

**The Morality of Revolution: Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps, and  
Citizenship in Socialist Mozambique (1974-1988)**

by

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## **Dedication**

In memory of Ché Mafuiane

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## List of Abbreviations

AGGPM	Arquivo do Gabinete do Governador da Província de Maputo (Archive)
AGGP	Arquivo do Gabinete do Governador da Província do Niassa (Archive)
AHM	Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (Archive)
AJN	Arquivo do Jornal Notícias (Archive)
ANC	African National Congress
ANP	Acção Nacional Popular (Party of the Portuguese Estado Novo)
APIE	Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado (Real-estate Agency)
ART	Arquivo da Revista Tempo (Archive)
CAN	Centro Associativo dos Negros da Colónia de Moçambique/Negro Association
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDFP	Centro de Formação Fotográfica/Center for Photographic Training
CDSM	Centro de Documentação Samora Machel (Archive)
CEA	Centro de Estudos Africanos (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane)
COC	Comando Operativo Central/Central Operative Command
COD	Comando Operativo Distrital/District Operative Command
COP	Comando Operativo Provincial/ Provincial Operative Command
CPPM	Centro de Preparação Político-Militar/Political & Military Training (Nachingwea)
CRL	Center of Research Libraries
DNSR	Direcção Nacional dos Serviços de Reeducação/National Directorate of Re-education Services
DPSR	Departamento Provincial dos Serviços de Reeducação/Provincial Dept. of Re-education Services
FEN	Feira de Exposição do Niassa/Niass Trade Fair
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique/Mozambique Liberation Front*
FPLM	Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Army)
GCP	Grupo Cultural Polivalente/Polyvalent Cultural Group
GD	Grupo Dinamizador/Dynamizing Group (Local party cell)
GLSBCM	Gabinete para o Levantamento da Situação dos Bairros da Cidade de Maputo (Maputo survey team)
GVP	Grupo de Vigilância Popular/People's Vigilant Group
GZV	Gabinete das Zonas Verdes/Cabinet of Green Belts
MHN	Mozambique History Net
MINT	Ministério do Interior/Interior Ministry

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\* FRELIMO changed its acronym in capital letters to Frelimo in 1977, when the Front became a Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party. Because my study deals mostly with the vanguard Party, I use the name Frelimo for both the Front and the Party.

MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola/Angola People's Liberation Movement
NESAM	Núcleo dos Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique (Student Union)
OJM	Organização da Juventude Moçambicana/ Organization of Mozambique Youth
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana/ Organization of Mozambican Women
PIC	Polícia de Investigação Crminal/Criminal Investigation Police
PIDE/DGS	Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado/Direcção-Geral de Segurança (Portuguese secret police)
PPI	Plano Prospectivo Indicativo/Indicative Prospective Plan (Development plan)
PPM	Polícia Popular de Moçambique/Mozambique People's Police
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana/Mozambique National Resistance
SNASP	Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular/National Security Service
TANU	Tanzania African National Union
TMR	Tribunal Militar Revolucionário/Revolutionary Military Tribunal
VC	Centros de Verificação/Verification Centers
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

## **Abstract**

Between 1974 and 1988, the revolutionary ruling party of Mozambique, Frelimo, launched several campaigns to cleanse the cities of residents it deemed antisocial and antithetical to the socialist revolution in Mozambique. The party established over twenty internment camps in remote locations throughout the country. Officially called ‘reeducation centers’, these camps were meant to rehabilitate wayward members of society through forced labor, political education, and moral regeneration. This study offers a critical historical examination of the cleanup campaigns and reeducation camps in socialist Mozambique. It explores the ideological and material infrastructure in which Frelimo devised and implemented its program of moral reform. Building on a new set of archival materials and interviews, the study foregrounds the contradictions of Frelimo’s ambitions and the gap between the ideals of social reform and the reality of the internment regimen. The examination of the campaigns, the empirical documentation of the organic functioning of the camps and the everyday life of internment shed light on the inner workings of authority and power, social control, and the carceral regime in contexts of austerity and national political transition. The study argues that the party’s incapacity to transmute the salvationist ideas of social reform into planned action produced spaces of social neglect and castigation that affected both the inmates and the personnel tasked to discipline and reeducate them. The conditions of austerity in which Frelimo implemented its reformist project produced a particular mode of carceral regime that was not dictated by technologies of disciplinary surveillance. Camp supervisors and detainees themselves defined the kind of internment regimen that prevailed in the camps in ways that subverted the disciplinary aspirations of political leaders. While the party leaders envisioned the camps as sites of disciplinary pedagogy for the making of the new man and the new woman, in fact the camps were spaces of social abandonment.





In October 1974, David Martin, a British journalist and an avid supporter of southern Africa's liberation movements, wrote an enthusiastic report to the *London Observer* from Mozambique's capital city, Lourenço Marques, just after the transfer of power from the departing Portuguese colonial regime to the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) had taken place.<sup>1</sup> In conformity with an agreement reached between Portugal and Frelimo, a transitional government had been installed which included three Portuguese officials and six Frelimo nominees. Headed by thirty-five year old Joaquim Chissano as prime minister, the government was tasked to prepare the country for the declaration of national independence, which was scheduled for June 25, 1975. The transfer of power had not been smooth and, as Martin walked around the streets of Lourenço Marques, the environment was still very tense. Racial violence followed the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, as most white settlers felt betrayed with the unilateral handing over of power to Frelimo.<sup>2</sup> It took a joint effort by Portuguese soldiers and Frelimo guerrillas to bring peace and prevent further violence among the former colonizers and the colonized.<sup>3</sup> But beyond preventing violence, Frelimo guerrillas were also engaged in a pedagogical exercise in the downtown red light district, the famous Rua Araújo. As Martin wrote:

On the notorious Rua Araujo here a squad of battle-hardened FRELIMO guerrillas have begun fighting a new war. (...) After years in the bush, the FRELIMO guerrillas have been thrust into a concrete jungle where, in addition to keeping order, their task is the political education of the prostitutes and others with wayward life styles.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In April 25, 1974, a bloodless military coup in Lisbon brought down the Portuguese dictatorial regime. The coup ushered the process of negotiations to end the liberation wars in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, which began in the early 1960s. For details, see Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire*. London: Longman, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> See A.D. Harvey, "Counter-coup in Lourenço Marques: September 1974", *International Journal of African Studies*, 39, 3 (2006):487-498; Benedito Machava, "Galo Amanheceu em Lourenço Marques: O 7 de Setembro e o Verso da Descolonização em Moçambique", *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 106 (2015): 53-84.

<sup>3</sup> See António Rita-Ferreira, "Moçambique post-25 de Abril: Causas do Êxodo da População de Origem Europeia e Asiática", *Moçambique: Cultura e História de um País*, 8 (1988): 122-169; Fernando Couto, *Moçambique 1974: O Fim do Império e o Nascimento da Nação*. Alfragide: Caminho, 2011; Ribeiro Cardoso, *O Fim do Império*. Alfragide: Caminho, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> David Martin, "The (political) facts of life on Mozambique's sin street", *Chicago Sun-Times*, 6 Oct. 1974. (I thank Kathleen Sheldon for providing me a copy of this article).



*Fig. 1. "The Last Sister", Photo by Ricardo Rangel. Frelimo guerrillas escorting a "prostitute" in downtown Lourenço Marques, 1975. Credit: MHN*

Martin reported that the guerrillas had begun closing down houses of ill-repute in the city (bars, dance halls and brothels) and, in his words, they had "ordered the girls off the streets." Martin did not say where the "girls" might have been "ordered" to. His interest was in recording the "revolutionary" activities of the guerrillas in the new battle. One particular case caught his attention. He noted:

Outside one bar a guerrilla was leaning against a wall smiling at a woman wearing a very short dress, her face daubed with skin lighteners, wearing an Afro wig. As passers-by stopped to stare curiously, the guerrilla, with an automatic rifle slung over his shoulder and wearing a camouflage uniform, quietly lectured the woman.

As Martin recounts, the lecture addressed the immorality of her revealing attire and the "shameful" trade of prostitution in which she may have been engaged.

Apart from securing a peaceful transition, this was the kind of revolutionary duty that Frelimo guerrillas were now carrying out as the country was fast moving towards complete self-determination. Impressed with the guerrilla's moralizing teachings, Martin remarked: "FRELIMO's campaign on Sin Street emphasizes what the party leaders now regard as their most important task – the 'political education' of all the people of Mozambique."

