frelimo's liberation struggle and proclamation of victory over the Portuguese was largely verbal, I assert that cameras, films, photographs and even the opportunity of having an individual's image taken were realities of daily life before and after independence.¹² In fact, the technological limitations and possibilities that photography presented in 1974 to Frelimo, photographers, their subjects and audiences were critical to the documentation and preservation of the unfolding of Mozambique's history as both a colony and independent state. Furthermore, the press and commercial photographers that practiced in this period have since appropriated photography's technical and visual aspects to reflect on their lives in relation to Mozambique's history. Thus, the study of photography presented here is also a study of the different, sometimes oppositional, political practices in which photographs became inserted and reworked in highly complicated, changing and even contradicting histories of colonialism and liberation.

9 Ibid.

10 S. Mofokeng, 'The Black Photo Album/Look at Me: 1890-1900s', *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, 4 (1996), 54-57.

11 L. Buur, 'Xiconhoca: Mozambique's Ubiquitous Post-Independence Traitor', in S. Thiranagam and T. Kelly, eds., *Traitors: Suspicion, Intimacy, and the Ethics of State-Building* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 24-47; E. Machiana, *A Revista Tempo e a Revolução Moçambicana: Da Mobilização Popular ao Problema da Crítica Na Informação, 1974-1977* (Maputo: Promédia, 2002); V. Igreja, 'Memories as Weapons: The Politics of Peace and Silence in Post-Civil War Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34 (2008), 539-556; and V. Igreja, 'Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36 (2010), 781-799.

12 J. P. Borges Coelho, 'Memory, History, Fiction: A Note on the Politics of the Past in Mozambique', Paris, EHESS, October 21-22, 2010, 1-11.

This article deals with two types of photographers and their images: commercial and press. I first highlight the legal procedures and conditions under which Frelimo assumed control over the practice of photography in Mozambique, and I consider how the institutions that resulted from this transition ended the previous overlap between press and commercial photography. As Louis Marin makes clear in his article, 'Classical, Baroque: Versailles, or the Architecture of the Prince', the picturing of political leaders does not only entail their portraits.¹³ Therefore, in the second section, I recreate the assemblage of narratives, discourses, entourages and processions through which Frelimo and its press photographers attempted to transform President Machel into an image of power. At the same time, Frelimo's ideological agendas required it to generate more negative forces of power. In one instance, the state used headshots to identify Mozambicans as employed or unemployed. The final section unpacks the interrelatedness of press and commercial photography, specifically focusing on the ways that commercial photographers adjusted their practice to the technological and political conditions that Frelimo created through the photographic image of Machel and the ways that the subjects of portraits responded to Frelimo using their images as forms of identification and shaming. Read together, these sections illuminate Frelimo's effort to use the production and circulation of studio and press photographs to control the desired and unexpected outcomes of its efforts to seek legitimacy and control over Mozambique.

Nationalization: Recreating the Conditions for Photography's Practice

Until Mozambique's independence, photographic technologies circulated freely and widely. However afterwards, supply shortages disrupted the social and commercial relationships previously made possible by the proliferation of photographic supplies and images. In the wake of political protests that greeted the transition of power over Mozambique, the newly independent government assumed direct control over abandoned commercial studios and the technology associated with press and commercial photography. In fact, Frelimo's jurisdiction over the institutions necessary to practice photography in Mozambique predated the formalised nationalization scheme of 1977. Settler departures, as well as nationalization, would change the nature of sovereignty and the forms in which political power appeared.

Settler departures restructured the backdrop against which photographers practiced photography after 1975. Before independence, commercial studios individually arranged the financial capital for contracts with supply distributors like Kodak, Agfa and Cannon.¹⁴ For example, the studio *Foto Portuguesa* partnered with Fuji films, and *Foto Focus*, known as the first studio to use colour films, imported the Italian brand *Ferrania*. At independence, the financial capital, political authority and physical mobility necessary to access and import supplies no longer existed. One reason for these supply shortages was that mounting tensions between Mozambique and its neighbours, Rhodesia and South Africa where Kodak and Fuji maintained their Southern Africa distribution centres, made it difficult for supplies to travel to Mozambique. In fact, after 1976, an imposed embargo and border closing between Mozambique and Rhodesia,

13 L. Marin and A. Lehman, 'Classical, Baroque: Versailles, or the Architecture of the Prince', *Yale French Studies*, 80 (1991), 167-182.

14 José Machado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, 2010-11.

the result of Rhodesian attacks on Mozambique, halted these transactions altogether. Another cause was that, in an effort to 'assure normal distribution and to respect the legitimate interest of the public consumer', the Ministry of Industry and Commerce prohibited people that wanted to 'abandon' Mozambique from exporting their electronics, photographic equipment and cinematic materials.¹⁵ Under this law the government, not practicing photographers, had access to confiscated materials.

After 1975, Frelimo's control over the supplies accessible in Mozambique created new demands on photographers just as possibilities were arising for the integration of photographic equipment into Frelimo's governing structures. Unable to liquidate their holdings, many commercial studio owners left their supplies to their workers or abandoned their businesses. Under Article 3 of the *Decreto-Lei No. 16/75* (The Decreed Law No. 16/75), Frelimo justified its confiscation of privately owned businesses for any range of reasons, including improper divestment of funds, poor performance, unjustified staff reductions and/or abandonment.¹⁶ An example of the use of this power occurred on August 21, 1976 when the Ministry of Industry and Commerce published a dispatch in the *Boletim da República* (*The Bulletin of the Republic*) announcing the suspension of activities at two of colonial Mozambique's leading commercial studios, *Foto Focus* and *Foto Portuguesa*. Frelimo, per a correspondence on August 1976, appointed a panel to oversee the state's acquisition and dismantling of *Foto Focus* and *Foto Portuguesa*.¹⁷

In 1975 and 1976, Frelimo did not dismantle the newspapers and governing structures implemented by the Portuguese. One example of the persistence of colonial structures was that Frelimo announced in February 1975 the integration of the Portuguese department of the *Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informação* (Service of the Centralization and Coordination of Information, SCCI) into the Ministry of Internal Administration.¹⁸ The SCCI previously housed the Portuguese secret police and both press censorship and the production of propaganda for the colonial administration. Five months later, in July 1975 and under the *Portaria No. 119/75*, Frelimo created the Ministry of Information, which was similar to the SCCI.¹⁹ And in November of 1975, the Ministry of Information, in conjunction with the Office of the President, announced the development of three sub-divisions within the Ministry of Information: the National Directorate of Information, the National Institute of Book and Disk, and the National Directorate of Propaganda and Publicity, all of which oversaw the then newly formed Mozambique News Agency (AIM), the National Service of Cinema and a training facility for media professionals, the Service of Professional Training.²⁰ As it was modifying old colonial structures and developing new arms of the government, Frelimo explored ways of integrating the photographic equipment and studios abandoned by settlers into the evolving bureaucracy.

