

Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo:

Some Research Themes

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...what is generally celebrated is our incomparable past...our reason for existing, the basis for all hope, is what we once were.¹

This article, which is part of a larger research project on historical memory and identity in the history of Frelimo, is a contribution to the study of certain central aspects of the transmission of that history and memory from 1975 to the present day. After independence, Frelimo's history was transmitted above all through the documentation published by the Secretariat for Ideological Work, and through testimony provided by protagonists in the liberation struggle. This historical narrative became, during the period of single party rule (1975-1990), the official national history of the Frelimo government. However, the war of destabilization/civil war was extremely unsettling for the country, and the economic and social changes after 1986-1987 and the political changes after 1990 – which established political pluralism – profoundly altered the political and public space and hence the freedom to question this referential historical narrative. Frelimo needed to guarantee that its memory, which it was now possible to interrogate, would continue to be part of the national identity and the reference point for the past and the future. For this reason, in response to all these changes and to critiques, Frelimo not only countered by revitalising the party at all levels, but also by publishing large numbers of pamphlets about the lives of its heroes and the restoration of historical sites. Through these actions, Frelimo tried to maintain both its identity and the ideological project that sustained it as a party in an attempt to guarantee its own legitimacy and hegemony.²

1 E. Lourenço, *Labirinto da saudade: Psicanálise mítica do destino português* (Lisbon: Publicações D. Quixote, 1978), 25.

2 This article is based on a paper presented to the 2nd International Conference on 'African Intellectuals and the Challenge of the 21st Century', held in memory of Ruth First (1925-1982) at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo on 28-29 November 2012. This article, despite being part of a larger research project which is still ongoing, was written with the specific objective of stimulating, for the first time in Mozambique, a debate around the issues of history, memory and identity in the history of Frelimo. In brief, despite contesting and criticising Frelimo's historical monopoly, the study I am developing will avoid adopting ideological or partisan positions. In analysing how Frelimo transmits its history and its memory, the study will rely mainly on documentation produced by Frelimo or its structures, such as the Congresses, the Central Committee, and the mass democratic organizations, as well as on oral and written evidence – interviews, testimonials, autobiographies – by protagonists. The study will consider biographies; teaching texts and manuals; articles produced by Eduardo Mondlane University, especially the Centre of African Studies; texts produced by the *Arquivo do Património Cultural* (ARPAC) for the 'recuperation of Mozambican heroes'; and oral histories. The study will also take into account various 'counter-memories' that have either been published or expressed in interviews. It will cover not only the period of the armed struggle, but also the civil war/war of destabilization, in order to discover how each of these wars is seen, understood and transmitted, and what memories each of them creates, through their different protagonists. The study will also consider and interrogate some of the earlier analyses of different authors who have worked on the question of history and memory, such as J. P. Borges Coelho, V. Igreja, M. Cahen and others. It will include, as it must, theoretical aspects of the questions of history and memory, as developed by various authors who have worked in this area.

Introduction

During the period of single-party rule, from 1975 to 1990, the history of Frelimo became the national and 'official' history of the Frelimo government through which the past was determined, codified, controlled and represented. This was fundamental not only for the legitimisation of the people's state, but also for the reproduction of its hegemonic position.³

After independence, the history of the national liberation struggle, which had been led by Frelimo, became the central event in the country's history and the main marker of 'before' and 'after', as well as the principal reference point for the past, the present and the construction and legitimisation of the future.⁴ As Borges Coelho has pointed out, political memory, defined as what was 'controlled by the authorities, who tried to turn it into "collective memory"', was built up around the liberation struggle.⁵ Through its leaders, its participants and some of the published texts, the history of the liberation struggle was imbued with an aura of 'purity' and 'justice', which became a constant point of reference in nation-building and in the desired creation of the 'new man'.⁶ This 'new man' would be precisely a man forgetful of his own past (because it could not become a reference for his future), by his experiences and by his own memory. He was a man who was compelled to begin his present anew, and to build his future starting from the very moment of his transformation. The only problem was that the present and the future are usually constructed from the memory of the past and from the sense of identity that this confers. Because it is memory that helps to build them, there can be no present and no future without a past.⁷ The past of the 'new man', beginning at the moment of his transformation, would have as its only reference point a collective memory which was not his, and a history lived by 'others' in which he had not himself participated. With him, a new identity would have to be born, a new type of citizen. Although the creation of the 'new man' would be a process, his emergence was both urgent and fundamental to the triumph of the revolution.

Nevertheless, there were aspects of the past that were not incorporated into the 'official national history' – 'silences' and 'exclusions' briefly mentioned or minimised. These were constituted by the selective character of memory – because to choose means to forget, to silence and to eliminate.⁸ It was clear in the process of selection and in its propagation that the history of liberation had to be, in its entirety, glorious, perfect and victorious despite its contradictions and conflicts. The contradictions and

3 On the legitimisation of the state see, for example, A. M. Alonso, 'The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, 1 (Mar. 1988), 33-57.

4 In 2012, Raimundo Pachinuapa stated that 'The history of Frelimo is the history of this country' at a commemorative symposium to mark Frelimo's 50th anniversary, *Simpósio - 50º aniversário da Frelimo*, Matola, Escola Central do Partido Frelimo, 15-16 June 2012, from the author's personal notes.

5 J. P. Borges Coelho, 'Abrir a fábula: Questões da política do passado em Moçambique', unpublished conference paper presented in Coimbra on 1 June 2011, 3.

6 S. Vieira, 'O homem novo é um processo', *Tempo*, 398 (1978), 27-38. This was a speech delivered in December 1977 to the second National Conference of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The New Man represented a complete break with the colonial past and was a revolutionary who placed the people's interests above his own; a man completely committed to the people's cause and to their liberation from want, illiteracy, ignorance, superstition and racism. He was to be incorruptible, free from petty material desires and without inferiority or superiority complexes; a man who would fight against exploitation and oppression, who would battle elitism and individualism, who would develop the collective spirit and the national consciousness.

7 J. J. Vieira de Sousa argues that 'a man can only articulate a sense of his place in the world if there is a debate amongst men about the world that they have inherited and share, and what action they must take', 'Memória e esquecimento: as artimanhas da História', available at http://www.dhnet.org.br/educar/1congresso/082_congresso_jessie_jane.pdf, accessed 30 May 2010.

8 F. Catroga writes that 'if memory builds and fixes identity, its collective expression also acts as the instrument and the object of power through the selection of what is remembered and what, whether consciously or unconsciously, is silenced', *Os passos do homem como restolho do tempo: Memória e o fim do fim da História* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2009), 47.

conflicts chosen were only those that could be retold as being consistent with the development of the armed struggle and necessary for the consolidation of its ideology. Moments of violent conflict were in this way ‘forgotten,’⁹ while the narration of some episodes served to legitimise the choices that the liberation movement had made or had intended to make. Excluded from this past, apart from those who were considered to be ‘traitors’ to the liberation struggle, were ordinary citizens and most of those who took part in the underground struggle (former political prisoners of the Portuguese colonial regime).

The economic and social changes that swept the country after 1986-1987, and the political changes after 1990, brought profound shifts in the character of political and public space. Memories that had until then been silenced were brought out into the public space, and they demanded their place in history. Citizens wrote down testimonies and memoirs that tried to recover the ‘silences’ in ‘official’ history, making their voices heard and denouncing what was considered to be misrepresentation. Frelimo needed to ensure that its memory, which was now likely to be interrogated, would continue to constitute part of the country’s identity and a reference point for its past and its future. In the face of such questioning, it was necessary to present certainties. Confronted by cross-examination, it was necessary to respond. And so Frelimo retrieved many of its forgotten heroes, some of them previously almost unknown.¹⁰ It recovered its past in the struggle, bringing physical spaces alive and turning them into monuments that would be present in daily life. All this amounted to a mobilisation of the past, with the objective of adapting Frelimo’s narrative to the challenges which were emerging in the present.