But this “political education” was not aimed at raising the nationalist (and revolutionary) consciousness of people after years of colonial bondage. Other pro-Frelimo groups were engaged in that kind of political work.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the purpose of this education was cultural and mental decolonization, aimed at changing the moral behavior of the masses.<sup>6</sup> As Frelimo leaders articulated their project in several official documents and pamphlets during and after the transition, among other goals, the socialist revolution was meant to eradicate the “bourgeois morality” and replace it with the “revolutionary morality” that developed in the course of the liberation struggle.<sup>7</sup> The guerrillas that impressed the British journalist were products of- and carriers of this new morality. As Frelimo’s president, Samora Machel, put it during the liberation struggle in 1970, the guerrillas – like all other party cadres – were agents of moral change.<sup>8</sup> Their task was to create the conditions for a radical transformation of society and usher in a new order. On the occasion of the investiture of the transitional government, Machel instructed his comrades to launch an “unyielding struggle” against immorality, self-indulgence, and idleness.<sup>9</sup> This struggle was to be fought in urban areas, where the mental damage of colonialism was most intense. He postulated that the evidence of the deep wounds that colonial rule had created was in the social fabric itself. Prostitution, drunkenness, vagrancy, drug addiction, familial instability, indecent dress, crime, and cultural tastes imported from the West were rampant. These social pathologies were an obstacle to nation building and needed immediate redress. As he asserted:

We must launch an unyielding struggle against the vestiges of colonialism, decadent values, erroneous ideas, the attitude of uncritically imitating foreigners, and against immorality. (...) In this respect, we must bear in mind that the city is one of the centers of vice and corruption and of alienating foreign influences. The blood of our people was not shed only to free the land from foreign domination, but also to re-conquer our Mozambican personality, to bring about the resurgence of our culture and to create a new mentality, a new society. (...) We are engaged in a Revolution whose advance depends on the creation of the New Man, with a new mentality.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For details on the work of pro-Frelimo groups during the transition period, see Aurélio Le Bon, *Mafalala 1974: Memórias do 7 de Setembro, A Grande Operação*. Maputo: Movimento Editora, 2015; Carlos Pereira and Luís Gonzalez, *História da AAM: Associação Académica de Moçambique (1964-1975)*. Vila Nova de Gaia: Calendário das Letras, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 Jan. 1976.

<sup>7</sup> AHM – “Centros de Reeducação em Moçambique”, *Tempo*, 26 Mar. 1976.

<sup>8</sup> Samora Machel, “Leadership is Collective, Responsibility is Collective”, in S. Machel, *Mozambique: Sowing the Seeds of Revolution*. London: Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau, 1974, p. 16-20.

<sup>9</sup> MHN – “Message from the President of FRELIMO on the Occasion of the Investiture of the Transitional Government of Mozambique”, September 1974.

<sup>10</sup> S. Machel, “FRELIMO’s tasks in the struggle ahead”, p.14.

The transitional government put President Machel's commandments into immediate action. By the end of October, 1974, guerrillas who may have been "polite" earlier in the month, were rounding up at gunpoint the "girls" and anybody – men and women – who exhibited the visual signs of moral decadence: short skirts, wigs, Afro hairstyles and hippie dress. People found in places of leisure, particularly beer halls and dance clubs, were rounded up and taken into detention. These people were considered "anti-socials." For the new political authorities, the presence of such people in the cities was a hindrance to the new society that they envisioned in Mozambique.

By November 3, 1974, the thirty year old minister of the interior and national political commissar, Armando Guebuza – who was in charge of the new "unyielding struggle" – announced that a major campaign to cleanse the cities of prostitutes and other people with wayward lifestyles was underway.<sup>11</sup> He presented a staggering number of 75,000 prostitutes who, he averred, lived in the capital city alone. These people were to be located and interned in Reeducation Camps (*Campos de Reeducação*), where their degeneracy would be washed away through manual labor and political education. "We are now installing camps", the minister said, "where we seek to raise their awareness so that they can learn a new life in conformity with the society that we will build."<sup>12</sup> He assured the press that the round ups against the anti-socials would "continue indefinitely." He justified the campaigns by claiming that "the presence of such people in the country would corrupt the society into crime and immorality."<sup>13</sup> As one newspaper reported in November 1975, "over 3,000 men and women were rounded up in five of Mozambique's major towns during an operation aimed at the rehabilitation of thieves, prostitutes, drug pushers and vagrants."<sup>14</sup> Geneva's *Review of International Commission of Jurists* claimed that "some 15,000 people were detained in the first month" of Mozambique's independence alone.<sup>15</sup>

True to minister Guebuza's assertion that the campaigns would continue indefinitely, the state carried out round ups to cleanse the cities of immorality and social degeneracy up until 1988. During this time, the state kept a network of labor camps to isolate the "pernicious elements" from

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<sup>11</sup> MHN – "FRELIMO cria Campos de Reeducação", *A Capital*, 20 Nov. 1974.

<sup>12</sup> "FRELIMO Cria Campos de Reeducação", *A Capital*, 20 Nov. 1974.

<sup>13</sup> MHN – *Daily News*, [Dar-es-Salaam], 3 Nov. 1975

<sup>14</sup> MHN – *Daily News* [Dar-es-Salaam], 3 Nov. 1975; "FRELIMO Cria Campos de Reeducação", *A Capital*, 20 Nov. 1974.

<sup>15</sup> MHN – "Mozambique's Re-education Camps", *The Review of International Commission of Jurists*, Geneva. December 1981, pp. 14-15.

urban society and prevent further contamination. If we take the party's claims at their word, the expectation was that corrective labor, moral and physical rehabilitation, and political education in rural sites – far away from the temptations and corrupting effects of city lights – would transform the anti-socials into disciplined and industrious citizens, the very new man.<sup>16</sup> By January 1976, the government had established more than twenty reeducation camps throughout the country and the number of detainees in that year was estimated at 10,000.<sup>17</sup> The number of the camps and the inmate population oscillated throughout the years, as some camps were closed and others were opened and detainees came in and out of the pipeline. In 1983/4 the pipeline reached its peak and it may have contained as many as 50,000 people from the urban areas.<sup>18</sup>

The present study offers a critical historical examination of the cleanup campaigns and reeducation camps in socialist Mozambique. It explores the ideological and material infrastructure in which Frelimo devised and implemented its program of moral reform. My examination of the campaigns, and the empirical documentation of the organic functioning of the camps and the everyday life of internment shed light on the inner workings of authority and power, social control, and the carceral regime in contexts of austerity and national political transition.<sup>19</sup> I argue that, while leaders of a newly independent state in southern Africa envisioned the camps as sites of disciplinary pedagogy for the making of the new man and the new woman, in fact the camps were spaces of social abandonment.<sup>20</sup> From the beginning in 1974 to its demise in the late 1980s, the reeducation program was a do-it-yourself undertaking, operating under conditions of extreme scarcity. The nature of the carceral regime reflected these conditions as the Frelimo government, unable to finance and support the program, expected its agents and the detainees to carry out such

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<sup>16</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 Jan. 1976.

<sup>17</sup> MHN – Jay Ross, “Mozambican reeducation camps raise rights questions”, *The Washington Post*, 7 May 1980.

<sup>18</sup> In 1983 Frelimo implemented its largest cleanup campaign (*Operação Produção* or operation production). After a period of relaxation, in the northern provinces the camps swelled again. Estimates place the highest number of urban people scooped from cities to labor camps at 100,000, half of which were removed from the capital city alone. Jean Tartter, “Government and Politics”, in *Mozambique: A Country Study*. Washington: The American University, 1984, p. 201; Herbert Howe, “National Security”, in *Mozambique: A Country Study*, p. 277; O. R. Thomaz, “Escravos sem dono”, p. 191; Carlos Quembo, *Poder do Poder: Operação Produção e a Inveção dos “Improdutivos” Urbanos no Moçambique Socialista (1983-1988)*. Maputo: Alcance, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Frelimo inherited a bankrupt state in the context of global economic recession following the 1973 oil crisis. The massive flight of white settlers deprived the new regime of qualified personnel to run the government. See David Wield, “Mozambique: Late colonialism and early problems of transition”, in Gordon White, ed. *Revolutionary Socialist Development in the Third World*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983, pp. 75-113.

<sup>20</sup> João Biehl, *Vita: Life in the Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p. 2-3.

ambitious project with limited resources.<sup>21</sup> Not only did the weight of establishing and running the camps fall on the backs of detainees, the daily regimen of camp life was largely left to the discretion of each camp commander, and in some cases, of detainees themselves. The organic features of the camps, I argue, did not stem from any marginal place that the camps may have occupied in the entire effort to build a socialist society in Mozambique.<sup>22</sup> Rather, they stemmed from the material constraints in which the camps operated. Without material and human resources to run the program, state officials compelled detainees to build their own detention facilities; to grow their own food; to carry out political education on their own; and in many ways, to watch over their own carceral regimen. The state's incapacity to transmute the salvationist ideas of reform into planned action – a general feature of the socialist experiment in Mozambique – produced spaces of social neglect and castigation that affected both the inmates and the personnel tasked to discipline and reeducate them.

Building on a new set of archival materials and interviews, this study foregrounds the contradictions of Frelimo's ambitions and the gap between the ideals of social reform and the reality of the internment regimen. Although the fragmentary source material on which this study is based does not allow for a complete picture of the entire reeducation camp complex, nevertheless the creation and use of reeducation camps as a means to broadcast moral authority has been a silent chapter in Mozambique's history.<sup>23</sup> Yet, without understanding the purpose and materiality of the camps, we cannot fully understand the socialist experiment in Mozambique.

Apart from ushering in a new era of economic development and social progress,<sup>24</sup> the socialist experiment also sought to remake the moral fabric of Mozambican society anew. The

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<sup>21</sup> As Laura Bear argues, conditions of austerity create new forms of relationships and engagements between the state, its agents, and society, which are based on new expectations of performance. One of the central outcomes of austerity is the expectation that those at the bottom of socio-political and economic hierarchies must do more with less. Laura Bear, *Navigating Austerity: Currents of Debt along a South Asian River*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015, p. 1, 198.