Central to the operations of the newly developed government agencies, their oversight bodies and the Ministry of Information were the making and circulation of photographs. To understand the ways in which Frelimo defined its political power through photographers and their images is to understand how Frelimo crafted new

15 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim Da República', 21 August 1976, I Série-Número 98, 1.

16 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim Oficial de Moçambique', 13 February 1975, I Série-Número 19,1.

17 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim Da República', 21 August 1976, I Série-Número 98, 1.

18 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim Da República', 25 February 1975, Série I, 117.

19 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim Da República', July 1975, I Série-Número 15, 57.

20 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Boletim da Repùblica', 22 November 1975, I Série-Número 64, 266.

hierarchies through administrative reforms. Over the course of Portuguese rule in Mozambique, studio photographers often took and developed pictures that editors at newspapers printed. In fact, studio photographers and their darkroom assistants staffed the photography departments of Mozambique's colonial-era newspapers. Unlike in the Western history of photography, categories like 'commercial' and 'press' did not accurately capture the reality in Mozambique, where photographers acted as reporters while also providing the colonial administration photographs in the form of ID pictures. Not only did the settler departures disrupt this unusual relationship between commercial and press photography, but so too did Frelimo's decision to designate special privileges to photograph and film to the sub-agencies of the Ministry of Information, which had their own image makers. For example, Frelimo made illegal the unauthorised reproduction of 'texts, images, symbols, names, emblems, insignias or words of Frelimo' – items characterised 'as symbols of Frelimo and its historic liberation of the country'.²¹ Administrative reforms, and the institutions that resulted, produced state-recognised press photographers and subsumed all other practitioners under the category of 'commercial'. Unlike in colonial times, a new generation of photographers marked the independence era, a group who would create their images from within the professional hierarchies of 'press' and 'commercial' that the Ministry of Information monitored.

By attempting to cease any overlap between commercial and press photography, officials in Frelimo assigned to the photographic print certain functions through which it sought to transmit its power. By 1974, Mozambique had several newspapers, each with its own photography section. During the war for independence, the liberation movement Frelimo attempted to expand its operations to Mozambique's southern half and, as a part of that effort, Frelimo officials initiated contact with sympathisers like José Luis Cabaço and Rui Balthazar who were later nominated in 1973 and 1974 respectively to assume the directorship of colonial-era publications.²² While Frelimo's own photographers traveled before independence with the exiled president-designate Samora Machel on visits to the liberated areas of Northern Mozambique, as well as to Socialist countries in Asia and Europe, Frelimo relied on a group of sympathisers, like Cabaço and Balthazar, to report on demonstrations, riots and peace talks happening in Mozambique. In the process, Frelimo discovered and affirmed the function of photographic images to assert its power first through its response to the settler riots at the announcement of the transition government and later reinforced these capabilities with its nationalization programs. According to the then Minister of Information Jorge Rebelo:

After independence, there was no reason to continue to project [President Machel] as the military commander. He was now the President of the Republic ... the leader of all people not only guerrillas.... The main challenge [after independence] was [also] to make sure that information would serve the interests of the [Frelimo] party. Why the party? Because the party was the ideological guide to the country.²³

21 Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 'Decreto-Lei no. 57/65', In *Boletim da República*, 31 May 1975, I Série-Número 65, 386.

22 According to José Luís Cabaço (2010), the colonial administration thwarted Frelimo's efforts to mobilise support in Mozambique's southern parts. In order to diminish the possibility of arrest, Frelimo's top lieutenants encouraged sympathisers to engage in political activities alone.

23 Jorge Rebelo interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008.



Figure 4: Unknown Photographer, 1974, Untitled, Nachingwea, Tanzania, Available at the *Centro de Documentação e Formação Fotográfica* (CDFF), Maputo, Collection: Guerra Luta Armada.

On the one hand, as part of this visual and political transformation, photographers in the press pictured President Machel in 1975 and afterwards differently than in years past, not in military fatigues but instead in suits. On the other hand, Frelimo directly implicated the photographic print in its political efforts to reconcile prior representations of its leadership in the liberation struggle with the realities of independence.

The photographers' proximity to the Frelimo leaders, as represented by President Machel, and Frelimo's position in relation to the photographer's camera were directly connected to Frelimo's larger political project of ensuring that populations, including photographers, identified with its political organisation. As Mozambique's independence approached, Frelimo invited noted journalists, such as Ricardo Rangel, Kok Nam and Fernando Margalhães, to visit their exiled bases in Tanzania (Figures 4 and 5). On these trips, Frelimo officials introduced guests to the organisation's liberation activities, and invited press photographers to use their cameras to document these exchanges. Often after these visits, photographers like Ricardo Rangel discovered new exchange values for the act of photographing and the images that they were responsible for producing. For example, photographs by Rangel from a visit to Frelimo's base camp, possibly Figure 4, proved of value as he traveled across Mozambique in 1974 and 1975. In an essay, the journalist and writer Calane Da Silva, who accompanied Rangel, explained that, at independence, very few of the Frelimo soldiers that assumed guard over towns in Mozambique knew how to read journalists' official identification cards.²⁴ Rangel had an illustrious reputation as a press photographer in the

24 C. Da Silva, 'Homenagem a Ricardo Rangel' (Tribute to Ricardo Rangel), in B. Z'Graggen and G. L. Neuenberg, eds., *Iluminando Vidas: Ricardo Rangel e a Fotografia Moçambicana* (Illuminating Lives: Ricardo Rangel and Mozambican Photography) (Basel: Christop Merian Publishers, 2002), 34.



Figure 5: Unknown Photographer, 1974, Nachingwea-Tanzania: RR (Ricardo Rangel)-Fernando Margalhães-Fernando Honwana, Available at the CDFF, Maputo, Collection: Guerra Luta Armada.

colonial era. However, out of all the photographs he had taken before Mozambique's independence, the most recognizable image, and hence most valuable as he traveled Mozambique on the cusp of independence, was the one of him dressed in military fatigues with the soon-to-be-President, Samora Machel, in Nachingwea, Tanzania. Da Silva wrote, '[t]he checkpoints opened as if by magic wherever we went, and we managed, therefore, to create images of this incredible time in the transition of our country'.²⁵ Da Silva's story suggests that at Mozambique's independence the recognised and valued pictures were those of Frelimo and that photographs of the colonial years would have a different import.

In 1974 and 1975, a new subject, the political party of Frelimo, presented itself before the camera lenses of colonial-era photographers, who were also facing new material and technological conditions. The photographic print, in this case one that featured Frelimo, was a symbol of an alliance and important standing that, if acknowledged by the necessary authorities, allowed photographers to travel and to continue with their profession. Nevertheless, as colonial-era photographers reoriented their cameras to Frelimo, a tension emerged between the subject matter of photographs, the effects photographs could achieve, the technological limitations presented before photographers and the stylistic techniques that were possible based on available technologies. In the end, the realities and the conditions of Mozambique's

25 Da Silva, 'Homenagem a Ricardo Rangel', 34.

independence and Frelimo's own agenda would directly challenge the ways photographers had come to understand their cameras' functions and the meanings that they had assigned to their practice and pictures.