It is this story and these memories that I want to take into account in analysing the history of Frelimo, contained not only in oral sources but also in pamphlets. The Frelimo archives remain closed, demonstrating that memory continues to be controlled. Such control is fundamental, as Connerton points out:

[...] Control of a society’s memory largely conditions the hierarchy of power; so that, for example, the storage of present-day information technologies...is not merely a technical matter but one directly bearing on legitimacy, the question of the control and ownership of information being a crucial political issue.¹¹

As Maria João Pires de Lima points out, ‘a country without archives is a country with no memory, no culture, no rights.’¹² For this reason, at the same time that the archives are managed to guarantee control over ‘official’ history, the country begins to lose its memory, which becomes restricted, and rests only on the dominant oral tradition. As Borges Coelho argues:

9 See M. Matsinhe, interviewed by F. Carmona and E. Beúla, ‘Na Frelimo era norma fuzilar as pessoas’, *Savana* (7 Sept. 2009). Although he does not elaborate, Matsinhe says that the death penalty was used by Frelimo, and people who turned out to have opposed the political line were shot, as well as fighters who agitated among the population or who deserted to the enemy. Matsinhe’s testimony shows that there was a history of violence and killings within the liberation movement, which its memory does not reflect and which has been silenced. This is the only pronouncement on this subject by a senior Frelimo leader.

10 The only occasion when some of these names – such as Belmiro Obadias Muianga, John Issa and Carlos Rabati – had been mentioned before was on 22 September 1984, when their remains were reinterred in the monument for Mozambican heroes.

11 P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.

12 M. J. Pires de Lima, ‘Os Arquivistas, a Formação, a Profissão’, *Cadernos de BAD*, 2 (1992). J. M. Jardim, ‘A invenção da memória nos arquivos públicos’, *Ciência da Informação*, 25, 2 (1995), 5

To keep such spoken history going is perhaps the best way to protect a canon whose outlines have not been firmly established from deviations (and the absence of deviations, in turn, contributes to reinforce the consistency of the fable). On the other hand, if we look at it from a different angle, the fact of being spoken confers on the narrative more flexibility and a capacity to adapt to contextual changes.¹³

Thus, the government and the ruling party, Frelimo, not only return to this orality but also revitalise the testimonies that transmit memory without sources or proof, desiring and struggling for universal acceptance and receiving criticism grudgingly.¹⁴ In the public space we also see the publication of memoirs written by participants in liberation struggle, as well as numerous biographies of heroes of the struggle.

History, Memory and Identity (1975-1992)

After the independence of Mozambique, in the period between 1975 and 1990, in the context of the legitimacy acquired by the liberation movement and the popular support that it enjoyed in the first years of independence, the history of Frelimo became known throughout the country from two main sources. These were first the countless pamphlets published by Frelimo's Department of Ideological Work (DTI), which had, of course, passed through a process of ideological vetting; and second the personal narratives of participants. Through these sources, which are analysed below, the movement's history was studied, dissected and reproduced throughout the entire country, either by Frelimo itself, by the media or in mimeographed copies made by various educational institutions.¹⁵ These speeches were also distributed in collections by various foreign publishers, either solidarity groups that had always supported Frelimo,¹⁶ or others with no such connection.¹⁷ The story became a history told by a single voice.

*The Pamphlets*¹⁸

The pamphlets that tell us the history of Frelimo are transcriptions of speeches or reflections of Samora Machel made during the liberation struggle. They deal with Frelimo's political line, education and health, the role of women, the importance of

13 Borges Coelho, 'Abrir a fábula', 5.

14 On various occasions Armando Guebuza has harshly criticised those who have questioned the history of the national liberation struggle. See, for example, the comments in his official speech at the opening, on 13 April 2012, of the IV National Conference of Fighters in the National Liberation Struggle: 'Guebuza diz que vai falar até irritar os que criticam a importância da independência nacional', *O País* (16 Apr. 2012); "Vamos continuar a irritar-los!" - diz Armando Guebuza, referindo-se aos críticos', *CanalMoz* (16 Apr. 2012).

15 See, for example, S. Machel, *Mozambique: sowing the seeds of revolution*, (London: Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola & Guiné, s.d.); CIDAC, *A nossa luta é uma revolução: nacionalizações-Moçambique*, (Lisbon: CIDAC, 1976).

16 See, for example, J. A. Salvador, ed., *A luta continua: antologia de discursos do Presidente da FRELIMO*, (Porto: Afrontamento, 1974).

17 See, for example, J. A. Salvador, ed., *A luta continua: antologia de discursos do Presidente da FRELIMO*, (Porto: Afrontamento, 1974).

18 Although this article presents some citations to these pamphlets, for a complete overview of what was published, see A. Neves de Souto and A. Sopa, *Samora Machel: Bibliografia (1970-1986)*, (Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1996). This bibliography contains a general listing not only of the pamphlets and various monographs, but also speeches, reflections, interviews and official messages published in the media.

national unity, and the definition of the enemy, among other themes.¹⁹ These pamphlets also served to record each passing moment of post-independence history. Speeches made at huge public rallies led by Samora Machel were printed as pamphlets, as were his interventions at meetings of international organisations,²⁰ which became the main guiding line for the country and for the people. The texts include important decisions, the road to follow, the problems experienced by the country and by its inhabitants. They are important to the extent that they are a record that bears witness like no other, to the important historical moments that the country passed through, but also because they show us some of the justifications for the measures that were being taken.²¹

Fighters in the Liberation Struggle

In this period, the pamphlets were supplemented only by the oral testimony of participants, who added only a few additional facts, mainly concerning their own experiences during the struggle that they had waged against Portuguese colonialism. These were the facts that their participation bore witness to. We have, therefore, during the first fifteen years of independence, memories based on oral accounts that were produced mainly on dates of historical celebration, or in moments of crisis.²²

The individual and collective memoirs of fighters in the armed struggle for national liberation were, at this time, carefully coordinated and presented a single, uniform and homogenous narrative, with all of them keeping silent about the same historical gaps. They did not allow for any contradictions. A society can relate its past to its present and its future in this way, since it is presented with a framework of references that confer consistency on the past. In order to achieve such uniformity the country should have what Michael Pollak has called ‘framers of collective memory’. Pollak argues that ‘...the analysis of the work of framing performed by its agents,

19 To list a few examples: S. Machel, *Estabelecer o poder popular para servir as massas*, (Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional, 1975), a 1971 speech by Samora Machel in one of Frelimo’s educational centres; S. Machel, *Produzir é aprender. Aprender para produzir e lutar melhor*, (Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional, 1975), another 1971 speech; S. Machel, *Educar o homem para vencer a guerra, criar uma sociedade nova e desenvolver a pátria*, (Lourenço Marques: s.e., s.d.), a 1973 speech by Machel at the opening of the 2nd Conference of the Department of Education and Culture of Frelimo.

20 Some more examples: S. Machel, *Organizemo-nos para resolvermos os problemas da nossa vida*, (Maputo: Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da FRELIMO, 1977); S. Machel, *O apartheid é o nazismo da nossa época*, (Maputo: Partido Frelimo, 1983); S. Machel, *Desalojemos os infiltrados nas Forças de Defesa e Segurança*, (Maputo: Partido Frelimo, 1981); S. Machel, *Desalojemos o inimigo interno no nosso aparelho de Estado*, (Maputo: Partido Frelimo, 1980).