<sup>22</sup> In the body of scholarship on postcolonial Mozambique, the reeducation camps have largely been placed at the margins of Frelimo's socialist experiment. While most studies do not mention the camps, some have viewed them as "policy mistakes" by a well-meaning socialist party (Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: Revolution under Fire*. London: Zed Books, 1984, p. 246 and 265), or a reflection of Frelimo's quest for political hegemony (see Michel Cahen, *Mozambique: La Révolution Implosée: Etudes sur 12 ans d'Indépendance (1975-1987)*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987; David Hoile, *Mozambique: A Nation in Crisis*. London: Claridge Press, 1989; Luis de Brito, "Le FRELIMO et la Construction de l'Etat National au Mozambique", PhD Thesis, Université de Paris 8, 1991).

<sup>23</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

<sup>24</sup> João Cravinho, "Modernizing Mozambique: Frelimo Ideology and the Frelimo State", Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1995; Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*. London: Hurst & Co, 1997; Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975-2000*.

camps and the campaigns were an essential component of this ambition to remold the people of Mozambique according to new moral aesthetics. As the architects of the campaigns asserted during the first national conference on the reeducation program held in November 1976: “the Revolution demanded that, in order to advance rapid and correctly, certain measures had to be taken to ‘cleanse’ the cities of pernicious elements to society, elements that constitute an obstacle to a society of a new type.”<sup>25</sup> By the same token, in the long run, the camps and the campaigns were one of the factors that undermined efforts to realize the socialist utopia.<sup>26</sup> The history of contemporary Mozambique remains incomplete without an investigation of the central role that the cleanup campaigns and reeducation camps played in the making of independent Mozambique. For the thousands of Mozambicans who went through the pipeline, the experience of internment left physical and psychological wounds that are yet to heal. For those who perished in the camps, the historical inquiry that I pursue here is an attempt to make sure that they will not die a second death.<sup>27</sup>

### **Beyond the Carceral Archipelago: On the Genealogy of Labor Camps and the Limits of the Carceral Regime**

Mozambique’s reeducation camps are part of a global history of mass incarceration and penal regimes of reform through labor that characterized much of the twentieth-century, as authoritarian regimes sought to ascertain and consolidate their power. Regardless of ideological orientations –

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Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Harry West, *Kupilukula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 1º Seminário Nacional de Reeducação. Documento de Apoio n.º. 2 – Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação, Novembro de 1976, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> If the number of people who fled from the camps to join Renamo was not significant – as some scholars have pointed out – it is important to note that André Matsaingaissa (the founding leader of the rebel movement) and several Renamo top military commanders escaped from the camps full of hatred for the ruling party. The “harrowing” war that they waged against the Frelimo government with the backing of Rhodesia and South Africa not only reduced the reeducation program to tatters, it ruined the entire socialist dream. See João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Da Violência Colonial Ordenada à Ordem Pós-Colonial Violenta: Sobre um Legado das Guerras Coloniais nas Ex-Colónias Portuguesas”, *Lusotopie* (2003): 175-193; João Cabrita, *Mozambique: The Torturous Road to Democracy*. New York: Palgrave, 2000, p. 96; Bertil Egero, *Mozambique: A Dream Undone. The Political Economy of Democracy, 1975-1984*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1987; William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. The literature on Mozambique’s post-independence war is vast. For an overview, see David Robinson, “Curse on the Land: A History of the Mozambican Civil War.” PhD dissertation, The University of Western Australia: School of Humanities, 2006; Alice Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa: The Case of Mozambique, 1975–1994*. London: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, p. 121.

socialist or capitalist – states used labor camps to confine dissent, to exploit unpaid labor in order to speed their developmentalist projects, and to enforce high-minded visions of social transformation.<sup>28</sup> Trained and supported mainly by China and the Soviet Union, Mozambique politicians were exposed to a variety of models of mass incarceration based on the principle of rehabilitation through labor. From the reformed Soviet Gulag of the post-Stalin years, the Chinese Laogai, the Vietnamese and North Korean reeducation camps, to the Cuban *Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción* (UMAP), Frelimo leaders had a plethora of examples of follow.<sup>29</sup>

Scholars have established that modern labor camps, like prisons, have a very recent past and that they are, in many ways, an amalgamation of related systems of punishment that developed in nineteenth-century Europe and North America.<sup>30</sup> The labor camp incorporated aspects of the banishment of unwanted people to remote locations (an ancient form of punishment<sup>31</sup>) as well as the modern prison, the juvenile reform school, and the counter-insurgency detention camp.<sup>32</sup> With its barbed wire, attack dogs, and heavily armed police, the counter-insurgency camp transmitted

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<sup>28</sup> Patricia O'Brien, "The Prison on the Continent: Europe, 1865-1965", in Norval Morris and David Rothman, ed. *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 178-201; Aryeh Neier, "Confining Dissent: The Political Prison", in N. Morris and D. Rothman, ed. *The Oxford History of the Prison*, pp. 350-380.

<sup>29</sup> On the Soviet labor camps, see, among many others, Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History*. New York: Anchor Books, 2003; Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. On the Cuban UMAP camps, see Enrique Ros, *La UMAP: El Gulag Castrista*. Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2004; and Joseph Tahbaz, "Demystifying las UMAP: The Politics of Sugar, Gender, and Religion in 1960s Cuba", *Delaware Review of Latin American Studies*, 14, 2 (2013). On Vietnamese camps, see Van Toai Doan and David Chanoff, *The Vietnamese Gulag*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986; and Tran Tri Vu, *Lost Years: My 1,632 Days in Vietnamese Reeducation Camps*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. On the Chinese labor reform camps (aka laogai), see James Saymour and Richard Anderson, *New Ghosts, Old Ghosts: Prisons and Labor Reform Camps in China*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998; Aminda Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> N. Morris and D. Rothman, ed. *The Oxford History of the Prison*.

<sup>31</sup> From the distant past up to the present, states have banished unwanted subpopulations to the far reaches of their countries or overseas for political, economic, religious, or social reasons. Examples abound. For a fascinating account on how the British government sent criminals to North America and then to Australia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1987. For centuries, Russian monarchs exiled criminals and political dissidents in Siberia (the Soviet Gulag was in part a direct descendant of this long tradition of punishment. Yet, the regime of forced-labor was a Bolshevik creation. According to Galina Ivanova, it was unknown in Russia prior to the revolution). Galina Ivanova, *Labor Camp Socialism: The Gulag in the Soviet Totalitarian System*. Translated by Carol Flath. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 12. For many centuries, Mozambique and the Atlantic island of São Tomé e Príncipe were the main destinations of Portugal's undesirables. See Malyn Newitt, "Mixed Race Groups in the Early History of Portuguese Expansion", in T. Earle and Stephen Parkison, eds. *Studies in the Portuguese Discoveries*. vol 1. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1992, pp. 35-52.

<sup>32</sup> On the history of juvenile reform camps, see Steven Schlossman, "Delinquent Children: The Juvenile Reform School", in N. Morris and D. Rothman, *The Oxford History of the Prison*, pp. 324-349.



its physical form to contemporary labor camps.<sup>33</sup> The juvenile reform school and the prison offered their reformist and disciplinary regime, as well as their organizing principle based on the ethos of rehabilitation and redemptive labor.<sup>34</sup> Twentieth-century labor camps derived their disciplinary technologies and physical shape from all of these institutions. But this combination of influences did not follow any chronological or schematic order, rather it resulted from a historical process of bricolage in a complicated web of cross-fertilization of innovations. Unsurprisingly, the process did not produce a uniform type of labor camp. Rather, its outcome was a motley of institutions with disparate characteristics and which served a variety of different goals.<sup>35</sup> The Nazi camps were different from the Soviet Gulag. The Gulag were different from the Chinese Laogai. The Laogai were different from Mozambique's reeducation camps. But in essence, they all belong to the same institutional family: the internment camp.

Michel Foucault's work on the history of the prison and other disciplinary institutions of the modern state (the asylum, the clinic, or the school) has shaped the scholarship on the carceral regime in general, and internment camps in particular.<sup>36</sup> Foucault suggested that the ultimate goal of the modern state is to produce order and discipline through social and spatial legibility. To achieve this goal, states seek to separate from society the bodies that do not conform to the ideal of order and they quarantine and keep a permanent watch on them, as they did with the lepers of old times. Excluded from society, these "impure bodies" are then placed in a space of exception – the "carceral archipelago" – where every detail about them is recorded, their daily and nightly routine permanently monitored by an elusive "seeing machine", the panopticon. Efficient,

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<sup>33</sup> Scholars agree that some of the first modern concentration camps were established in colonial Cuba as a strategy to contain insurgents during Cuba's war of independence in 1895. Judging from the widespread use of detention camps as counterinsurgency measure across the colonial world, the Spaniard innovation seem to have gained a revolutionary traction. The British adopted the same model during the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa (1899-1902) and again in Kenya during the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s. The Germans followed the example in South-West Africa (Namibia) during the Herero's resistance against colonial occupation (1904-1907). Some scholars have established a direct connection between the Namibian camps and the Nazi death camps. The strategic helmets or *aldeamentos*, which the Portuguese army borrowed from the American strategy in Vietnam to counter the liberation movements in her colonies evolved from the Spaniard's *reconcentración*. See A. Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. xxix.