The Technical and Technological Politics of Photographing President Machel

Over 90 percent of Mozambique's population was illiterate at the time of independence. Frelimo wanted to link images and text in a way that enabled Mozambicans to identify a picture of President Machel and to associate him with Frelimo. Within the setting of the newsroom, the making of photographs of President Machel became a way for Frelimo to construct a new image of itself and to train journalists in its political philosophies. However, the production and publication of these images often required photographers to use the limited technologies at their disposal in ways that did not guarantee the images that Frelimo desired. The institutions and aesthetics that Frelimo constructed after independence in actuality only re-awakened colonial-era tensions, divisions that had previously distinguished urban resistance efforts from rural ones. And, in the process, these conflicts led photographers to internalise and replicate a way of seeing, what they often referred to as '*auto-censura*' or 'self-censorship', through which they pictured Frelimo.

President Machel recognised the power of photography to enhance Frelimo's political agenda.²⁶ For example, on his first journey from exile to assume the presidency, Machel encountered photographers from the colonial era that worked at Portuguese-run newspapers. As he spoke to the gathered crowds, Machel noticed the state-of-the-art equipment of the photographers accompanying him. The photographer, João Costa, also known as Funcho, who at the time was working at the daily newspaper, *Notícias*, recounted how Machel eyed the Roliflex medium-format camera owned by the photography section's director, Carlos Alberto Vieira.²⁷ According to Costa, President Machel stated how he wanted his own photographers to have the very same equipment.²⁸ As further evidence of the importance that Machel placed on his image and the photographer, the chief of the Office of the Presidency, the famed writer and journalist Luís Bernardo Honwana, alerted President Machel that a Portuguese man by the name of Eduardo Gageiro was the official photographer of the Presidency. President Machel asked who Mozambique's best photographer was, and Honwana responded Ricardo Rangel, a man whom he knew from his time as a journalist at the colonial-era publication *A Tribuna*.²⁹ In addition to wanting the 'best' photographers to document his image, President Machel was known to embrace world leaders, like the President of Cape Verde, Aristides Maria Pereira (Figures 6 and 7), or Cuba's Prime Minister, Fidel Castro (Figure 8), for a second or two longer, or to walk two or three times through the doorway of the presidential palace for a speech, in order to give the photographers present the opportunity to record the (historic) moment.³⁰

26 According to photographers Jorge Almeida (April and November 2010) and Moira Forjaz (April 2010), President Machel always repeated the clichéd phrase, 'A photograph is worth a 1000 words'. These interviewed photographers praised President Machel for continuing the colonial-era tradition of including pictures in newspapers.

27 João Costa (Funcho) interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008.

28 Despite the trade barriers that accompanied nationalization, Machel managed to arrange for the importation of these expensive cameras from Europe.

29 E. Humbane and J. Ubisse, '*Uma Lenda Viva do Jornalismo Moçambicano*' (A Living Legend of Mozambican Photography), *Proler* (Feb. 2003), 22.

30 Fernando Veloso interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, June and August 2010.



Figure 6: *Tempo*, 'Estabelecer Estratégia Comum Anti-Imperialista ('To Establish a Common Anti-Imperialist Strategy')', 20 June 1976, No. 298, Front Page, Available through JSTOR's ALUKA Project and at the AHM, Maputo, Collection: *Tempo*.



Figure 7: *Tempo*, Detail: Samora and Aristides Maria Pereira (Cabo Verde), 20 June 1976, No. 298, Front Page, Available through JSTOR's ALUKA Project and at the AHM, Maputo, Collection: *Tempo*.

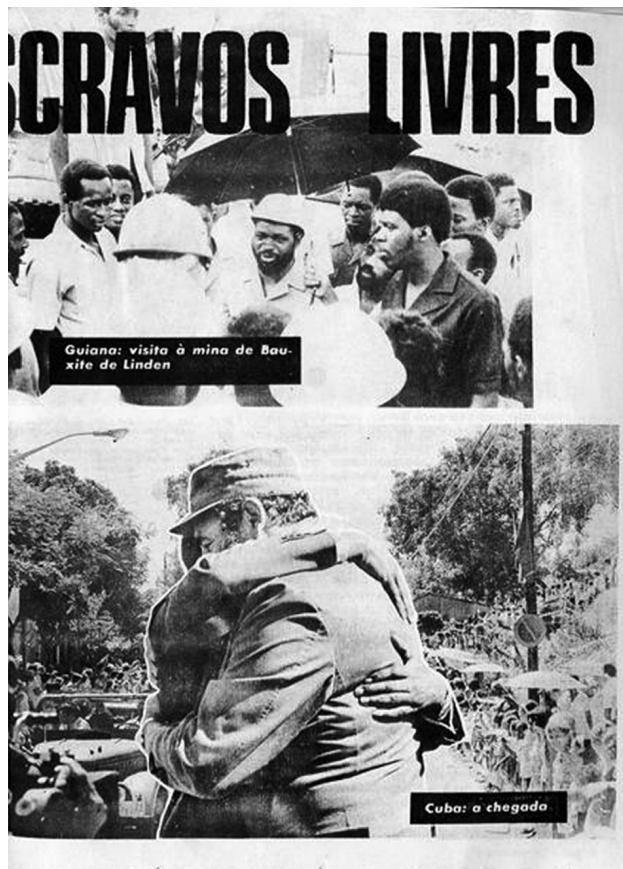


Figure 8: *Tempo*, 'Na Rosa Dos Escravos Livres' ('The Route of the Free Slave'), 23 October 1977, No. 368, 51, Available through JSTOR's ALUKA Project and at the AHM, Maputo, Collection: *Tempo*.

In order to create the desired image of its President, Frelimo was reliant on a group of media professionals who had limited contact with the exiled liberation movement. At independence, the photography section heads at media publications in Mozambique included Ricardo Rangel and Kok Nam at *Tempo*, Carlos Alberto Vieira at *Notícias*, and Carlos Rodrigues of *Notícias de Beira*. All these individuals were central figures in the development and operation of press photography in the colonial period. At the same time, individuals who had held sympathies for Frelimo and had fought for Mozambique's independence on university campuses inside the country, in Portugal and in South Africa were assuming roles as journalists and photographers within the expanding yet understaffed press units.³¹

The technical skills of journalists were essential to the operation of newspapers, but journalists' different affiliations posed challenges to Frelimo's messaging. Some of these media professionals did not see Frelimo as the sole liberators of Mozambique. Others did not always agree with Frelimo's political ideologies. According to journalist Machado da Graça, there was a generation of colonial-era journalists and cultural

³¹ This generation of media professionals included João Costa, Carlos Calado, Luís Souto, Carlos Cardoso, Fernando Lima, Mia Couto, Alves Gomes and Sol Cavalho.

intellectuals that left Mozambique at independence who were from the city – a much better world than that in which the liberation struggle occurred.³² Da Graça added that these individuals were ‘people of reasonable culture and well educated’.³³ In many instances, these different generations of media professionals tried to distance themselves from past associations that they carried, sometimes going as far as adopting Mozambican citizenship as a symbol of solidarity.