21 An obvious example was the justification for the death penalty offered by Samora Machel at a big rally on 15 February 1983 in Chibuto. This was to be applied to ‘candongueiros’, people who were engaged in illegal trade, hoarding essential produce and having a major impact on the national economy. This was considered to be not only a question of illegal trading, but rather ‘a political, economic and social crime with unpredictable consequences’ since it created moral and material corruption and hoarding theft. *Candongueiros* were compared to the armed bandits whose crimes, differing only in method, had the same practical consequences. At this rally, the crowd demanded tougher punishments for *candongueiros*. See ‘Destrução dos bandidos, construção do bem-estar – Presidente Samora saúda a população de Gaza, em comício no Chibuto’, *Notícias* (16 Feb. 1983); ‘Punir bandidos armados punir candongueiros’, *Notícias* (17 Feb. 1983); ‘Só o povo destrói bandidos e candongueiros’, *Notícias* (18 Feb. 1983); ‘Exercer o poder, aniquilar o inimigo – Presidente Samora Machel no comício de Chibuto’, *Notícias* (19 Feb. 1983). Following the rally in Chibuto, on 16 March 1983, the Permanent Commission of the People’s Assembly amended Law no. 2/79, on Crimes against the Security of the People and the People’s State, extending the death penalty to additional political and non-political crimes, and making it mandatory. These included smuggling, black market trading and murder (Law no. 1/83). On 31 March 1983, the government passed a new law (no. 5/83), which introduced public flogging – in addition to prison sentences – for perpetrating, aiding or abetting specified serious crimes. These included smuggling, hoarding and black market trading, *candonga*, crimes involving the supply of goods to the market, and illegal foreign exchange trading as well as armed robbery, gang membership, theft, rape and child abuse. ‘Penas mais severas para inimigos da revolução: Lei da Comissão Permanente da Assembleia Popular divulgada ontem para defesa do poder popular’, *Notícias* (2 Apr. 1983).

22 See the many interviews and testimonies published each year in the newspapers and in the weekly magazine *Tempo* about Frelimo history, above all on such historic dates as 3 February (Mozambican Heroes’ Day), 7 April (Mozambican Women’s Day), 25 June (Independence Day) and 25 September (the anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle for national liberation), among others.

and their material traces, are key to studying how collective memory is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed, from top to bottom.²³ These framers of collective memory are above all some of the participants in this history: senior Frelimo cadres, fighters and heroes of the national liberation struggle (even though they are selected according to criteria). These are the ones who, precisely for this reason, confer credibility and substance on the official history.

Through this process of historical narration, the fighters in the national liberation struggle take on a determinant role in the construction of the independent nation. Their stories have something of the normative in the sense that they become points of reference and examples. All of them are Frelimo's 'new man' who overcomes his individual character and turns into a collective being – 'we' becomes the new identifying personal pronoun; 'we' becomes the example to follow – and they shape the collective memory of an entire people, who must identify with them, with the struggle, in abnegation, defending the most general interests that go beyond the 'pettiness' of individualistic, tribal and racial interests. Nevertheless, although they seem to occupy identical places in the history, only some of the fighters are present in the narrative, usually leaders or senior cadres from the Frelimo apparatus. And, just as most of the fighters are individually marginalised in this epic story, the masses, the main protagonist in the struggle that was waged, are not invited to speak of their story, their experience, and their memory. If anything is produced in works that collect oral narratives,²⁴ these stay buried in the archives. These accounts by the 'masses-as-narrator' are only made public – broadcast or written down – when they reinforce and exalt the role of the 'other', generally the liberation 'hero' whose role must be highlighted in moments of celebration.

The Fighters of the Underground Struggle

Equally credible as witnesses are the handful of former political prisoners of the colonial secret police, PIDE – the fighters in the underground struggle. Despite the fact that most of them were members of or activists for Frelimo, who have been marginalised by the Frelimo leadership to carry out a more direct political action, they are a reference source above all in the urban context, where they were active and were recognised as such. Some of them, through interviews and narratives, have given accounts of their activities and the sufferings they went through; however they always emphasise their relationship with Frelimo and corroborate its history. At the very least some of them have managed to reflect on and recognise some of the mistakes that Frelimo committed – but without placing their loyalty to Frelimo in doubt. As a result, almost all of them have refused to speak about post-independence history and their role in it.²⁵

Jorge Rebelo, a senior Frelimo cadre and at the time its Secretary for Ideological Work, in reference to the meeting with the former political prisoners (which I discuss below), stated that because they took part in the underground struggle, they 'wanted to be recognised at the same level as fighters in the armed struggle' and claimed that

23 M. Pollak, 'Memória esquecimento e silêncio', *Estudos Históricos*, 2, 3 (1989), 10.

24 Various projects involving the collection of oral history have been carried out, above all by the Cultural Heritage Archives (Arquivos do Património Cultural [ARPAC]) and by students from Eduardo Mondlane University during the July Activities.

25 See the autobiographies of M. Mboa, *Memórias da luta clandestina*, (Maputo: Marimbique, 2009) and A. V. Langa, *Memórias de um combatente da causa: o passado que levou o verso da minha vida* (Maputo: JV Editores, 2011).

they should be considered their equals. But this was impossible not only because it was wrong, but also because the political prisoners had not passed through the process of 'purification' that the armed struggle required of each one of the fighters. He continued by way of clarification:

The preference given to a fighter, to somebody who was in the liberation struggle, is not so much for having participated in the struggle but rather because of the fact that *through living this experience he or she has taken on certain principles and values, for example the fight against racism, the struggle against exploitation, the situation of women, and others, while you, who were prisoners of PIDE, did not take these on.* The armed struggle was a school. It wasn't just about shooting. It was a political and military struggle. *With regard to those who took part in the armed struggle, we know who's who, they have given us guarantees that what we are busy building after independence will be supported by them. As for you, you didn't graduate from that school, so equivalency can't be just handed out like that, automatically.*²⁶

On a television programme broadcast much later, on 16 May 2010, Luís Bernardo Honwana summarised what was always Frelimo's real thinking, in practice, about clandestine activities carried out in areas under colonial control, when he stated that 'the underground struggle was a component of the armed struggle for national liberation and contributed to its objectives',²⁷ trying to show that the armed struggle took priority over any other form of struggle that had developed.

It was perhaps a consequence of the desire that Frelimo should recognise them as real fighters in the liberation struggle, and should acknowledge their activities as fundamental and intrinsic to and not just as a 'component' of that struggle, that led the Frelimo leadership to meet with the former political prisoners in March and in May 1978. At these meetings, each political prisoner was required to tell his or her own story, but above all to talk about the 'betrayals.' The real objectives of the meetings remain – to a certain extent – obscure even today, but in various testimonies we can detect the deep disquiet that it generated among these militants. Many of them interpreted the meeting as showing that Frelimo was 'afraid' of what they represented. As combatants above all in urban areas, they understood, even better than the Frelimo leadership, the reality of the capital, Lourenço Marques, and its suburbs. They also represented a force that had been infiltrated into urban and suburban society and was capable of mobilising it, as was demonstrated during the period of transition to independence and the attempted coup of 7 September 1974.²⁸ Confronted with Frelimo's aspirations to be considered the only political force in the country, the former political prisoners might have represented a counter-force, or even a counter-power to such ambitions, or have constituted an affront to Frelimo's supremacy. This seems to be clearly stated in Albino Magaiá's testimony, where he says:

26 J. Rebelo, '[Depoimento]' in Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *Memórias do colonialismo e da guerra* (Porto: ASA Editores, 2006), 397–398. My emphasis.