<sup>34</sup> As Patricia O'Brien asserted, the slogan "Work Makes You Free", which "masked" the "system of forced labor under which millions suffered and died" in the twentieth-century "could have been devised by a nineteenth-century penal reformer explaining the liberating value of labor." P. O'Brien, "The Prison on the Continent: Europe, 1865-1965", p. 194. Michel Foucault considered the juvenile reformatory schools – the French agricultural colony of Mettray in particular – as the first prototype of the modern penitentiary, "the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behavior." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 2 ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, p. 293-4.

<sup>35</sup> A. Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. xxxviii.

<sup>36</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

insidious, and more violent than the spectacular forms of punishment of old times, panoptic institutions function “as a kind of laboratory of power” that meticulously surveil human subjects to the most minute, intimate aspects of everyday life.<sup>37</sup> In penal institutions – where the panoptic mechanisms of power reach their finest shape – inmates are subjected to the most totalitarian surveillance. As Foucault put it, “the theme of the panopticon – at once surveillance and observation, security and knowledge, individualization and totalization, isolation and transparency – found in the prison its privileged locus of realization.”<sup>38</sup> In the prison, the elusive “panoptic machine” is in permanent vigilance. It is endowed with effective techniques of discipline in the form of architectural arrangement of the space of confinement and a central watch tower (a model devised by the British penologist and reformer Jeremy Bentham). For Foucault the birth of the carceral archipelago represents the emergence of the most totalitarian forms of social domination at the disposal of the modern state to exert control, create order, and demand uniformity. The aim of the prison was to allow the state to domesticate the human body and in so doing, produce knowledge about the functioning of the human body and mind. Punishment, he argued, gradually ceased to be a public spectacle to become an intimate, silent affair in enclosed walls, where the body could be observed and scrutinized. The panopticon was devised to induce in the individual body the sense of self-discipline, while allowing for the extraction of knowledge about the individual’s “behavior, his deeper states of mind, his gradual improvement.” Prison supervisors ceased to be conductors of public theatrics of brutality to become “technicians of behavior: engineers of conduct, orthopaedists of individuality” tasked to produce docile, obedient, and physically apt bodies.<sup>39</sup>

Building on Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, on Carl Schmidt’s notion of the state of exception, and Hannah Arendt’s concept of totalitarianism, Giorgio Agamben has expanded the analysis of the panoptic mechanisms of social control and domination. He has suggested a more capacious definition of the internment camp which has gained traction among scholars of the carceral regime.<sup>40</sup> In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben defines the camp as a delimited “space in which the normal order is de facto suspended and in which whether or not atrocities are committed depends

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<sup>37</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 200-4.

<sup>38</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 249.

<sup>39</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 294.

<sup>40</sup> See J. Biehl, *Vita: Life in the Zone of Social Abandonment*.

not on law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign.”<sup>41</sup> The camp, he argues, is a “zone of anomie”, a grey area between law and the absence of law, a zone of suspension, the ultimate space where the state of exception and sovereign power reach their absolute manifestation.<sup>42</sup> Central to Agamben’s understanding of exception and sovereign power (which rests on the decision over life and death and is manifestly biopolitical in Foucauldian terms) is the notion of abandonment. The camp is a space of exception in that detainees are in a state of abandonment by law, their lives lying bare at the hands of those who have the power to decide whether they live or die.<sup>43</sup>

The model of the carceral archipelago as an extension of the bureaucratic state and its totalitarian mechanisms of domination has elicited divergent responses from scholars of the carceral regime. For students of confinement in the West, Foucault’s model has provided a revolutionary way of dissecting the insidious nature of the prison and of the internment camp. From the first comprehensive study of Stalin’s special settlements by Alexander Solzenitsyn in the 1970s to the most recent explorations of the Gulag by Galina Ivanova, Anne Applebaum, Lynne Viola, Steven Barnes and others, the evocative concept of the carceral archipelago has allowed scholars to account for the massive scale of internment and the workings of the industry of incarceration in the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup>

Scholars of internment camps outside the West have employed the model of the carceral archipelago to show that the insidious mechanisms of surveillance that emerged in the West were reproduced in the colonial world and produced equal versions of the *homo sacer* that European

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<sup>41</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> The exception, avers Agamben, “is neither bound to the rule nor violates it, but is the evidence of a suspended relation that constitutes the rule.” In other words, because the exception is not bound to the law of the state, the acts that take place inside a space of exception cannot break the law. Yet, a kind of “rule” continues to determine what the detainees can and cannot do. In this sense, the exception “constitutes itself as a rule.” While being outside the purview of the law, the exception has nevertheless a “coherence and validity” of its own. It is precisely this bipolar relationship between law and exception that Agamben calls the “inclusive exclusion” nature of sovereign power, which is at the heart of the production of bare life or *homo sacer*. G. Agamben, *State of Exception*, p. 6; Nasser Hussain and Melissa Ptacek, “Thresholds: Sovereignty and the Sacred”, *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2000), p.501-2.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Solzenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973; Galina Ivanova, *Labor Camp Socialism: The Gulag in the Soviet Totalitarian System*. Translated by Carol Flath. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2000; A. Applebaum, *Gulag*; L. Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*; Steven Barnes, *Death Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of the Soviet Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

camps produced. The camps are largely viewed as total systems that worked to break the human spirit, dehumanize, and produce what Achille Mbembe calls the “living dead.”<sup>45</sup> Caroline Elkins study of detention camps during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya sought to illustrate that the Kenyan camps were similar to Nazi death camps and Stalin’s Gulag. Elkins postulated that the British carceral regime in Kenya transformed the detainees into “social nonentities” and the most “dangerous” detainees became “socially dead.”<sup>46</sup> Building on Foucault, Anna Mester’s work on “imperial carcerality” in the Portuguese-Iberian space demonstrates the continuities in the disciplinary violence of the colonial regime in the post-colonial states of Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Mozambique.<sup>47</sup> The few analysts who have discussed Mozambique’s reeducation camps have been tempted to portray the camps as spaces of social death. One commentator has suggested that the reeducation camp of M’telela in Niassa province – where Frelimo’s former vice-president Uria Simango and several political prisoners were executed – was an “extermination camp” with a regime similar to Auschwitz.<sup>48</sup> Barnabé Ncomo has equated the reeducation camps with the Soviet Gulag, where detainees were subjected to the most totalitarian form of punishment.<sup>49</sup> It is as if there were no other alternatives but to suffer, die, or come out socially routed. As João Cabrita put it, “those who did not perish in the camps came out either physically and psychologically damaged, or loathing Frelimo more than when they were sent in.”<sup>50</sup>

The picture of reeducation camps that emerge from the present study shows a more complex reality of the camps as well as the limits of the carceral regime. Scholars of cultures and practices of confinement outside Europe have contested the universality of Foucault’s model of the carceral archipelago.<sup>51</sup> Scholars have argued that, while the modern prison may have replaced

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<sup>45</sup> Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, *Public Culture*, 15,1 (2003), p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*. London: Pimlico, 2005, p. 156.

<sup>47</sup> Anna Mester, “Iberian Atlantic Imperial Carcerality: Vestiges of Colonial Disciplinary Violence in Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Mozambique”, Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Dalmazia Colombo, “Ntelela: Campo di sterminio”, *Missione in Directa*, 3 Marzo 1996 (I thank João Cabrita for kindly giving me a copy of this article and Father Inácio of the Diocese of Lichinga for translating it from Italian into Portuguese).

<sup>49</sup> Barnabé Ncomo, *Uria Simango: Um Homem, Uma Causa*. Maputo: Edições Novafrica, 2004, p. 22-3.

<sup>50</sup> J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 96. Marlon Duncan, “Mozambique: Machel re-education camps teach a tough lesson”, *To the Point*, 3 June 1977; José Ramalho, “Alarm spreads as executions continue”, *To the Point*. 1 June 1979; José Pinto de Sá, “A História inédita dos “centros de reeducação” em Moçambique: Os campos da vergonha”, *Público Magazine*, 277, 25 Junho 1995; D. Colombo, “Ntelela: Campo di sterminio.”