The writing of articles and the taking of pictures became a way for Frelimo to arrange publicity for itself while reorienting journalists and photographers whose cultural heritage and political views differed. Frelimo’s restriction and regulation of the media (outlined in section two of the paper) situated the press as an extension of the government. Journalists, including photographers, attended seminars hosted by Frelimo on the role of the media. Filmmakers at the National Institute of Cinema received political education classes on Saturdays, which involved reading translated versions of Karl Marx.³⁴ And, by late 1977, the Ministry of Information had created what its director Jorge Rebelo referred to as ‘political commissions’.³⁵ Known by journalists as the ‘security’, these commissions supposedly included Frelimo loyalists, who monitored the activities of media organisations and workers’ behaviour.³⁶ And based on the recommendations from these administrative bodies, Frelimo replaced journalists deemed as having no loyalty to the party or deemed as exhibiting subversive behaviour to the party’s mission.³⁷

With access to high-ranking Frelimo officials also came new expectations and vocabularies of representation, which not only governed the subject matter presented before the camera but also what the photographer selected to document. Speaking about the structures Frelimo implemented as part of its media oversight, Rebelo stated:

The interesting phenomenon [was that] because of the new climate, the journalist began to identify with Frelimo and with Frelimo ideology. So they themselves produced some kind of self-censorship. So, if there was an article [that] the [editorial] board would feel ... would not be agreeable to Frelimo, we [the editorial board] would create a bad image, they themselves would cut it.³⁸

But, for a press photographer like Ricardo Rangel, who in addition to photographing the visits of high-level dignitaries to Mozambique also photographed President Machel’s official portrait, self-censorship was not as simple as following Frelimo’s ideology. Reflecting on photographing after independence from the purview of almost thirty years later, Rangel stated:

32 Machado da Graça interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, June 2010.

33 Ibid.

34 Gabriel Mondlane interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, July 2010; and José Cabral interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, August 2009 and March 2010.

35 Jorge Rebelo interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008.

36 Fernando Veloso, interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, June and August 2010; Mia Couto interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, August 2010; Fernando Gonçalves interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, June 2010.

37 Frelimo, ‘Intervenção Do Secretário Do CC Para O Trabalho Ideológico, Minutos de Reunião com a Célula do Partido No Instituto Nacional de Cinema’ (Intervention of the Secretary of the CC for Ideological Work, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cell of the Party at the National Institute of Cinema), 29 January 1982, 1-11.

38 Jorge Rebelo interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008.



Figure 9: *Tempo*, Photo caption: 'Samora and Manley during an assembly held in the palace of sports in Kingston, Jamaica, No. 368, 64, Available through JSTOR's ALUKA Project and at the AHM, Maputo, Collection: *Tempo*.

My life changed. It was the euphoria of freedom, we could talk about anything, take pictures of anything ... but it didn't last long. Censorship, that didn't exist outside, now existed inside us. I used to say: 'You won't be able to write in a censorship-free media'. That's what happened. In my case, I always shot what I saw, if it got cut, too bad! But my drama was that afterwards, I couldn't denounce the government. Who am I supposed to criticize? I'm a guy at war of intervention ... but whenever I saw a destroyed bridge, I couldn't take a picture [because the government did not want] the enemy to find out ... what was that for?³⁹

On the one hand, from the perspective of Rebelo, journalists developed a sense of what was and what was not suitable for publication. Press photographers would discover the types of images that editors would authorise for publication and would photograph such images as a symbol of their loyalty to Frelimo. On the other hand, and in hindsight, press photographers like Rangel have recently come to understand that the practice of self-censorship was not unrelated to the manner in which Frelimo oriented journalists to its ideological positions. The very techniques for using the camera that Rangel mastered in the colonial era were neither applicable to the independence period nor acceptable to the ruling government. In fact, Rangel discovered that the very function of the camera, as he had known it, to criticise or 'denounce' was no longer feasible.

Throughout the late 1970s, press photographers were responsible for having and maintaining their own equipment. If a camera broke, it was not merely difficult to repair; non-operational materials put a photographer in jeopardy of not completing

³⁹ T. Sá Nogueira, 'Ricardo Rangel, Poeta Da Imagem' ('Ricardo Rangel, the Poet of an Image'), *M de Moçambique*, (May and June 2012), 31-36.



Figure 10: *Tempo*, Photo caption: 'President Samora greets Michael Manley, the prime minister of Jamaica and special guest of the Conference', Available through JSTOR's ALUKA Project and at the AHM, Maputo, Collection: *Tempo*.

his assignments.⁴⁰ Carlos Calado, a press photographer who worked for *Notícias* from 1976 to 1986, spoke about the low-quality materials sometimes available to him and his colleagues.⁴¹ He noted how press photographers voiced frustration with these supplies since many had never used them before. The technologies photographers used in this period had their own requirements and limitations, which did not always match Frelimo's own standards of image making.

Considering the supplies available, Frelimo's media regulations related to the picturing of President Machel challenged what was actually feasible for the press photographer to document. One occasion that stands out in the memories of Calado and his colleague, Luís Souto, was the visit of Jamaican Prime Minister, Michael Manley, to Mozambique. Manley had traveled to Mozambique in 1977 for a meeting sponsored by the United Nations (Figures 9 and 10). Souto recalled how the sun was extremely bright as photographers raced to photograph President Machel greeting Manley at the airplane.⁴² Hours later, while developing the film at *Notícias*' darkroom, Calado and Souto discovered that many of their images could not be printed.⁴³ The film they had used was not responsive to the sunny conditions in spite of their efforts to monitor their apertures. In some pictures, President Machel appeared completely black, while in other frames the light-skinned Manley completely disappeared. The shots that Calado and Souto were able to print depicted President Machel, who was five feet nine inches, standing shorter than his six-foot counterpart. Both Calado and Souto learned with the rejections of such prints that they had submitted for publication that Machel could not be pictured shorter than the leaders with whom he was photographed. According to both Calado and Souto, Frelimo officials interpreted such depictions of Machel as representing him as inferior and weak.⁴⁴

40 Carlos Calado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, March and July 2010.

41 Ibid.

42 Luís Souto interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, April and November 2010.

43 Ibid.

44 Luís Souto interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, April and November 2010; and Carlos Calado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, March and July 2010.

The images of Manley and Machel embracing or speaking at a press conference ultimately published in *Tempo* or other local publications resulted from photographers' own reconciliations of their technology with institutional policies and demands. Since Calado and Souto traveled with President Machel on official visits outside of Mozambique, there was sometimes the possibility of purchasing additional higher quality films. However, on internal visits, such opportunities did not exist. Recounting his experiences traveling with Machel to India and other parts of Asia, Calado commented on how a photographer native to the country that he visited or affiliated with an international news agency would have countless rolls of film, permitting them to photograph freely.⁴⁵ Calado, Souto or the other Mozambican press photographers in President Machel's delegation often had only a limited number of film rolls, each with 24 or 36 exposures, which might have had to suffice for an entire week or a three-to-four-day visit. Understanding the types of images editors authorised for publication, Calado carefully edited himself and selected what aspects of President Machel and his official visits to capture.⁴⁶ Therefore, as a result of the technical limitations, photographers rarely took a full range of images of the events they covered. So what the Frelimo government interpreted as a form of self-censorship, or as an expression of political solidarity, press photographers understood as pragmatic responses to supply shortages or the inferiority of available supplies.