27 STV broadcast (16 May 2010), organised by the Universidade Técnica de Moçambique. From notes taken by the author.

28 This was a revolt led by a group of individuals belonging to the most radical wing of the urban white community, mainly in Maputo and Beira, who wanted to prevent the transfer of power to Frelimo in favour of Rhodesia-style independence. The group named itself the Free Mozambique Movement, occupied the radio station, the airport and the post office, blew up an armoury and freed about 80 PIDE agents from Machava prison. The analyses of the motives for these actions remain diverse and divergent.

Samora judged us.... He met the political prisoners; he told us we should have died and not agreed to collaborate. So, we were 'judged' even though the word has to be in inverted commas. [...] The political prisoners, potential cadres, were totally marginalised at the time, above all by the armed struggle people. So Machel held this meeting where, one by one, in that Samora-style, each one of us spoke and told our stories from prison. Nobody escaped this.... We were all there, we all had to justify why we did this or that. Nobody escaped! He said he wanted to free the cadres, liberate our consciences, *neutralise us: 'If it wasn't like this, one of these days you would be reactivated. This way, nobody will reactivate you.* This conversation, this meeting is to free you, because you are still trapped'. Terrible things. People came out of there as prisoners.²⁹

Claudina Ivete Chambal Mboa, who participated in the meeting of the political prisoners, is even sharper about Frelimo's 'fear' when she says:

That thing about [writing for] *Ressurgimento*³⁰ was just an excuse.... At a certain time, President Samora Machel even said '*We don't want Nito Alves here*'. One of the main reasons for that meeting had been the Nito Alves case. According to what they said, Nito Alves was a former political prisoner who had wanted to make a coup d'état in Angola. So I think that one of the main reasons for the meeting was the Nito Alves case.... Since they were scared of a coup d'état, it was necessary to scatter the prisoners. First denigrate them, then separate them. That's how politics is.³¹

After the meeting, many of the participants were sent for re-education (Albino Magaia, Aurélio Bucuane, Ângelo Chichava, Malangatana Valente), others were imprisoned (Matias Mboa), and almost all of them were sent for military training and later assigned to different workplaces. As Ângelo Chichava comments:

When they talk about the liberation of Mozambique they are talking about the armed struggle, meaning only the fighters, those who they now call the veterans. I don't agree with this way of posing the problem. We who were in the cities, we were also fighters in the liberation struggle. [...] The underground was at the root of the whole liberation struggle in Mozambique. [...] We were taken, not to the scaffold, but for what they call 'brain-washing'. They took us for military training and afterwards they distributed us to work here and there, in the communal villages, well, all that those kinds of things. It was kind of psychological.³²

29 A. Magaia, '[Depoimento]' in Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *Memórias do colonialismo*, 46-47. My emphasis.

30 A newspaper published in Machava prison with the participation and collaboration of the political prisoners, who were forced to write for it.

31 C. I. Chambal Mboa, '[Depoimento]', in D. C. Mateus, *Memórias do colonialismo*, 251-252 (my emphasis). Nito Alves was a senior figure in Angola (Minister of Internal Administration) and a high-ranking member of the MPLA. He led a revolt aiming to change the government and its policies, which in the official version was considered to be an attempted coup d'état. The revolt, on 27 May 1977, left deep scars not only on the political class but also on the Angolan people because of its consequences: summary judgements, assassinations, thousands of dead, and persecutions that continued for two years afterwards.

32 Â. Chichava, '[Depoimento]' in Mateus, *Memórias do colonialismo*, 124-125.

The threat that political prisoners represented, even if only in the hegemonic mindset of Frelimo, had to be neutralised. A 'purification' was necessary in which their future was more important than the memory of their past. It was, perhaps, because of this that they all kept silent about the real motive for the meeting, seeking instead a process of conciliation/reconciliation between individual memory and the collective memory of the country.

Nevertheless, the way that Frelimo, during this period, minimised the significance of the underground struggle in the urban and peri-urban zones of the cities was notorious. To acknowledge this struggle was to attribute an importance to its protagonists that Frelimo was not disposed to share with them. Frelimo thus refused any kind of conciliation or even negotiation between the memories of this group and the memories of the armed struggle of its combatants and participants. And in this way, having denied them any place in the history of the struggle for independence, Frelimo never wanted to recognise them as true fighters for liberation.³³

The Break (1987-1992)

The death of Samora Machel on 19 October 1986, the serious political, economic and social situation which the country was living through, and the war situation, all combined to bring profound changes. In the first stage, in 1987-1988, the changes were mainly economic – joining the IMF and other international financial institutions. This led to the adoption of a liberal economic policy which in turn created a somewhat anachronistic contradiction between the Frelimo Party-State's programme and what were becoming the economic objectives of the country.

From 1990 onwards, political change also started to occur and as a reaction to earlier economic changes, to the war (which had accelerated, grown and expanded)³⁴ and above all to the opening of peace talks with Renamo in July 1989. A new pluralist or multi-party constitution was approved, which forced the Frelimo Party to change its political programme in fundamental ways, abandoning socialism and its character as the only party. Later, the General Peace Accord signed by the government and Renamo in Rome in 1992 was to have a determinant impact on the collective social memory, because it changed at a basic level what had, up until then, been part of Frelimo orthodoxy. As Borges Coelho points out:

In changing from a united front to a political party, and above all by engaging with a multi-party system, Frelimo lost – at least morally – its exclusive right to claim the liberation struggle, and was no longer able to impose its version of a common past, as the founder of Mozambican-ness.³⁵

The new circumstances would lead to the near obliteration from memory of the emblematic figure of the first president of Mozambique. In this way, during the administration of Joaquim Chissano from 1986 to 2004, this important aspect of the past

33 See on this topic H. G. West, 'Voices twice silenced: Betrayal and mourning at colonialism's end in Mozambique', *Anthropological Theory*, 3, 3 (2003), 343–365.

34 From the end of 1983 onwards, this development was well documented. The war seemed to have spread through the entire country.

35 J. P. Borges Coelho, 'Política e memória: fontes arquivísticas e História Contemporânea de Moçambique. Problemas e algumas perspectivas', paper presented to the IV International Seminar of Archives from the Iberian Tradition, Lisbon, Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo, 24-28 October 2005, 5.

in the memory of a people was simply 'omitted'. José Luís Cabaço has said that these changes in the country were so radical that Chissano had to transform 'Samorism', and the only way to achieve this was 'to wipe a sponge over the past'. He added that in order to introduce the new ideological and economic discourse to the country, Chissano had to 'organise a real "conspiracy of silence", in an attempt to break with the memory of the past'.³⁶ But Joaquim Chissano not only had to silence Samora, he also had to reduce the party, and party work, to a secondary role, and to give primacy to governance, to the establishment of peace and to economic recovery in a country that had been almost completely destroyed.

History and Memory after 1992

The end of the war and the introduction of political pluralism meant that new questions began to be posed. One of these was the question of the real character of the war. Was it a civil war? Was it a war of destabilisation? A sixteen-year war? Although this may not seem important to some, the question of defining the real nature of the war is basic to an understanding of the origins of the conflict.³⁷ It is therefore legitimate to question the extent to which the lack of clarity about the character of the war, the analysis of its origins and the changes that occurred, as well the prevalent memories about it, provide for reconciliation in the country or might lead to the emergence of new conflicts.³⁸

To call it a 'sixteen-year war' is to try to erase it, to minimise it and above all to avoid taking a clear position on what in fact took place; to call it simply a 'war of destabilisation' is to ignore the internal dynamic that developed, seeing only a part of the picture and thus refusing to consider or analyse the mistakes that were made; to reduce it to a 'civil war' is to forget about the aggressive and violent character of the region's racist regimes – South Africa and Rhodesia – and their unceasing pursuit of the internal collapse of Mozambique. Borges Coelho believes that at base it was a war of destabilisation that progressively changed into a civil conflict, and that this duality must be confronted if the emergence of other conflicts is to be avoided and if the signs behind such conflicts are to be understood.³⁹

36 A. Souza Silva; J. L. Cabaço, 'História e memória na voz do sociólogo moçambicano José Luís Cabaço', *Revista Crioula*, 2 (Nov. 2007). Available at <http://www.filch.usp.br/dlcv/revistas/crioula/edicao/02/Entrevistas/JoseLuizCabaco.pdf>, accessed 9 April 2010. It is interesting to note that the only memoir by a former fighter in the liberation struggle to be published during the presidency of Joaquim Chissano was that by H. Martins, *Porquê Sakrani?: memórias de um médico de uma guerrilha esquecida*, (Maputo: Editorial Terceiro Milénio, 2001).