<sup>51</sup> Frank Dikotter, *Crime, Punishment and the Prison in Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002; Frank Dikotter, ed. *Cultures of Confinement: A Global History of the Prison in Asia, Africa, the Middle-East and Latin America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007; F. Bernault, ed. *A History of Prison and Confinement in*

public forms of punishment in Europe and North America, in the colonial world “the prison did not replace but rather supplemented public violence.” First, colonial and postcolonial states continued to rely on spectacular forms of punishment. As Florence Bernault asserted, in Africa, the “colonial penitentiary did not prevent colonizers from using archaic forms of punishment, such as corporal sentences, flogging, and public exhibitions.”<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the elusive mechanisms of the panopticon and the “individualizing nature” of the modern European carceral regime did not take hold in the colonial world. As Daniel Branch put it, in Africa the “prison was punitive not panoptic.”<sup>53</sup> Second, the disciplinary power of the carceral regime outside Europe and North America was more limited – a reflection of the limitations of modern states outside the West.<sup>54</sup> Frank Dikotter argues that in Asia, Latin America, and Africa the barriers between the world inside carceral institutions and the world outside were permeable, and both detainees and guards were never subjected to a totalitarian system. Prisoners and guards colluded, and “religious, social, ethnic and gender hierarchies were replicated inside the prison, undermining the very notion of penal equality to produce social exclusion.”<sup>55</sup>

Building on this scholarship, my study demonstrates that the carceral regime in socialist Mozambique was not an archipelago, but an extension of the society in which it existed. The reeducation and labor camps mirrored the state that created them – a state of big ambitions working within the constraints of austerity and often resorting to the most spectacular forms of public punishment to assert its power. I argue that it was in the intention – and in the intention only – that Mozambique’s camps can be seen as modern disciplinary institutions. In conceiving the reeducation camps, Frelimo authorities – president Samora Machel in particular – had in mind a well-functioning and sophisticated panopticon. Mozambican reformers idealized the camp as an agricultural penal colony that would function as a moral filter through which the “dangerous mixtures” of society would be purified and reinserted as useful members of the nation. For President Machel, camp supervisors were to be “technicians of behavior” and agents of moral

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*Africa*; Daniel Branch, “Imprisonment and Colonialism in Kenya, c. 1930-1952: Escaping the Carceral Archipelago”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 38, 2 (2005): 239-265.

<sup>52</sup> F. Bernault, “The Politics of Enclosure in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa”, in F. Bernault, ed. *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> D. Branch, “Imprisonment and Colonialism in Kenya”, p. 241.

<sup>54</sup> Frank Dikotter, “Introduction”, in F. Dikotter, ed. *Cultures of Confinement*, p. 9; Florence Bernault, “The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa”, in F. Dikotter, ed. *Cultures of Confinement*, p. 88.

<sup>55</sup> F. Dikotter, “Introduction”, in F. Dikotter, ed. *Cultures of Confinement*, p. 11.

change. Consider the following passage from a speech that Machel delivered before anxious detainees awaiting amnesty from the reeducation camp of Chaimite in 1981 and note his vision of what the reeducation camp was supposed to be:

The reeducation center should be a school where professional knowledge should be passed on and made use of. It is the fundamental task of officials in charge of reeducation centers to know the history of each one of the people being re-educated – his life history and his origin, in order to understand why he committed his crimes. Who is his father, mother and brothers, who are his grandfathers, what type of life did they lead? These are essential things that should be taken into account in order to understand why this or that one committed a crime.<sup>56</sup>

President Machel's words could have been in the book of instructions for the supervisors of the French juvenile reform colony on which Foucault built his argument about the modern carceral regime.<sup>57</sup> But Machel's ambition was never realized, and there was very little in the organic functioning of reeducation camps in Mozambique that resembled the Soviet Gulag or the Chinese Laogai on which they were modelled. While the Gulag and the Laogai were established on both an economic and punitive basis,<sup>58</sup> Mozambique's camps had no economic role whatsoever. Inmates' labor consisted mainly in farming, and was exclusively meant for their own subsistence. Their labor was hardly different from what peasants did in ordinary rural areas beyond the camps. This is not meant to suggest that the labor regimen was lax for the victims of the internment, especially considering that they were subjected to labor against their will. Moreover, the iconic elements of internment camps – barbed wires, watch towers, and armies of well-equipped and well-supplied security forces – were absent from Mozambique's camps. Reeducation camps had no fence, no watch tower, and few armed guards. Authorities assumed that the remote location of the camps – often in the middle of the forest to which inmates were transported in the dark cover of the night – was enough to curb escapes.

Given the shortage of personnel, the bureaucratic and policing apparatus of Mozambique's camps was very shallow. Consequently, the camps were not strictly regimented and detainees were

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<sup>56</sup> "Machel's speech on unjust detentions in re-education camps", *Summary of World Broadcasts*, London. 6.10.1981. Part 4, The Middle East and Africa: B. Africa, page ME/6846/B/1.

<sup>57</sup> Consider how Foucault described the organic functioning of the agricultural colony of Mettray, opened near Paris in 1840: "On entering the colony, the child is subjected to a sort of interrogation as to his origins, the position of his family, the offence for which he was brought before the courts and all the other offences that make up his short and often very sad existence. This information is written down on a board on which everything concerning each inmate is noted in turn, his stay at the colony and the place to which he is sent when he leaves." M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 294.

<sup>58</sup> A. Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. xxxviii; G. Ivanova, *Labor Camp Socialism*, p. 69.

not subject to permanent surveillance or a totalitarian panopticon. There was no separation and individualization of bodies; no pedantic annotation of individualized observations; and no classification of inmates (they bore no identification numbers and no plates).<sup>59</sup> This kind of meticulous surveillance requires a bureaucratic machine and material resources that the Frelimo government lacked. Austerity – the order of the day throughout the fifteen years of socialist experiment in Mozambique – conditioned and defined the organic functioning of reeducation camps. Established in the remotest corners of the country, the camps had no electricity and no lights (the insidious backlight from the tower was thus an impossibility). Not only did camps lack a central watchtower, the most basic implements of bureaucracy and professional observation were not available. Camps had no typewriters. Paper and ink were scarce. Camp overseers, who were meant to be “technicians of behavior” and diligent collectors of knowledge, could hardly read and write. As one supervisor of Niassa’s department of reeducation services observed in one of his reports in 1976, the “level of literacy among camp overseers is minute.”<sup>60</sup> Most camp commanders were former guerrillas with no more than a primary-level or literacy training. Much of their work consisted of enforcing military discipline on detainees – the only field in which they were really habilitated – and compel them to till the land. Reeducation camps were porous. Although they were located in remote sites, there was no complete separation of the “dangerous mixtures” from society. In the rural areas where the camps were established, detainees were often in contact with local communities where they exchanged their meager belongings for food, alcoholic drinks, hemp, and sex.

As chapter 5 and 6 will show, despite the panoptic ambitions of Frelimo authorities, it was not the “architectural apparatus” and the unfailing eye of camp supervisors that “induced in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” in reeducation camps.<sup>61</sup> Here that role was played by something else: the remote location of the camps and the wilderness that surrounded them. Rather than the backlighting effect of a tower or armed guards with dogs, it was the roar of lions and other wild beasts that kept detainees

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<sup>59</sup> In his kaffian novel, *Campo de Trânsito*, João Paulo Borges Coelho attributes plate numbers to *reeducandos*, as an effort to illustrate one of the most iconic characteristics of modern internment camps. But, in reality, Mozambique’s camps did not classify detainees in this way. See J.P. Borges Coelho, *Campo de Trânsito*. Maputo: Njira, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fereveiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977

<sup>61</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 201.

in line. Here was a different kind of panopticon, one that was regulated not by a modern “seeing machine” with its abstract mechanisms of biopolitical power, but by the very untamed nature that defied modernity. This was a panopticon that had no regard for bodily legibility, not because it was unwilling, but because it had no capacity given the conditions of austerity in which it had to operate.

This study also maintains that, despite the harshness of internment, Mozambique’s reeducation camps were not locales of social death nor were they designed to eliminate life. Except for the execution of some prominent political dissidents in M’telela (a case that is still clouded in mystery to this day), and the sadistic acts to which detainees were submitted in camps like Ruarua in Cabo Delgado, there is little in reeducation camps that matches the unspeakable horrors associated with the various kinds of Gulags around the world. In Mozambique, rather, the violence of internment was directly related to the chronic shortages in food, decrepit infrastructures, lack of medical assistance, and the neglect of an economically frail government. As I demonstrate in chapter 6, these circumstances did not affect detainees only, they affected camp overseers as well. The anatomy of camp life that I present in chapter 5 – though hardly complete – attempts to give a balanced view of what Mozambique’s camps looked like. Whereas they were not different from the kinds of Gulags that populate public imaginations, they were far from the idyllic schools for the socialist new man and new woman that high-minded Frelimo revolutionaries envisioned.

#### *A Note on Terminology and Comparative Analysis of Mozambique’s Camps*

This study is about the ideological conception of reeducation camps in Mozambique and the material conditions in which the camps were built and administered. It is *not* a study of the carceral regime as a whole. Along with internment camps, Mozambique continued to have prisons and other institutions of incarceration. On paper the camps were supposed to replace prisons as the matrix of Mozambique’s penal system in the long run, but such ambition was never realized. Although the subjects of incarceration in both prisons and camps were almost the same, my study is only concerned with forced labor camps as an intrinsic aspect of the socialist experiment.

Forced labor as a penal instrument of power has a long history in Mozambique. Studies of the Portuguese labor system by Jeanne Penvenne, Allen Isaacman, Valdemir Zamparoni, David Hedges, Eric Alina, and others have shown the pervasive relationship between forced labor,



punishment, and the carceral regime in colonial Mozambique.<sup>62</sup> In general, the relationship between forced or correctional labor and confinement is a huge chapter in the history colonial Africa.<sup>63</sup> The language of idleness and vagrancy to justify confinement of African people by colonial and postcolonial states is part of this long history.<sup>64</sup> However, the model for the reeducation camps in Mozambique has a very specific source. Frelimo introduced the practice of reeducation through labor as early as 1965 in guerrilla bases and training camps during the liberation struggle. Chinese military and political instructors introduced the practice in Frelimo's major training camp and military headquarters of Nachingwea in southern Tanzania. By 1970 reeducation was an established "institution" to correct indiscipline and the dissolute ways of cadres as well as civilian populations under guerrilla authority.<sup>65</sup> After assuming the reins of power in Mozambique, Frelimo institutionalized the pedagogy of revolution experimented during the struggle in an effort to undo the damage of colonial rule and bring about a new order.