Frelimo not only recognised the power of President Machel's picture to establish its presence on an international stage, but it was equally aware of the risk that these very photographic images posed to undermining vital international alliances. Photographers at *Tempo* pictured President Machel with heads of state from all over the world. In fact, many of these journalists had admired and adopted the political philosophies advocated by the leaders that they pictured with President Machel. The walls of the newsroom at *Tempo* included pictures of Che Guevara, Mao Tse-Tung, Lenin and other revolutionary heroes. However, in preparation for a visit by a delegation from the Soviet Union, Frelimo officials ordered the removal of Chairman Mao's image.⁴⁷ For decades, there had been bad blood and competition between the Soviet Union and China over the spread of communism throughout Africa, and Frelimo did not want to jeopardise its balancing act to win the financial support of both allies. In another instance of not wanting to offend a visiting head of state, Frelimo recalled an edition of *Tempo*. At a meeting with Frelimo's Minister of Information, Ricardo Rangel, who was one of *Tempo*'s co-founders and who was then a section editor, learned that Frelimo halted the publication of an edition because it included an article with images critical of Mobuto Sesse Seko, the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In a published interview from 2002, Rangel recounted his own frustration in learning that, while Jorge Rebelo, the Minister of Information at the time, appreciated the media's inclination to be critical, Frelimo wanted to momentarily halt such examples of criticism in light of Sesse Seko's visit.⁴⁸

Picturing President Machel required that photographers defy their own practicing philosophies for using different technology. But, once inside of the newsroom, the image of President Machel and his allies held another set of possibilities for Frelimo

45 Carlos Calado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, March and July 2010.

46 Ibid.

47 Paul Fauvet interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, March and June 2010.

48 Humbane and Ubisse, 'Uma Lenda Viva', 22.

to identify its loyalists and for journalists to articulate their political positions. Journalist and author, Paul Fauvet, captures the duality of functions for President Machel's portraits in the biography of the famed Mozambican journalist, Carlos Cardoso. If Frelimo interpreted the photograph of Chairman Mao as favouring one ally over another, for journalists like Cardoso the same picture represented popular and government efforts in Mozambique to embrace and adopt socialism. Fauvet, in his co-authored biography titled, *Carlos Cardoso: Telling the Truth in Mozambique*, quoted Cardoso as stating, '[w]e [journalists] were neither pro-Soviet nor pro-Chinese, we favoured a path of our own, a socialism made in Mozambique'.⁴⁹ In the late 1970s, Cardoso offered a harsh critique of the political influence Frelimo attempted to achieve through the publication of images of President Machel with heads of state. He wrote:

The link between President Samora [Machel] and the people is revolutionary, intimate. The relationship between the President and the people through our press is bureaucratic. It creates the idea of distance, and is thus counter-revolutionary. It is a way for the enemy to separate a comrade president from the working masses.⁵⁰

For Cardoso there was a genuine and important connection between President Machel and the people of Mozambique. Nevertheless, in the quotation cited above, he also suggests that photography and the institutions that oversaw its practice were not always the best modes for representing this relationship. In fact, Cardoso implicates the press, one centre of photography, for diminishing the relationship between Machel and the people of Mozambique. Cardoso also takes aim at Frelimo for using images not only as media of publicity but also as modes of ideological training. As evidence of this dual function, which did not always go hand-in-hand, editors at the government-run newspaper *Notícias* used images of President Machel, the very types Cardoso singled out, to show the urban elite that '[Mozambique] had a state of [its] own, and a head of state'.⁵¹ To further emphasise this point, editors referred to Samora Machel in the text of articles as 'President Machel'.⁵² Also, as part of this strategy, Frelimo pushed for journalists to officially join the political party.⁵³ Some media professionals refused such invitations, while Cardoso himself was deemed unfit. If media professionals voiced any criticism towards Frelimo, they risked being labelled as radical supporters of Leninist ideologies. Such was the case with Cardoso, who Frelimo considered an ultra-left after putting forward this critique. In turn, this concept of self-censorship can be seen as one way through which photographers and journalists mediated the ability of their images and text not only to create images of the state, but also to identify them or their colleagues as loyalists or dissenters of the Frelimo government.

49 P. Fauvet and M. Mosse, *Cardoso: Telling the Truth in Mozambique* (Cape Town: Double Storey Books, 2003), 39.

50 Cardoso, cited in Fauvet and Mosse, *Cardoso*, 50-51.

51 António Souto, cited in Fauvet and Mosse, *Cardoso*, 92.

52 Official state protocol suggests that it would have been customary to address President Samora Machel as 'President'. But, there were deliberations within Frelimo and the press over making the 'President' appear as 'a man of the people'. In present-day Mozambique, President Machel is popularly referred to as 'Samora' and not as 'President Machel'. At the time of independence, this emphasis on 'President Machel' was part of a larger conversation over how to assert Frelimo's power through the image of President Machel as the leader of the Party and the independent nation.

53 Fauvet and Mosse, *Cardoso*, 49.

Independence as understood by Commercial Photographers

The operation of commercial studios in Mozambique existed outside of the control of the colonial state. In fact, the passport-size portraits acquired an opposite and sometimes subversive function to the format and aesthetic of state-regulated press photography. However, after independence in Mozambique, the portraits of individuals left the private domain of people's homes and wallets and hung at the door of workplaces. The state used the more public display of commercial studio photographs to identify individuals who had collaborated with the colonial Portuguese, while it considered individuals without such documentation as unemployed, immoral and possible enemies of the state. Headshots of individuals produced by commercial studios after independence negatively complicated the political force Frelimo sought to generate through the photographs of President Machel. In fact, the uses that the state attributed to portrait photographs changed the technical way in which commercial photographers practiced in an independent Mozambique and ultimately reconfigured the political relationships crafted through the practice.

After independence, while many settler-owned studios in Mozambique's capital city closed, individuals previously classified under the Portuguese as *indigena*, or native, managed to open studios in their neighborhoods.⁵⁴ As a result, photographic services continued and even expanded in the outskirts of Maputo, the *bairros* and on the city streets. These practices of commercial photography and the demand for studio services developed in independent Mozambique around the return of migrant labourers from South Africa as well as those individuals who came to the city of Maputo from the country's northern parts in search of work. For example, after twenty years on the mines of South Africa, João António Mahiça returned to Mozambique in 1975. He started practicing photography on his days off, usually Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Mahiça returned to Mozambique with his Yashica and Polaroid cameras and Kodak films, and he initiated his career as a full-time photographer by offering his services on Maputo's streets. In 1978, he managed to purchase a house on Maputo's outskirts where he opened *Foto Comrada* later renamed *Foto Calanca*.