37 During the colonial period it was already clear that the inability of the Portuguese government to define what kind of war it was fighting was preventing a resolution, since deciding the nature of the war would determine the nature of the solution. A 'colonial war' implied the recognition of the existence of colonies, removing Portuguese legitimacy and acknowledging the existence of a part of the population that refused to accept the subordinate role that the recognition of colonialism implied. A 'war of subversion' implied in its turn the recognition of guerrilla influence over the population, and popular loyalty towards the fighters, an aspect that was publicly denied, even though beating it back was a key objective of the war that was raging. An 'outbreak of a subversive character' minimised what was happening in the operational areas to such an extent that it was not even necessary to find a complex solution for something so unimportant. So colonial war, war of subversion, outbreak of a subversive character, guerrilla, low-intensity conflict, were some of the ways in which they tried to explain what was going on in the colonies of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, turning the events into a struggle that had been imposed on Portugal, that was against civilization, against the established order, national sovereignty, against the whites and fomented by foreign communists who wanted to chase Portugal out of Africa, often with the collusion of Western countries. Since the war was imposed from outside, its political solution could always be delayed, depending on the international context. A. Neves de Souto, *Caetano e o 'caso' do império: Administração e Guerra Colonial em Moçambique durante o marcelismo (1968-1974)* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2007), 425.

38 This article will not develop an analysis of memoirs about the war of destabilisation/civil war, its transmission or the contradictions that existed, but will only take them into account as points of reference for the new questions which had begun to be posed during this period. There are some texts reflect on this question, for example V. Igreja, 'Memories as Weapons: The Politics of Peace and Silence in Post-Civil War Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34, 3 (2008), 539-556.

39 See the introduction by Borges Coelho to the book *Elementos para a História Social da Guerra em Moçambique 1978-1992* (in preparation). This introduction presents an important analytical contribution to our understanding of the nature of the war.

Connected to the lack of clarity about a definition, we find the memories that persist at particular times to bring to the debate the character of the war and its objectives from clear positions of political struggle. In Mozambique even today, at the peace celebrations to mark 4 October 1992,⁴⁰ in election processes and on historical dates, the two former belligerent parties ‘argue’, with violent rhetoric, about who surrendered, who was forced to submit, who won and who lost. Even today, peace is held hostage by a political violence where the memories of each group endure and claim victory and their own version of the ‘truth.’⁴¹ To quote Vieira de Sousa: ‘To think that gazing at the past impedes the building of the future, and that historical mistakes must be forgotten, is to fail to understand that the loss of the past is exactly the same as a tragic deprivation of the sense of human existence.’ She continues that one can question whether the difficulty of constructing the future does not lie exactly in the fact that ‘we silence ourselves forever by refusing to hold ourselves accountable to the past.’⁴²

In political terms, pluralism gave rise to the emergence of new political formations, which started to present new views about and new versions of Frelimo history, questioning this history and its memories. Most of the leaders of the new parties had been Frelimo members and had taken part in the armed struggle for national liberation⁴³ – and many of them had participated in government in various capacities, above all in the military, during the first years of independence. Some of them had distanced themselves from Frelimo, some after the death of Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo’s first president, and others after independence when they became dissatisfied with the political project, especially when Frelimo chose to become a Marxist-Leninist party in February 1977.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, they considered themselves to have been participants in and witnesses to the past, and as such, believed that they had a right to recount ‘their’ history.

Consequently, we began to see books and articles appear that attempt to rehabilitate some of the protagonists in the history of Frelimo who were considered to be ‘traitors’ by the movement itself. What might be termed ‘counter-memoirs’ appeared, presenting interpretations, written by marginalised groups, that differed from and sometimes contradicted Frelimo’s version of the past; memoirs that were ‘unofficial’ in their relationship to the existing canon.⁴⁵ A book about Uria Simango by Barnabé Ncomo was published,⁴⁶ challenging the monolithic vision of the past to the extent that it denounced and interrogated ‘official’ history. Similarly, Joana Simeão was the subject of several accounts published in independent newspapers in Mozambique.⁴⁷

40 The date on which the General Peace Agreement was signed in Rome between the Mozambican government and Renamo, bringing an end to 16 years of armed conflict.

41 Pollak says that such difficulties and contradictions are inherent features of countries that have suffered civil wars, when various kinds of questioning arise. He queries whether it is even possible to organise commemorations of events that provoke such mixed emotions, affecting not only all the political organisations but also, often, even single individuals. ‘Memória esquecimento’, 11.

42 Vieira de Sousa, ‘Memória e esquecimento’.

43 For example, this was the case with Carlos Reis (UNAMO), Gimo Phiri (UNAMO/UEDEMO), António Palange (PALMO), Wehija Ripua (PADEMO), Casimiro Nhamintambo (SOL), Vasco Campira (PACODE) and many others.

44 As did, for instance, Domingos Arouca. In an interview, Arouca later explained his reasons for leaving Mozambique: see ‘Salvação do país está na vitória eleitoral da FUMO’, *Domingo* (12 Jan. 1992). See also A. Chiúre, ‘Partidos no exílio voltam a Moçambique’, *Diário de Notícias* (18 Jan. 1991); ‘No quadro do multipartidarismo: PADEMO apresenta-se publicamente na capital do país’ *Notícias* (22 Jul. 1991).

45 On the subject of the emergence of counter-memoirs, see, for example, E. Pereira, ‘Abordagens teóricas ao estudo da memória social: uma resenha crítica’, *Arquivos da Memória: Antropologia, Escala e Memória*, 2 (new series, 2007), 4-23; E. Halas, ‘Issues of Social Memory and their Challenges in the Global Age’, *Time Society*, 17, 1 (2008), 110-113.

46 B. L. Ncomo, *Uria Simango: um homem, uma causa*, (Maputo: Edições Novafrica, 2003).

47 See, for example, *Canal de Moçambique* 3-29 May 2006; 1 August and 2-7 November 2006.

Both the book and the articles attempt, in practice, to rehabilitate those who were marginalised by official history – because they were simply considered to be traitors and dissidents – and to give them back the role as protagonists that they played in the past and that they believed they deserved. The objective was that they should occupy their rightful place and should be a part of the collective identity and collective memory of the nation. The objective was to rescue memory.⁴⁸ Such interventions aimed for a genuinely ‘national’ history in the sense that everybody would be included and would be treated as if they had been part of the process of national liberation. In this period, therefore, memory became the object of political, social, ideological and even judicial disputation.⁴⁹

With the political changes, the past and the image of itself that Frelimo had crafted over so many years was so fundamentally transformed that many Frelimo members could no longer recognise themselves in the new version. Frelimo’s very sense of individual and group identity within memory was at stake.⁵⁰ Consequently, in responding to all these changes and critiques linked to a situation characterised by economic crisis, corruption and social unrest, Frelimo reacted by publishing a multiplicity of pamphlets with the life stories of its heroes, trying to maintain in this way and through them its identity as a party as well as the ideological project that had sustained it.