Frelimo official records use both *Center* and *Camp* to refer to Mozambique's reeducation camps. The most common parlance in Mozambique is *Campo de Reeducação*. In recalling their experience of detention, some of my interviewees used the term "*campo de concentração*" (concentration camp). Former *reeducando* Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohammed), a well-known pop singer in Mozambique, immortalized the camps in his song *Bilibiza* (after Bilibiza reeducation camp in Cabo Delgado province). As he told me in 2014, "this song is dedicated to all reeducation camps, which I consider concentration camps because they concentrated many Mozambicans. They used these reeducation camps as a way of brain-washing."<sup>66</sup> The term *concentration* carries a very negative and sinister meaning, especially due to its association with the Nazi death camps. Generally, scholars use the term *concentration* to refer to the Nazi death

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<sup>62</sup> Jeanne Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962*. London: James Currey, 1995; Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996; Valdemir Zamparoni, "Entre Narros e Mulungos: Colonialismo e Paisagem Social em Lourenço Marques c. 1890-1940", Ph.D. Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1998; David Hedges, coord. *História de Moçambique Volume 2: Moçambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930-1961*. Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1999; Eric Alina, *Slavery by any other name: African Life under Company Rule in Mozambique*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Florence Bernault, "The Politics of Enclosure in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa", in Florence Bernault, ed. *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003, pp. 1-53.

<sup>64</sup> Keletso Atkins, *The Moon is Dead, Give us our Money: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993.

<sup>65</sup> See "O Direito e a Justiça nas Zonas Libertadas", *Justiça Popular*, 8/9 (Jan-Jun 1984): 11-14.

<sup>66</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze (Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 November 2014.

factories and the term *labor camps* to designate the Soviet penal colonies during Stalin's reign of terror. Because the two systems represent the most extreme case of mass internment, they often capture the public imagination whenever the term *camp* or *concentration* is evoked.<sup>67</sup> Without discarding Mazuze's own understanding of his experience of internment, as a well learned individual, he was tapping on a widely shared imagery of detention camp. Regardless of the specific nature of internment, the term *concentration* also serves to amplify the lived memory of a traumatic experience as well as to emphasize the severity of the detention regimen.<sup>68</sup> The analysts who have commented on Mozambique's camps have fallen in this trap.<sup>69</sup>

Although many people died in the camps – either due to covert executions or the harsh conditions of internment – Mozambique's camps were not, by any stretch of imagination, closer to German camps or Stalin's Gulag. If one takes the death toll and the number of people who revolved through the camps as valid comparative tools, Mozambique's camps would rank as the least severe in a long list that may include camps in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, to mention only those socialist regimes with whom Mozambique authorities had close ties and from whom they gathered expertise on mass internment. Nevertheless, the less bleak character of Mozambique's camps compared to their more sinister counterparts does not set them completely apart from the larger family of modern institutions of mass internment, which derive – for the better or worse – from the mechanism of social control that consists of concentrating many people in one place against their will. It is under this observation that a comparative examination of Mozambique's camps with the Soviet Gulag or the Chinese labor camps needs to be situated. In my estimation, such comparative exercise should not be oriented towards an assessment of the extent to which Mozambique's camps were equally austere or not in relation to the Gulag. To those who experienced reeducation like Mazuze, such quest is irrelevant because it presupposes, in a certain way, the measurement of suffering.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See Norval Morris and David Rothman, ed. *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>68</sup> Klaus Muhlhahn, "Remembering a Bitter Past: The Trauma of China's Labor Camps, 1949-1978", *History and Memory*, 16, 2 (2004): 108-139.

<sup>69</sup> D. Colombo, "Ntelela: Campo di sterminio"; J. Pinto de Sá, "A História inédita dos "centros de reeducação" em Moçambique"; J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*; B. Ncomo, *Uria Simango*.

<sup>70</sup> See Arthur Kleimann, Veena Daas, and Margaret Lock, eds. *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. J. Biehl, *Vita: Life in the Zone of Social Abandonment*.

Rather, the central question is what kind of carceral regimen the inmates were subjected to in Mozambique and how that regimen relates to the larger field of mass encampment to which the history of Mozambique's camps belong. The architects of the reeducation program in Mozambique spoke an ecumenical language of reform situated within a global ideology of social transformation that was neither exclusively socialist or capitalist, although it was more salient in the eastern wing of the Cold War divide.<sup>71</sup> In fact, Frelimo officials were convinced that the battle to clean the cities of anti-socials and their rehabilitation was an important contribution to a global socialist revolution, and as such a contribution to the “scientific theory” of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>72</sup> However, the camps and the socio-political dynamics that produced them are essentially a Mozambican phenomenon. While the ideology behind the camps derived from a tapestry of global experiences to which Mozambique authorities were exposed, the motivations and the organic character of the camps emerged from the particular context of the country's historical trajectory from a Portuguese colony to an independent state. Their physical and structural architecture, as well as the organization of daily life inside the camps reflected the general state of Mozambican society during the first decade of independence: a period marked by the enthusiasm of independence as well as by chronic shortages, hunger, and social strife.

### **Urban Cleanup Campaigns and the Politics of Morality in Postcolonial Africa**

If Mozambique's internment camps belong to a global history of the mass carceral regime, the anxieties that animated Frelimo's campaigns against urban indecency – the main source of the victims of the pipeline – have a very particular African trajectory. Thirty-five out of fifty-three states in Africa declared themselves socialist at some point in their short history as independent nations between the late 1950s and mid 1980s.<sup>73</sup> Most of them pursued various kinds of schemes to re-engineer their societies in the name of cultural renaissance, nation building, and modernity.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; Slavoz Žizek, *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. Verso, 1991; James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> See “A Contribuição do Nosso Partido para o Enriquecimento do Marxismo-Leninismo”, *Voz da Revolução*, 70 (1980): 21-24.

<sup>73</sup> Anne Pitcher and Kelly Askew, “African Socialisms and Postsocialisms”, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 76, 1 (2006): 1-14.

<sup>74</sup> See Donald Donham, *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*. Oxford: James Currey, 1999; Mohamed Camara, *His Master's Voice: Mass Communication and Single Party Politics in Guinea*

They dedicated inordinate amounts of time and resources reorganizing rural settlements; sending unwanted urbanites to rural villages; and regimenting even the most intimate aspects of social life (marriages, dressing styles and various modes of self-fashioning).<sup>75</sup> Yet, these reformist efforts were not confined to socialist regimes. The “authenticité” movement of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, and the anti-miniskirts and anti-prostitution movements across the continent – from Hastings Banda’s Malawi to Idi Amin’s Uganda – were all part of a general concern for social and moral reform in postcolonial Africa.<sup>76</sup> This is an aspect that social scientists, obsessed with the pathologies of African bureaucracies and the politics of extraversion of some African statesmen, have by and large failed to see.<sup>77</sup> Among many other aspects, the political landscape of late colonial and early postcolonial Africa was marked by moralistic efforts to reform societies more than by belly politics.<sup>78</sup> In East and Central Africa, for example – from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, down to Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe – ethnic associations and political activists saw the modern lifestyles of their youth and the increasing autonomy of women in urban spaces as a serious challenge to their political aspirations.<sup>79</sup> While they may have disagreed over the scale of their politics (ethnic versus national), for East and Central African political activists, moral comportment, decency in dressing styles, temperance and asceticism in one’s personal conduct

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*under Sékou Touré*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005; Jay Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009; Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in the 1960s Dar es Salaam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011; Mike McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot, eds. *Generations Past: Youth in East African History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010; J. Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*; A. Ivaska, *Cultured States*. For one of the early discussions of these campaigns in East and Central Africa, especially against women, see Audrey Wipper, “African Women, Fashion, and Scapegoating”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 6, 2 (1972):329-349.

<sup>76</sup> Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935-1972*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Derek Peterson and Edgar Taylor. “Rethinking the State in Idi Amin’s Uganda: The Politics of Exhortation”, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7, 1 (2012): 58-82; See also N. Tutashinda, *As Manifestações da ‘Autenticidade’ Africana*. Cedernos Ulmero, 1. Lisboa, 1978.

<sup>77</sup> See Jean-François Bayart, “Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion”, *African Affairs*, 99, 395 (2000): 217-267; Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009; Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001; Patrick Chabal, *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Oxford: James Currey, 1999. For a critique of this scholarship – generally characterized as ‘afropessimism’ – see, among many others, Ernest Harsch, “African States in Social and Historical Context”, *Sociological Forum*, 12, 4 (1997), p. 674 and Michael Kalström, “On the Aesthetics and Dialogics of Power in the Postcolony”, *Africa*, 73, 1, (2003), p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> J. Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, p. 15; D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p. 35-6. Derek Peterson has traced the roots of East Africa’s moral politics in the anxieties ushered by the urban expansion after the Second World War as well as the cultural challenges that the advent of national independence posed to conservative ethnic patriots.