Interviewed commercial photographers were cognizant of enforced hierarchies that differentiated their practice from press photography. As commercial photographers, they were aware that their position precluded them from photographing government buildings, from traveling with President Machel and from publishing their photographs in newspapers. However, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the relationship between commercial photographers and the government was much more fluid and evolving than the profession's perceived inferiority to press photography.

The Frelimo government did not hesitate to intervene in the business affairs of commercial studios. A government-run committee sold studios that it had acquired during nationalization and distributed studio supplies.⁵⁵ Although the government incorporated *Foto Focus* into its National Department of Propaganda and Publicity, an unknown individual purchased *Foto Portuguesa* and renamed the studio *Corte Real*. After 1975, other studios, such as *Polana Color* and *Foto Mário*, popped up across Maputo as result of this government initiative.

54 José Machado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, 2010-11.

55 Ibid.

Newly opened and revitalised studios were critical components to Frelimo's transformation from a liberation movement into a political party. Following Mozambique's independence, Frelimo faced pressure to implement certain political reforms and to adopt specific policy positions that were favourable to the allies, who press photographers often pictured with President Machel. Part of this transformation and acquiescence involved Frelimo's public embracing and formal adoption of a Marxist-Leninist platform at the Third Party Congress in November 1977. The occasion of the Third Party Congress also coincided with Frelimo's own project to rid the state of its colonial legacies while increasing economic production. As it instituted a series of economic reforms and efforts to improve both the moral character and productivity of populations, Frelimo deployed the portraits produced by commercial photographers to categorise populations in a way that strengthened and reinforced the relationship between populations, the Frelimo political party and the state's governing apparatus. Frelimo's use of commercial portraits in its political project was not unrelated to the usages it assigned to press photographers' pictures of President Machel. But attached to Frelimo's efforts to facilitate popular recognition of its leader President Machel was the urgency Frelimo felt to identify possible enemies and to rid the state and people's imagination of Mozambique's colonial legacies.

In order to understand the inter-relatedness between commercial and press photography in independent Mozambique was to understand not only the ways in which Frelimo relied on photographers from the colonial era but also how it used their past image archives. For example, take the story of press photographer Ricardo Rangel, who under the veil of darkness and from within streets and alleyways photographed the nightlife of colonial Lourenço Marques. He often watched through his camera's lens as secret police agents and administrators of the colonial Portuguese regime entered clubs to drink, listen to music and flirt with women. At independence, Frelimo used these very images to identify Portuguese collaborators, who Frelimo believed posed a direct threat to its rule and the nation's political stability.⁵⁶ Frelimo referred to these collaborators and those individuals who had gone to Portuguese prison as '*comprometidos*', the compromised. While some were sent to re-education camps in Northern Mozambique, where they learned new ways of daily life around Frelimo's political ideologies, many other '*comprometidos*' publicly came before President Machel to ask for forgiveness.⁵⁷ A year after the Third Party Congress and in conjunction with efforts to restructure the party, President Machel ordered the posting of photographs of *comprometidos* on the front doors of their respective workplaces.

Just as Frelimo used passport-size photographs to identify individuals that previously collaborated with the Portuguese, it used the same image form to identify official party members and to formalise relationships with different constituencies. After 1977, Frelimo pushed to expand its party membership. As part of this effort, officials visited workplaces and rural areas to explain the type of person suitable for membership. Individuals nominated themselves and others for membership. Afterwards, prospective candidates went before public audiences that discussed their lifestyles and personal character. Following the rigorous process that could be characterised as public shaming, some individuals received at official ceremonies *cartões do partido*, cards of the party, which included their photograph. There were many people that

56 Calane Da Silva interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, September 2010.

57 Igreja, 'Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory', 781-799.

supported Frelimo but did not join the party, either because of personal choice or because the officials deemed them unsuitable due to immoral behaviour or previous affiliation with the Portuguese.

The story of press photographer Carlos Alberto Vieira illustrates the role that Frelimo assigned to images produced by commercial studios and the reaction of an individual to having his image displayed in public as a form of public shaming. Carlos Alberto Vieira was a colonial-era press photographer who served at the newspaper *Notícias* as the photography department's section editor and who photographed the Portuguese military in its war against Frelimo. At independence in June 1975, if not before, Carlos Alberto Vieira found himself in a position where his technical skills were of great importance to the operation of the photography section at one of Mozambique's leading publications. But, from the perspective of his photographed subjects and those that surrounded him as he photographed, he was a photographer of 'the colonial Portuguese regime'.⁵⁸ Using as a backdrop more recent questions in Mozambique over Frelimo's claims to political rule and ongoing changes in the practice of commercial photography, Vieira's son, Joaquim, explained how his father after independence increasingly faced pressure to vacate his editorial position despite him having deep respect and admiration for Frelimo.⁵⁹ In the same conversation, Joaquim acknowledged that his father was not only aware of his reputation as a photographer of the Portuguese colonial regime, but that he was also cognizant of what it would mean if Frelimo officials posted his photograph in the newsroom. However, for reasons that remain unknown, Frelimo excused Carlos Alberto Vieira from attending the mandatory meetings for the '*comprometidos*', and Vieira managed not to have his photograph displayed at *Notícias*. Nevertheless, his professional legacy did not escape the widely held societal stereotype that, because he was white, he had collaborated with the Portuguese. On the surface, the circulation and display of photographs allowed Frelimo to mark individuals as either party members or as sympathisers of the Portuguese. But, in actuality, based on Carlos Alberto Vieira's experience and those of other press photographers, Frelimo's application of passport-size portraits only shifted the terms under which old colonial divides of black and white would be understood and re-manifested in the post-independence period.

From 1978 to 1982, populations in Mozambique went from needing one form of identification to requiring a range of identity cards. In 1978, for instance, Frelimo announced that as part of its efforts to reform Mozambique's labour economy it required all individuals under the *Portaria 30/70* to have a '*cartão do trabalho*', literally translated as 'the card of work', which identified employed and unemployed populations. And in 1982 (Figure 11), Frelimo introduced the card of residency, which permitted cardholders to maintain residence in a neighbourhood of a specified city and guaranteed them access to a pre-determined allotment of food rations. Post-independence demands for individuals to carry forms of documentation appeared no different from the colonial era; these requirements for identification remained a medium of governance and surveillance, but this time justified under a different rhetoric and set of conditions.

58 João Costa (Funcho) interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, Summer 2008 and March 2010; Luís Souto interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, April and November 2010; and Carlos Calado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, March and July 2010.

59 Joaquim Vieira interviewed by Drew Thompson, e-mail correspondence, May and June 2011.

Emissão aumenta

Cartão do Residente e operações selectivas na origem da situação

As operações selectivas levadas a cabo pela PPM, desde há meses, bem como a introdução do Cartão de Residente estão na origem das avalanches, que aumentam progressivamente no Arquivo de Identificação em Maputo, segundo o que apurámos junto do Chefe da Repartição daqueles serviços, Vítor Sueia.