It is evident that the administration of Armando Guebuza, which began in 2004, in contrast to the period of the Joaquim Chissano government, is characterised by serious measures intended not only to breathe new life into the party at all levels, from the party branch or *célula* right up to the top leaders,⁵¹ but also by the rehabilitation of its own history and its memory of the liberation struggle. These ‘rehabilitation’ measures began in the first months of 2008, when the government decided to mark the fortieth anniversary⁵² of the deaths of all the heroes of the liberation struggle who had died in 1968. These ceremonies were organized by the state and presided over by the President of the Republic himself.⁵³ These ceremonies continued in the years that followed.⁵⁴ For Guebuza, to celebrate the heroes was to show respect for the liberation process, for the building of ‘Mozambican-ness’, and helped to strengthen self-respect and national pride among Mozambicans. It was a basic facet of the people’s sense of identity.⁵⁵

48 Catroga says that to remember is to rescue, because ‘memory in being projected is inseparable from different and dissimulated viewpoints that are born from the historical human condition’, *Os passos*, 27.

49 See the debate around the death certificate of people shot by Frelimo firing squads, especially in the case of Joana Simeão and the legal status of her husband who survived her. ‘Um ex-marido de Joana Simeão quer divorciar-se dela Tribunal Judicial de Inhambane prepara-se para considera-la “em parte incerta”’, *Canal de Moçambique* (3 May 2006).

50 On this issue, see Pollak, ‘Memória esquecimento’, 8. Pollak’s ideas on this subject appear in a research project carried out in collaboration with an association of survivors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

51 At the Frelimo Central Committee meeting held in October 2007 Guebuza asserted that the main function of the Central Committee’s Secretariat for Party Organisation was to revitalise and restructure party branches, and that each party member and activist must have a specific task assigned to him or her. ‘Membros da Frelimo devem ter tarefas - Armando Guebuza, no empossamento do secretário para a Organização, Sérgio Pantie’, *Notícias* (30 Nov. 2007). By 2010, the establishment of party branches in the workplace was clearly being emphasised. ‘Valorizar as células - considera Filipe Paúnde aos membros da Frelimo em Nampula’, *Notícias* (5 Feb. 2010).

52 ‘Tombados há 40 anos: Heróis Nacionais vão ser homenageados’, *Notícias* (20 Mar. 2008).

53 To cite a few examples only: ‘Destacado combatente da luta de libertação: John Issa morreu há 40 anos’, *Notícias* (7 Jul. 2008); ‘Guebuza reitera combate à corrupção - Armando Guebuza, na cerimónia do 40º aniversário da morte de José Macamo’, *Notícias* (6 Oct. 2008); ‘Moçambique é pátria de heróis - PR na cerimónia de homenagem a Paulo Samuel Kankhomba’, *Notícias* (23 Dec. 2008).

54 See, for example ‘Heróis fontes de inspiração - PR na homenagem a Belmiro Obadias Muianga, tombado durante a Luta de Libertação Nacional’, *Notícias* (9 Aug. 2010).

55 See, for example ‘Falecido há 40 anos na Tanzânia: Mateus Sansão Muthemba homenageado na sua terra’, *Notícias* (7 Jun. 2008).

In connection with the celebration of these heroes, various pamphlets were published that told their life stories, how they took part in the struggle the sacrifices that they made.⁵⁶ Other pamphlets dealt with various events from Frelimo history.⁵⁷ It should also be noted that homage was also paid to some 'heroes' of the liberation struggle who were still alive.⁵⁸

An aspect of all this that should be highlighted is the rehabilitation of the mythical figure of Samora Machel. Consigned to oblivion during the administration of Joaquim Chissano, Samora began to re-emerge and to become an important point of reference in the popular mind among a public who were unhappy with the situation in the country. Samora's comeback as a popular figure led to his re-appropriation by the Frelimo Party. Such an appropriation by a party that was behaving in ways that absolutely contradicted the principles that he had defended (the placing of the people's interests above the individual, the fight against ambition, against bureaucratism, nepotism, the illicit accumulation of wealth and so on) needed to be deep-rooted. To try to comprehend the contradiction leads us to a better understanding of what lies behind the rehabilitation of his memory. Although the appropriation of Samora allowed Frelimo to legitimise its power, because he 'belongs to Frelimo', this explanation is not sufficient. One of the aspects that turns out to be self-evident when we analyse in detail this discourse of 'appropriation' as used by the power elites, is that it seems to be an attempt to empty Samora's thought of meaning. Making his ideas banal by repeating them systematically in a completely different context, where it is hard to articulate them with the current discourse, and to convert this figure, who cannot be erased from the popular memory, into a myth which can be reduced to the bronze statues that are now proliferating all over the country.⁵⁹

Historical localities, physical spaces and cultural landmarks are also part of this movement of rehabilitation. Frelimo, with regard to what it thinks of as 'its' historical and cultural spaces, has declared certain regions to be 'historical heritage sites of national interest'.⁶⁰ Examples are Chilembene, in Gaza province, birthplace of the first president of independent Mozambique, Samora Moisés Machel;⁶¹ Matchedje, a settlement in Niassa province where the II Congress of the 'Frente de Libertação de

56 On 7 July 2010 the Director of ARPAC, Fernando Dava, confirmed at the first 'Meeting and Reflection on Ways of Coordinating Research on the History of the Struggle for National Liberation', that some of these biographies had been extremely difficult to write since there were problems with the absence of sources, contradictions in the sources that were available and even that there had been difficulties finding 'examples of heroism'. However, the search had continued until something was found. (Author's notes taken during the meeting).

57 Many biographies were prepared by ARPAC, at the request of the Frelimo Party and following a list that was provided. The following titles were published: L. Malimusse and A. Mudender, *Vida e Obra de Tomás Nduda*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2009); R. Dove et al., *Vida e obra de José Macamo, 1936-1968*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); Mudender and Malimusse, *Vida e obra de John Issa, 1940-1968*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); F. Dava et al., *Vida e Obra de Mateus Sansão Muthemba*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); Dove et al., *Vida e obra de Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, 1938-1968* (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); Mudender et al., *Vida e obra de Belmiro Obadias Muianga, 1942-1969*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2010); R. Matusse and J. Malique, *Josina Machel: ícone da emancipação da mulher moçambicana*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); C. Tiane and A. António, *Massacre de Mueda: clímax da consciência nacionalista*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2010); Dove et al., *II Congresso da Frelimo 20-25 de Julho de 1968*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2008); Dava et al., *Chama da Unidade: farol da moçambicanidade*, (Maputo: ARPAC, 2010).

58 'Difícil falar de Marcelino dos Santos - PR na homenagem ao histórico da Frelimo', *Notícias* (20 May 2006). In addition, Matusse has written a biography of the current president. See Matusse, *Guebuza: a paixão pela terra*, (Maputo: Macmillan Moçambique, 2004). Z. Sampaio has published a biography of the senior Frelimo figure Mariano Matsinhe: see *Um homem mil exemplos: a vida e luta de Mariano de Araújo Matsinhe*, (Maputo: Plural Editores, 2012).

59 Analytically, the situation is much more complex than this. The fact is that when it decreed that 2011 was 'the Year of Samora Machel', the government ordered the erection of identical statues in every province of the country to mark the 25th anniversary of Machel's death. See, for instance, 'Monumentos a Samora atrasados', *Notícias* (18 Jan. 2011); '25 Anos sem Samora Machel', *O País* (18 Oct. 2011); '2011 - Ano Samora Machel: Uma celebração sem igual', *Notícias* (28 Dec. 2011).

60 These events, always on a grand scale and with the participation of the head of state, might be thought of as the state's mnemonic devices.