<sup>79</sup> D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p. 285.

were key components for building political constituencies, composing civil societies, and upholding a respectable citizenry.<sup>80</sup>

Mozambique's nationalist leaders were not disconnected from these developments. Frelimo was formed in Tanzania by Mozambican political exiles in 1962. This was an exhilarating time in East Africa – and in Africa in general. In Tanzania, nationalist politics were deeply enmeshed with moralist campaigns to reform people's behavior. It was from here that, for more than a decade (1962-1975), Frelimo carried out the liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonial regime. Their training camps were sites of pilgrimage for young African revolutionaries eager to learn the art of revolutionary warfare.<sup>81</sup> Leaders of the TANU Youth League and students from the University of Dar es Salaam (among them the Ugandan future president Yoweri Museveni) were frequent guests in Nachingwea (Frelimo's main rear base in southern Tanzania). Surely the exchanges that took place during these visits encouraged the cross-fertilization of ideas. As Frelimo leaders pondered the future of Mozambique in the party's headquarters in Dar es Salaam or in Nachingwea, they followed closely the debates around TANU's 1967 Arusha Declaration, the *ujamaa* villagization scheme, and the likes of *Operation Vijana* (a campaign against urban decadence and indecent dressing launched in Dar es Salaam in 1968).<sup>82</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that the vocabularies that TANU activists employed to label their purge targets (bloodsuckers, parasites, or anti-socials) permeated Frelimo's anti-urban discourse in independent Mozambique.<sup>83</sup>

However, Frelimo took its reformist project to the extreme. As Jocelyn Alexander and Gary Kynoch observed, within southern Africa, Frelimo “stands out for the ideological fervor of its early years of rule.”<sup>84</sup> In a recent short survey on Mozambique's history, historian Malyn Newitt was

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<sup>80</sup> John Lonsdale, “Threads and Patches: Moral and Political Argument in Kenya”, in Alessandro Triulzi and M. Cristina Ercolessi, eds. *State, Power, and New Political Actors in Postcolonial Africa*. Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2004, pp. 27-52; D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p. 286-9.

<sup>81</sup> John Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 94.

<sup>82</sup> On *ujamaa*, see Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. On *Operation Vijana* and other anti-indecency campaigns in Dar es Salaam, see A. Ivaska, *Cultured States*, p. 87 and Andrew Burton, “The Haven of Peace Purged: Tackling the Undesirable and Unproductive Poor in Dar es Salaam, ca. 1950-1980s”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40, 1 (2007): 119-151.

<sup>83</sup> See James Brennan, “Blood Enemies: Exploitation and Urban Citizenship in the Nationalist Political Thought of Tanzania, 1958-1975”, *Journal of African History*, 47 (2006): 389-413.

<sup>84</sup> Jocelyn Alexander and Gary Kynoch, “Introduction: Histories and Legacies of Punishment in Southern Africa”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 3 (2011), p. 410.

puzzled by Machel's puritanical speeches in the first years of Mozambique's independence, in which the president exhorted party cadres and citizens in general to detach themselves from material indulgence and aim for a higher existence of self-denial and moral rectitude. Newitt posited that "Machel's speeches read like *evangelical sermons*, representing Mozambique's quest for independence as a *moral crusade* as well as a political revolution" (my emphasis).<sup>85</sup> Newitt concluded that while Machel's political discourse resonated with other nationalist leaders like Amílcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, Machel's speeches were dominated by "moral, somewhat puritanical, exhortations."<sup>86</sup> In fact, a close examination of Frelimo's political writings since 1968, particularly Samora Machel's speeches from 1970, reveal a deep seeded obsession with moral reform. Like most of his closest mission-educated comrades, Machel saw and projected himself as the moral paragon of the society he envisioned.<sup>87</sup> From his ascension as president of Frelimo in May 1970 onward, Machel was an energetic preacher of the catechism of self-improvement and moral purification. He believed this was a necessary path for the emancipation of Man and the full realization of the revolution. His tireless exhortations for Mozambicans to wage an internal struggle for self-perfection and self-discipline were not disconnected from his broader politics. The anthropologist and longtime militant of Frelimo, José Luís Cabaço, noted recently that under Machel, Frelimo's "ideological struggle, with a strong emphasis on moral values, was elevated to the consciousness of each militant" in an "internal dialectics between the present and the past." Cabaço argues that this moralistic ideology was "not so distant from some protestant missions that opened the doors of modernity and nationalism" to Frelimo leading cadres.<sup>88</sup>

Taking its cue from Newitt and Cabaço, the first chapter of this dissertation traces the roots of Frelimo's fervent ideology in the Protestant background of the party's most important leaders.<sup>89</sup> With very few exceptions, they all came from southern Mozambique; they spoke the same vernacular language; and were raised in Protestant families and educated in Protestant missionary schools in the 1940s and 1950s. This generational, ethnic, linguistic, and intellectual cohesiveness

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<sup>85</sup> Malyn Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 156-7.

<sup>86</sup> M. Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique*, p. 157.

<sup>87</sup> See S. LeFanu, *S is for Samora*, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup> José Cabaço, *Moçambique: Identidades, Colonialismo e Libertação*. Maputo: Marimbiq, 2010, p. 289.

<sup>89</sup> A few decades ago, Aquino de Bragança and Jacques Depelchina urged scholars to interrogate and not take for granted the history of Frelimo as it is presented in the official historiography. Aquino de Bragança e Jacques Depelchin, "Da Idealização da FRELIMO à Compreensão da História de Moçambique", *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 5/6 (1986): 29-52. Also published in english: "From the Idealization of Frelimo to the Understanding of the Recent History of Mozambique", *African Journal of Political Economy*, 1 (1986):162-180.

– which is hardly present in other nationalist movements in southern Africa – facilitated the consolidation of Frelimo’s ideology and political culture in ways that did not occur in the multi-ethnic and multiracial ANC or MPLA, much less in TANU. Their adoption of Marxism during the struggle – particularly the Maoist version of Marxism – offered the young revolutionaries a more powerful idiom to articulate an old project of social reform that emerged in the beginning of the twentieth century in southern Mozambique. I argue that the combination of Maoism with Frelimo leaders’ protestant background resulted in a markedly messianic vision of revolution and social transformation loaded with contradictions.

To fully understand the contradictions and violent modes of Frelimo’s governmentality<sup>90</sup> during the socialist experiment in Mozambique we need to take into consideration the messianic, salvationist predisposition of the party’s ideology and political culture. Rather than professional politicians and public servants, Frelimo leaders held themselves as saviors entitled to deliver the “masses” from darkness, social degeneracy, and cultural alienation.<sup>91</sup> As vanguards pursuing an “inner-worldly political kingdom” – the idyllic classless society free from the exploitation of men by men – Frelimo leaders, like the Bolsheviks and Chinese revolutionaries before them, “defined themselves as a *moral elite*.”<sup>92</sup> For them, political leadership was not a professional field of governance, but a position from which the ontological problem of human existence and salvation could be realized.<sup>93</sup> They saw the revolution as a *moral crusade* to elevate society from darkness.

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<sup>90</sup> Foucault defined governmentality as the “ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.” Michel Foucault, “Governmentality”, in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds. *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> As Margaret Hall and Paul Young observed in their study of postcolonial Mozambique, Frelimo leaders had “an image of themselves as an embattled vanguard of ‘fighters against darkness and superstition’ surrounded by legions of enemies, shepherding the masses towards progress and enlightenment.” M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 74.

<sup>92</sup> Klaus-Georg Riegel, “Marxism-Leninism as a Political Religion”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6, 1 (2005), p. 98.

<sup>93</sup> This argument rests on the concept of “political religion”, which Emilio Gentile defines as “the sacralization of a political system founded on an unchallengeable monopoly of power, ideological monism, and the obligatory and unconditional subordination of the individual and the collectivity to its code of commandments.” The sacralization of politics in modern society, claims Gentile, occurs when “an entity such as a nation, state, race, class, party, or movement is transformed into a sacred entity” and it “claims for itself the prerogative to determine the meaning and fundamental aim of human existence for individuals and the collectivity.” Rising from the ebullient political environment of 19th century Europe, political ideologies such as nationalism and philosophical doctrines such as socialism gave birth to political projects that took a secular religious dimension. Fascism and Marxism-Leninism are the two extreme examples of sacralization of politics in the 20th century. Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*.

In their estimation, before Portuguese conquest, people lived under the mantle of feudalism and superstition. Under Portuguese rule, they were all oppressed and humiliated. After centuries of perpetual gloom, the party brought enlightenment, political awakening and self-awareness.<sup>94</sup> Historian Igal Halfin has characterized this rendering of historical time by socialist revolutionaries as “Marxist eschatology”, which he defines as “a narrative that structured historical time as an odyssey of human consciousness.” The end-point of this odyssey, he writes, is the “bright light of Communism, a symbol of human metamorphosis into the New Man.”<sup>95</sup>

Under Frelimo, the Marxist eschatology took the form of a fable or, as João Paulo Borges Coelho calls it, a “liberation script.”<sup>96</sup> More than a political organization, the party was like a religious congregation to which all Mozambicans had to dedicate their loyalty and devotion. To be Mozambican was to obey the party. The opposite was to side with the *enemy* to undermine the revolution. As Margaret Hall and Paul Young put it, “the enemy was identified according to a taxonomy of moral failings – laziness, corruption, and self-indulgence.”<sup>97</sup> Led by the party and enlightened by the experience of the liberation struggle, the “masses” had to wage a battle with themselves in order to cleanse their mentalities from the damage that the years of darkness and degeneration under the “old society” imparted on them.<sup>98</sup> The construction of a new society and a

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Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, p. xv- xiv; See also Erich Voegelin, *Political Religions*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986 [1938].