De facto e conforme esclareceu Vítor Sueia, desde que se iniciaram as operações selectivas, registam-se, diariamente, mais de 1000 pedidos de cartões de residência, que são dirigidos ao Arquivo de Identificação, que é o seu endereço. São os últimos quinze dias que registaram-se 1500 pedidos. O Arquivo de Identificação do

diário, visto terem apenas dois funcionários destinados para esse efeito. Por isso, os mesmos estão ligados aos serviços de Bloco, os referidos postos encarregam-se de fazer os registos e pedidos de cartões.

OPORTUNISTAS NÃO FALTAM

Engusso o passel do Arquivo, se preocupa em identificar organizadamente as pessoas que diariamente ali se dirigem, os oportunistas «não perdem tempo». Soubemos, através daquele responsável, que não raras vezes aparecem indivíduos que se intitulam funcionários daquela instituição. Esses elementos, direcionam-se a impressos, e colocam selos e fotos, cobrando dinheiro em troca.

Segundo a mesma fonte, já apareceram casos em que os infractores foram levados à PIC, onde vão responder.

No decorrer da conversa com o chefe da Repartição do Arquivo de Identificação, o Sr. Machado, subiu que um novo método, para atender o público, entrará em vigor na próxima segunda-feira. Esta alteração prevê que os pedidos sejam feitos na parte da manhã, das 7:30 às 11 horas, enquanto para os bilhetes serão levantados das 14 às 16:00.

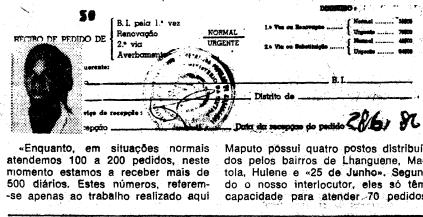


Figure 11: *Notícias*, 'Emissão aumenta: Cartão do Residente e operações selectivas na origem da situação ('Emission increases: Card of the Resident and the selective operations in the origin of the situation'), 9 August 1982, Available through Mozambique History Net, Collection: *Operação Produção*, May 1983-May 1988.

In colonial and post-colonial regimes of power in Africa, Asia and Latin America, populations served as a reservoir for labour, and, as a consequence, populations underwent highly complex identification processes. However, after independence, Frelimo identified these possible labour reserves by the absence of any form of identification. During the colonial era, documents like the *cartão indígena*, indigenous card, identified populations according to their racial classification as defined by the state and their birthplace. This administrative paperwork, which often included a headshot, determined where people traveled and lived, as well as the types of jobs they held. Conversely, after independence, the use of identification was happening as Frelimo assumed control of unproductive and understaffed agricultural lands and as President Machel unleashed a discourse of an internal enemy, who was unemployed and who illegally occupied urban areas. During the early 1980s, Mozambicans reported not only having their documents stolen but also spoke to journalists about their numerous experiences being stopped by the police to verify their identity. Out of political necessity and in a time of economic crisis, Frelimo used the worker card to distinguish individuals as employed or unemployed, and it was this system of classification that would serve as the basis for the 1983 project known as *Operação Produção* (Operation Production), which involved Frelimo sending undocumented individuals and those who displayed immoral behaviour (i.e., prostitutes and criminals) to state-owned farms and communal villages. As a consequence of post-independence forms of identification, like the worker's card and card of residency, new ways of seeing oneself in relation to the state and the political changes underway were consistently happening around the usages that Frelimo assigned to commercial studio photographs.

The bonds fostered at independence between the Frelimo government and commercial photographers have come into recent focus. In March 2010, the government

announced that it would photograph in-house images for official documents, including identification cards, driver's licenses and passports. A few weeks after the decision, José Machado, whose practice as a commercial photographer dates back to Portuguese colonialism and who owns the studio *Foto Retina*, criticised the government for not having the foresight to consider the impacts of such a decision on commercial studios. He stated:

The individual that thinks to bring this technique [into the government] must also think about the future of the country's photography houses. This process is being used in neighbouring South Africa and no one [loses out]. The government is doing its work and the [photography] houses are developing their activities as the [government] is doing [theirs]. This is what is missing in this country [Mozambique].⁶⁰

From 1978, when the National Institute of Book and Disk was responsible for the distribution of supplies, commercial photographers cultivated new dependencies on the Frelimo government in order to continue with their practice. In the interim, José Machado recalled going to the pharmacy during months of shortages to purchase powdered chemicals, such as sulfate, in order to mix his own developing and printing solutions.⁶¹ Other studio owners either diluted their fixers or used acid-based substances, like lemons and even urine, to adhere the image to paper.⁶² When asked about his own responses to supply shortages, António Machiça stated, 'We [commercial photographers] suffered until the government purchased new materials which it [the government] rationed'.⁶³ On the one hand, the ability to create ID photographs after independence until 2010 was a source of guaranteed financial income. The frustrations of the owner of *Foto Mario* in Maputo, Carlos Huguana, echo those of Machado (cited above), further revealing how the activities of the Frelimo government regarding forms of identification impacted on commercial photography. 'We [commercial studios] did not make any decision about the future of the workshop', said Huguana.⁶⁴ 'We paid taxes. Our future is dependent on the government. What they want and what conditions they create for us to continue to do our work'.⁶⁵ On the other hand, cooperation between the government and commercial photographers was also a source of pride and social standing. Despite starting their practice in colonial times, many of these post-independence commercial photographers had come to see Frelimo as the reason for why they were able to practice photography in the first place.

Through the exchanges that took place to create and to circulate studio portraits, photographed subjects were visualising and representing themselves in new ways. Unlike the present moment, the government back in 1978 did not have the capacity to photograph headshots for identity cards. Instead, people visited studios in their neighbourhoods or contracted the services of one of the many photographers that

60 A. Seleman, 'Modernização tira pão a retratistas' (Modernization takes the bread from the portraitist), *Domingo*, 21 March, 2010, 18.

61 José Machado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, 2010-11.

62 Eduardo Matlombe interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, June 2010; António Mahiça interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, September and October 2010.

63 João António Mahiça interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, September and October 2010.

64 Seleman, 'Modernização tira pão a retratistas', 18.

65 Ibid.

camped in the streets. The visitor to the commercial studio may have worn a work uniform or even dressed up for the occasion, but all that would be visible on the final print was the individual's face and his/her facial features. From a technical standpoint, the studio photographer positioned and used the camera to obtain a headshot. The work of the studio photographer resulted in one negative and one set of four prints. Under these arrangements and with respect to what the headshot depicted, the sitter's ability to fashion his/her appearance through dress and props in order to convey a certain image or social standing disappeared from the frame. The photographer sometimes kept the negative or gave it to the customer, who could use it to make additional prints. Nevertheless, the obtained prints were more than a reproduction of the negative. What a client retrieved was an object through which they saw what they looked like, sometimes for the very first time.