61 'Homenagem pelo 75º aniversário: Terra natal de Samora vira Património Histórico', *Notícias* (4 Sept. 2008).

Moçambique' (FRELIMO) took place in 1968;⁶² and Nwadjahane, in Gaza province, the birthplace of the first president of FRELIMO, Eduardo Mondlane.⁶³ Contact has been made with Tanzania so that some of the historical sites used by Frelimo during the armed struggle can be preserved. Negotiations have even begun with a view to purchasing some of them.⁶⁴ Frelimo has also decided to take over what it considers to be its exclusive heritage and property, and has announced that it intends to buy the Museum of the Revolution.⁶⁵ In an interview in *Savana*, Filipe Paúnde, the Frelimo secretary-general, said that the party did not accept the possibility that the museum might be managed by 'people from outside our party'. When asked whether he thought that if the museum belonged to the Frelimo Party rather than the state, whether it might create split public opinion, Paúnde responded sharply: 'People don't have to go in there if they don't want to. But the Museum of the Revolution is ours and will always be ours'. He added that 'what we want is that what was always ours should be ours again'.⁶⁶ And so the historical heritage of the struggle for national liberation ceases to be national and becomes the property of a political party and its activists. With this decision, part of the country's history becomes an asset belonging to a private entity, a political party, and is lost as the property of the state and the public.⁶⁷

These decisions seem to be consistent with the position taken by Carlos Siliya, at that time a member of Frelimo's central committee, at the first Meeting on Research into the History of the National Liberation Struggle, when he said 'Frelimo owns this history [of the national liberation struggle]'⁶⁸ and, as the owner of the history it is only natural that Frelimo should appropriate everything that is connected to it or has relevance to it. But in appropriating the history, Frelimo also claims that it alone has the capacity to write that history. A former liberation fighter commented, at the same meeting, 'we are this history, without us there is no history'. Liberation fighters believe that they were the true 'makers' of history, that because of this they are the 'owners' of that history and that apart from their accounts no other truth exists. They resist any attempt to write the history of the liberation struggle without them; fight back against those who try to 'rehabilitate the traitors', the silenced ones, within 'their' history; and defy historians who, in their view, want to rewrite or reinterpret this history.⁶⁹ In 2009, during a symposium⁷⁰ to honour Eduardo Mondlane (the first FRELIMO president) Marcelino dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano and Alberto Chipande, who had all been senior figures at the time of the Front, made reference to the distortion of the history of liberation, arguing that 'the real history of the road followed to national independence

62 'Segundo determinação do Conselho de Ministros: Matchedje já é património nacional', *Notícias* (18 Jul. 2008). A lot of construction work was also done in Matchedje in connection with this celebration. See 'Esta semana: Matchedje vira capital político-cultural do país', *Notícias* (23 Jul. 2008).

63 'Aldeia de Eduardo Mondlane poderá ser património cultural', *Notícias* (11 Aug. 2006).

64 According to Zacarias Kupela, the Mozambican High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam, contact has already been established with the owners of the building in connection with Frelimo's old offices, and a commission has been set up to estimate costs. The idea is to turn the offices into a Documentation Centre on the Struggle for National Liberation, and the Veterans' Ministry and Eduardo Mondlane University are to identify ways of preserving and maintaining these and other historical sites in Tanzania. 'Património da Frelimo em processo de compra', *Notícias* (7 Jul. 2008).

65 'Frelimo compra Museu da Revolução', *Savana*, 867 (20 Aug. 2010).

66 'Filipe Paúnde tenta limpar zonas cinzentas. O Museu e todo o seu património é da Frelimo', *Savana*, (27 Aug. 2010).

67 See for the debate took place on this issue: A. Nemane, 'Frelimo compra Museu da Revolução', *Savana*, (20 Aug. 2010), 2-5.

68 First meeting for the Study of and Reflection on Ways of Coordinating Research on the Struggle for National Liberation (Encontro de Estudo e Reflexão das formas de Coordenação da Pesquisa da História da Luta de Libertação Nacional), Maputo, 7 July 2010, organised by the research centre (CPHLLN), an institution run by the Veterans Ministry (from notes taken by the author at the meeting).

69 *Ibid.*

70 International Symposium organised by Eduardo Mondlane University, 18-19 June 2009, to mark the 40th anniversary of the death of Eduardo Mondlane.

must be sought among people of good reputation who always fought for the nation's cause, and not among people whose motives are merely petty and ephemeral.⁷¹

In this attempt to recover the past and its history we can see the emergence of a discourse, in the words of senior Frelimo cadres, that is more or less incoherent when it claims, asserts and tries to prove that the present-day party is the same organisation as the front of 1962, having merely adapted to current national circumstances. An obvious example of this incoherence is Joaquim Chissano's assertion, at the conference to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Frelimo, that everybody knows that Simião Mazuze⁷² is exactly the same person as Salimo Muhamed, apart from having changed his name.⁷³ In his anxiety to make and justify the comparison, Chissano completely ignored the fact that, apart from being the same singer, Mazuze had changed basic aspects of his personality as a human being by converting to Islam – not only in religious terms, but in terms of a world view and of his values and the rules of how he behaves in the world.

A process of publishing autobiographies, individual memoirs written by many of the participants who organised national liberation, is underway.⁷⁴ The writing and publication of these personal memoirs is a completely new phenomenon in Mozambique. Some are simple accounts, with no objectives or aims other than telling the story of what the author believes was important in his or her life's journey.⁷⁵ Others attempt not only to deconstruct the history or histories in opposition to the collective social memory, telling the 'truth' of what they saw (and so are witnesses) or took part in (and so are protagonists), but also taking a position with regard to their self-identification with this history and with no other.⁷⁶ They were faced with changes to an ideology and to reference points that they had identified themselves with and to a party that they had been members of (and were still members of, despite the changes that it had undergone). Their identification with the present and the future does not seem to make sense if past history is not recovered and if no continuity can be found – even if its is a breaking point – some kind of link was needed to make sense of and justify their staying in the party. At bottom, it required the work of reconstructing themselves, their identity as protagonists in this history where they wanted to strengthen their role in a present that was now the object of interrogation.⁷⁷ Their sense of identity demanded a

71 'Segundo Chissano, Chipande e dos Santos - História de Moçambique está distorcida', *Público* (22 Jun. 2009), emphasis added.

72 Mozambican singer.

73 Author's notes. See also: 'Celebramos a Frelimo de 1962 - esclarece Joaquim Chissano', *Notícias* (20 Jun. 2012).

74 It is obvious that Frelimo only began to get organised when it had to reply to questions about its version of history. The only autobiography published before the Guebuza administration took power was H. Martins, *Porquê Sakrani?: memórias de um médico de uma guerrilha esquecida*, (Maputo: Editorial Terceiro Milénio, 2001).

75 See, for example, J. P. Moiane, *Memórias de um guerrilheiro*, (s.l.: King Ngungunhane Institute, 2009).

76 J. Veloso, *Memórias em voo razante*, (Maputo: António José Correia Paulo, 2006); V. Ferrão, *Embaixador em Washington*, (Maputo: Ndjira, 2007); R. Pachinuapa, *II Congresso da Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO)*, *Memórias*, (Maputo: Edição do Autor, 2009); Pachinuapa and M. Pachinuapa, *A vida do casal Pachinuapa*, (Maputo: JV Editores, 2009); S. Vieira, *Participei, por isso testemunho*, (Maputo: Ndjira, 2010); J. F. Pelembe, *Lutei pela Pátria: memórias de um combatente pela libertação nacional*, (Maputo: Edição do Autor, 2012); Pachinuapa, ed., *Memórias da Revolução 1962-1974: colectânea de entrevistas de combatentes da luta de libertação nacional*, (Maputo: CPHLLN, 2011).

77 See, for example, the 'fierce attack' by Veloso in his memoirs on the presence of Soviet advisors and their interventions, the relations and political and economic pressures exercised by the Soviet Union in Mozambique after independence. Veloso also argues that there was no 'Portuguese component' in Renamo, but that this was staged by South Africa, among others. Looking into the reasons for these positions, it is clear that Veloso needs to locate himself in relation to the memory of his past and in relation to the Mozambique of today which he himself represents. See Veloso, *Memórias*, 183-186, 224 *passim*. In another example, Alberto Chipande, an historical figure in the struggle for national liberation, and a member of Frelimo's Political Commission, wants to legitimise the accumulation of wealth by Frelimo Party leaders, because they fought for the independence that Mozambicans enjoy today. 'Chipande reitera suas convicções sobre o direito à riqueza', *O País*, (21 Aug. 2009); 'Chipande insiste na "legalidade" dos dirigentes da Frelimo serem ricos', *CanalMoz*, (21 Aug. 2009). Ferrão writes that the decision taken at the III Congress of Frelimo, to adopt a Marxist-Leninist ideology, was taken on the basis of a 'lack of analysis of the realities of the country'. But since nobody at the time asked him what he thought, he kept quiet: 'There was an absence of what Aquino de Bragança called internal debate. We all happily accepted Marxist-Leninist ideology and moved on', *Embaixador*, 86.

link between past-present-future, which needed not only to be discovered but also to be (re)affirmed. As Pollak argues, it is characteristic of all life histories that they must be thought of as instruments in the construction of identity, and not just as factual accounts. Through this work of retrospective reconstruction of self, the individual begins to define his or her place in society and his or her relations with others.⁷⁸

In reading these memoirs, it is worth noting that what makes them interesting above all is what is omitted, what is silenced, and not the memoir in itself, not the story that is actually told. In fact, they reveal nothing new in terms of oral accounts of the past of the struggle for national liberation, and remain loyal to 'official history'. The authors do not problematise, do not question, do not analyse and do not interrogate the past. They possess absolute certainty, because they were there. It is worth noting that none of them attempt to connect history to the present moment, and how they view themselves and their party in the present moment,⁷⁹ because, in fact, it is only the memory of the past that united them, that gives them their identity, and that distinguishes them from the others.⁸⁰

By Way of a Conclusion

This research project, as mentioned above, is still in its early stages, and still requires deeper analysis of the various issues that have been raised. As with any oral register, when working with memoirs, autobiographies and biographies, it is necessary to compare them with other sources. As Connerton says, when this is not possible, such testimonies must be treated as what they actually are and must be read as such. Indeed, for an historian simply to accept their declarations as fact amounts to the renunciation of his or her autonomy and independence regarding social memory. Historical reconstruction continues to be necessary.⁸¹

What is true is that in Mozambique after the introduction of political pluralism, but above all after 2004 when Armando Guebuza became president, there was an obvious revitalisation of the Frelimo Party, of its history and its memory. At the same time as the revitalisation, the extreme position was taken of refusing to accept criticism, accentuating something that Aquino de Bragança and Jacques Depelchin had already called attention to in 1986: that one of the major problems in Frelimo history arises not only in how the discussion takes place, but also in the utilisation of knowledge in a form that brooks no questioning.⁸²

78 Pollak, 'Memória esquecimento', 11. General B. M. Gruveta, a Frelimo veteran and senior party cadre criticises and questions these 'autobiographies', writing of Sérgio Vieira's book, as well as others by his Frelimo comrades, that 'everything that [...] they write is untrue, so take it easy'. However, he does not specify what he considers to be 'untruths' in these accounts. 'O livro do meu camarada Sérgio Vieira não tem nada - diz General Gruveta', *Diário da Zambézia, Jornal Electrónico* (9 Sept. 2010).

79 It is perhaps for this reason that texts describing what was done, what happened and how the authors found a place for themselves in the post-independence are so rare. This is true not only for the period after 1975, but above all for the period after 1990. The few that do talk about present times, present a general history full of omissions and silences, historical periods cut off, as if they are speaking of a reality that is outside themselves, where they were only very rarely involved in the taking of decisions or the implementation of measures, in the taking on of responsibilities or in mistakes, as determinants of this history.

80 It is only recently that a tiny number of senior Frelimo cadres, such as Jorge Rebelo and Marcelino dos Santos, have begun to ask questions about specific party attitudes. Rebelo is a classic example of this kind of questioning since he headed the Department of Ideological Work and was a member of the Political Bureau. See, for example, 'Frelimo está a desviar-se dos seus objectivos - Marcelino dos Santos', *Savana*, (3 Sept. 2010); '«Há ministros que enriquecem à custa do sofrimento do povo»', *O País* (20 Oct. 2010); Rebelo interviewed by E. Salema and P. Rolletta, 'As falas da velha raposa', *Savana*, (4 Jul. 2008).

81 Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

82 A. Bragança and J. Depelchin, 'Da idealização da Frelimo à compreensão da História de Moçambique', *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 5/6 (1986), 33.

It is also necessary in these memoirs to identify the principles of selection and omission, and to pay attention to whether or not there are inconsistencies in the narratives of individuals who are writing about the same events. It is necessary to try to understand how some elements become part of the history and others are left on the margins of the story or in obscurity. Who decides, and how? What are the criteria?

It is in this context that two issues should be mentioned that deserve to be taken into account, which have to do with the way the historian conducts himself or herself. The first has to do with what Catroga calls the 'use and abuse of memories', or what other historians have termed a worrying 'tyranny of memory'. This is 'imposed by official viewpoints, or through pressure from groups which have little interest in subjecting their readings to the scrutiny of critical analyses'.⁸³ For Catroga, therefore, the historian's mission 'is analogous to that of a *remembrancer*, a name given to an English state functionary who, in the late Middle Ages, had the hateful task of going from village to village just before taxes were collected to remind people of what they most wanted to forget'.⁸⁴ Given that both collective and historical memory tends to homogenise, the historian has a responsibility, when working with these sources, to ask who remembers what, and why? Which version of the past is written down and preserved? What is forgotten?⁸⁵ Because history, when it is based only on memories, and memories on myths, moves further and further away from the truth.

The second issue, which Rui Bebiano reminds us of, is the need to keep in mind the difference between *forgetfulness*, which is accidental, and *forgetting*, which is deliberate. Thus 'deprived of memory, we recognise only a past that is transmitted to us through the medium of carefully selected information, rather than what we are told, or what, either alone or in company, we are able to recuperate'.⁸⁶ Because of this

If forgetfulness suggests a casual obscuring of the past, or even an essential condition of remembering (it is necessary to forget in order to remember), then forgetting implies a voluntary erasure of remembering, an ignorance, a disinterest determined by specific areas of an experienced life, compensated for, paradoxically, by a real obsession with the past. The fashion for commemoration, the search for roots and traditions, the enormous success of biographies, films and novels with historical themes, the old icons printed on t-shirts or used in advertising campaigns, at the same time as they seem to seek an identity that may be either remembered or invented, promote gigantic processes of forgetting.⁸⁷

83 Catroga, *Os passos.*, 30.

84 *Ibid.*, 53.

85 *Ibid.*, 48.

86 *Ibid.* M. M. Cruzeiro. 'Memória individual/memória colectiva: conflito e negociação', *Ensaio*. 23 September 2009. Available at <http://caminhosdamemoria.wordpress.com/2009/09/23/memoria-individualmemoria=colectiva-conflito-e-negociacao/>, accessed in June 2011.

87 *Ibid.*