The experiences of Mozambican filmmaker, Ahmad Ali, offers one lens through which to interpret the meaning of this encounter between the subject and his/her image on the retrieved photographic print. From 1976 to 1982, Ali traveled across Mozambique, where he made and screened documentaries produced by the *Instituto Nacional de Cinema* (INC). On one visit to the province of Cabo Delgado, a woman in the audience recognised her face on the screen. As he was explaining to the woman how her image appeared on the screen, Ali said in an interview how he was also realising that many people in Mozambique did not know what they or the other Mozambicans across the country looked like until they saw government-commissioned cinematic documents.⁶⁶ A similar encounter transpired for those clients of studio photography.

The prints clients received of themselves were often their first contact with visual representations of themselves. As the severity of punishment for not having the necessary identification increased, journalists reported on their amazement how individuals, after living for twenty or thirty years without any form of identification, were only then coming forward to identify themselves. Photography scholar, Heike Behrend, explains how a new awareness, or 'watchfulness', of self was happening through the act of taking and later seeing the portrait photograph.⁶⁷ This awareness or sense of self and the historical period was not removed from the opening of a political space, one that was portable and, drawing from the work of Jennifer Bajorek and Jens Andermann, cinematic in quality.⁶⁸ The need to obtain a portrait image reconfigured the political space because it brought people, specifically the sitter, the photographer and government officials together under circumstances that exhibited commercial and political qualities. Additionally, the format of the government-issued identification made people carry their images in their wallets and purses and present them in order to access food supplies, the city limits and the workplace. Like a film in a cinema, a spectator-performer relationship undercut the portrait image. In the case of portrait photography in early independent Mozambique, the spectator would presumably be the sitter and the performer the state. However, as Frelimo fought wars with neighbouring South Africa and Rhodesia, this spectator-performer relationship

66 Ahmad Ali interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, July 2010.

67 Heike Behrend, "I am like a Movie Star in My": Photographic Self-Creation in Postcolonial Kenya', in Richard Werbner, ed., *Postcolonial Subjectivities in Africa* (New York: Zed Books, 2002), 47.

68 J. Bajorek, 'Introduction: Special Section on Recent Photography Theory: The State in Visual Matters', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27 (2010), 155-160; and J. Andermann, *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).

blurred and became more complicated. Portrait photography, which initially served to distinguish friend from foe and political subject from political enemy, placed pressure on the state to direct its resources to maintaining this spectator-performer distinction at a cost that did not accurately categorise the war's political dimension and the actors involved. Furthermore, the political role that Frelimo assigned to studio images shifted power to the photographed subjects, allowing them to confront the state for not providing basic social services and civil protections. In part because of the political functions assigned to both commercial and press photographs, Frelimo in this period faced the dilemma of protecting its territorial sovereignty while trying to provide for the needs of its people.

Conclusion

After Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980, Frelimo announced the *Offensiva Política e Organizacional* (Political and Organisational Offensive), an initiative to enhance Mozambique's economic and infrastructural development. President Machel said that this program aimed to create 'indispensable political, ideological, organisational and cultural conditions for the country's conquering of underdevelopment'.⁶⁹ At the same time, President Machel charged members of his staff in consultation with the nation's leading press and amateur photographers to form a group that trained photographers and enhanced the photographic practice in Mozambique.⁷⁰ On October 2, Machel celebrated the opening of the *Associação Moçambicana de Fotografia* (the Mozambican Association of Photography, AMF) to display this national rebuilding project.

The objectives of the Political and Organisational Offensive were not separate from those of the AMF. In a speech at the AMF's inauguration, President Machel presented photographs as having the power to resurrect the history of the liberation struggle and to foster national unity. By acknowledging the power of images to depict 'the sacrifices of the country' and as 'a weapon in the construction of socialism', President Machel was also deploying photography as a weapon in what he described as 'the brutal homicidal atrocity and treacherous attacks of the racist South Africans'.⁷¹ He believed that the role of photographers was not to take images at random. 'The eye of the photographer', he elaborated, '[was to] interrogate the reality and, at the same time, procure a form of communicating the interrogations that he made and the responses that he encountered'.⁷² The AMF's formation and operation symbolised and reaffirmed the marriage between photographers and the state that resulted from photography's integration into the governing apparatus in 1975 and 1976.

A final telling example of the political power that Frelimo attempted to achieve through photographs – and photographers' own compliance – is a photograph by Carlos Calado (Figure 11). One of AMF's first exhibitions, *I Salão Nacional de Arte Fotográfica* (the First National Salon of Art Photography), displayed the pictures of the nation's professional and amateur photographers as well as the efforts of Frelimo to craft an identity of itself as non-racial, anti-discriminatory, anti-apartheid

69 President Machel, Speech at Inauguration of the Association of Mozambican Photographers, October 1980, 2.

70 This commission included Luis Bernardo Honwana, Jorge Almeida, Ricardo Rangel and Daniel Maquinasse.

71 Machel, Speech at Inauguration, 4.

72 Ibid.



Figure 12: Carlos Calado, early 1980s, Untitled, Published in *Moçambique: A Terra e os Homens* edited by Associação Moçambicana de Fotografia (Rome: Edicomp, 1984).

and socialist. Carlos Calado, a photographer at the daily Mozambican newspaper *Notícias*, remembered winning first prize in the black-and-white film category for an untitled photograph that he captured while attending *Dia do Trabalho*, a holiday held on May 1 in honour of workers. At first glance, Calado's picture featured a young boy sitting on the shoulders of an unidentified (and invisible) person. The boy held a miniature flag of Mozambique above in a crowd of people. The figure of the boy with the Mozambican flag appeared next to a flag that depicted the stenciled profiles of Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin – the fathers of socialism.

‘The force of the image’, Calado elaborated, came from the juxtapositions of the Mozambican flag, the flag of the founders of socialism and the image of the white child holding the flag of Mozambique.⁷³ Despite describing the image as beautiful, Calado believed that the exhibition committee awarded his photograph the top prize because of its political symbolism. For Calado, this untitled picture and its contents represented what he considered ‘the politically correct’ way of photographing in Mozambique between 1975 and 1982.⁷⁴ Photographic images, such as Calado’s, would allow the Frelimo state to generate certain representations of its power from 1975 to 1982. As well as juxtapositions, there were specific alignments also within the frame, which further encapsulate the possibilities and limitations of political power that Frelimo sought to generate from photographs. The film, chemical supplies and paper that Calado used to develop and print the image came from Mozambique’s

73 Carlos Calado interviewed by Drew Thompson, Maputo, July 2010.

74 Ibid.

socialist and communist allies, such as the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. On the one hand, the photograph itself was a direct result of Frelimo's ideological and political alliances. On the other hand, the flag of Mozambique juxtaposed against the founding fathers of socialism and communism reaffirmed this relationship. Unquestionably, commercial and press photographs enabled Frelimo to present certain images of its political power. But such representations undermined the work of photographers in Mozambique and compromised Frelimo's claims to legitimacy. In 1982 and the years after, South Africa used the very alliances pictured in Calado's image to justify its arming of Renamo and launch of military attacks on Mozambique.