<sup>94</sup> Writing in similar lines, Mozambican sociologist Elísio Macamo argues that Frelimo was driven by an “eschatological nationalism.” See Elísio Macamo, “Power, Conflict and Citizenship: Mozambique’s Contemporary Struggles”, *Citizenship Studies*, 21, 1 (2017), p. 198.

<sup>95</sup> “The Marxist eschatological vision prophesied a radical reform of the human soul, the unification of work and thought, rendering man both an active and a cognizant creature. The New Man could emerge only from the ranks of the proletariat, the class of virtuous toilers destined by Marx to play the part of messiah. Atomized and blinded by capitalism, the proletariat embodied the promise of redemption, not the actuality. Consciousness had to be mastered for emancipation to become possible. Self-awareness (or ‘class-consciousness’, as the Marxists put it) was carried aloft as the messianic standard. Once proletarians achieved this state, the Revolution was won and the path to Communism achieved.” Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh press, 2000, p. 1-2 and 6.

<sup>96</sup> João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History of Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes”, *Kronos*, 39 (2014), p. 2. Terence Ranger used the term “patriotic history” to characterize the same eschatological reading of history by ZANU in Zimbabwe. See Terence Ranger, “Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 2 (2004): 215-234.

<sup>97</sup> M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 75. See MHN – Samora Machel, “Desalojemos o Inimigo Interno do Nosso Aparelho de Estado”, Texto do Discurso Proferido pelo Presidente Samora Machel no Comício Popular de 18 de Março, 1980.

<sup>98</sup> MHN – “Fazer de Todo o País uma Zona Libertada”, *Tempo*, 361, 4 Set. 1977.



new man was dependent on purifying the people and elevating society to a new moral plane.<sup>99</sup> The reeducation camps were conceived for those who had not been awakened from darkness and cultural alienation by the liberating effect of the revolution. For these unworthy individuals, membership of the national brotherhood was only possible through the ascetic and purifying ritual of public repentance, moral renewal, collective manual labor and the hardship of taming nature in remote labor camps. Frelimo leaders expected people to emerge from reeducation camps as reformed new men and new women, “politically conscious, physically apt, and mentally sound.”<sup>100</sup> However, as this study demonstrates, rather than delivering social transformation, this idealistic vision produced new forms of oppression and the rustication of thousands of urban citizens. Frelimo’s promise of salvation and liberation came with new chains.

### *Urban Citizenship and the Politics of Enmity and Denunciation*

Frelimo’s reformist project was not a simple top-down process with the party-state playing as the masterful agent and the ‘masses’ as passive recipients of state directives. Local party agents, workers, and ordinary urban residents employed their skills, their personal ambitions, and their own understanding of morality to engage, recast, and ultimately shape Frelimo’s agenda. On the ground where detentions of so-called anti-socials and enemies occurred, ordinary people acted enthusiastically to carry out the urban cleansing campaigns often beyond the control of party leadership. These social forces – which operated largely outside ideological concerns – shaped the demographic composition of the inmate population of reeducation camps. Among the former detainees in reeducation and labor camps that I interviewed in Maputo and Niassa for this study, few mentioned Frelimo or a government institution as being responsible for their detention. Rather, most identified by name the person behind their arrest – and the person was often a neighbor, a co-worker, a schoolmate, a friend, and sometimes a relative. This does not mean that my informants do not attribute responsibility to the party-state for their traumatic experience. But they also recognize that individuals took advantage of the cleanup campaigns to target personal enemies or settle old accounts with people. During *Operação Produção* in 1983, ordinary people welcomed

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<sup>99</sup> “Purifiquemos as Nossas Fileiras para Avançar Rumo ao Socialismo”, *Notícias*, 9 Maio 1978. On purity and danger, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge Classics, 2002; B. Moore, *Moral Purity and Persecution in History*.

<sup>100</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 Jan. 1976.

the campaign with great enthusiasm (see chapter 3). They not only supported the cleanup campaign, many were active participants in the purges against their fellow city dwellers.

Understanding why ordinary people participate actively in autocratic regimes' efforts to identify unwanted subpopulations objectified as enemies or an obstacle to social change is one of the most perplexing questions.<sup>101</sup> As scholars of modern authoritarianism have convincingly argued, "social doctrines do not account for the intensity of activities such [authoritarian] leaders foster."<sup>102</sup> Even in the most authoritarian regimes, individuals are not "merely passive subjects of authority." People have "some real space for action and reaction."<sup>103</sup> While it is important to ask why Mozambique's ruling party was so invested in transforming the minds and worldview of Mozambican citizens by enforcing a violent program of reeducation-by-labor, it is also imperative to inquire into the motivations that drove their followers to participate in the purges so enthusiastically. Like Lynn White, who studied mob violence during China's Cultural Revolution, I ask: "if high leadership was the only cause (of violence), why were so many followers enthusiastic enough to obey orders for violence against their neighbors?"<sup>104</sup> Why did ordinary urban Mozambican citizens denounce, accuse, and hunt their fellow neighbors, schoolmates, working colleagues, including friends and relatives. As we experience a time of renewed social unrest and the re-emergence of conservative politics and radical partisanship across the globe, this line of historical inquiry is timely. While I recognize the important role of what James Scott calls 'high politics' in fueling social divisions (which often result in unspeakable violence), I maintain that 'low politics', that is, the everyday relations among ordinary people play a greater role in shaping the outcome of programs that seek to re-engineer societies.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Lynn White, *Policies of Chaos: The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989; James Aho, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994; Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996; Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, eds. *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789-1989*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997; Paul Corner, ed. *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes*; Barrington Moore, *Moral Purity and Persecution in History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000; Wendy Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Lynn White, *Policies of Chaos*, p. 6. See also Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Corner, "Introduction", p. 5.

<sup>104</sup> L. White, *Policies of Chaos*, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 5; Joel Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## Methods and Sources

This study is placed between the boundaries of social and intellectual history. The study grew out of my deep commitment to rescue the voices, faces, names, and trials of the “defeated of history” in Mozambique’s recent past. Like social historians committed to a history from below and the tribulations of everyday life, my goal is to sharpen “our sights for history’s victims and the multiple contours of their suffering.”<sup>106</sup> As a study in the tradition of social history, this dissertation explores the cultural and material conditions of life, and most importantly, it gives voice to marginalized and silenced historical actors. My interrogation of the ideology and political thought that produced the material conditions that victimized the nameless mass of people sent to reeducation and labor camps led me to explore the production, circulation and debate of discourses and actionable ideas.<sup>107</sup> My engagement with these two sub-fields informs my research methods. Over the course of this project I conducted sixty interviews in Mozambique with former camp inmates and former government officers (including journalists who covered the events in the 1970s and 1980s). I consulted five archives in Maputo and Niassa and made extensive use of the online database *Mozambique History Net* (MHN). In Maputo I consulted the newspaper collection deposited at the *Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique* (AHM, the national history archive); the archive of Maputo Province Administration (AGGPM); the Center for Documentation Samora Machel; the private archive of *Jornal Notícias* (AJN); and the private archive of the now defunct *Tempo* magazine (ART). In Niassa I consulted the archive of the Provincial Administration (AGGPN).

The Niassa archive was the richest collection that I consulted for this project. Despite its messy organization, the archive contains collections of administrative files covering a wide range of topics, including reports on the administration of reeducation camps; lists of camp inmates and their supposed crimes; letters of appeal to the governor by ordinary citizens asking for the release of their detained relatives; and more. The collection of documents in the AGGPM also contain confidential circulars, meeting minutes, official reports, and party-state resolutions on the cleanup campaigns and the administration of the camps. While the archives in Maputo are kept in relatively

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<sup>106</sup> Alf Ludtke, “Introduction: What is the History of Everyday Life and who are its Practitioners?” in Alf Ludtke, ed. *The History of Everyday Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> As Derek Peterson has argued, “discourses – self-serving and partisan as they are – have real social and material lives. Texts, poetry, song, narratives and other discursive genres concretize changeable social relations, inspire action, invite emulation, and do work in the real world of human ambition and action.” Derek Peterson, “Conversion and the Alignments of Colonial Culture”, *Social Sciences and Missions*, 24 (2011), p. 215

better conditions, the archive in Niassa is in dire circumstances. Here, the bureaucratic paperwork produced since independence has been dumped in a humid basement and a dusty verandah along with outmoded equipment. All the files are unorganized and uncatalogued. Each of these archives provide partial views of the reeducation program. The most comprehensive archive of the camps is likely in the ministry of the interior, but it continues to be inaccessible. Until scholars gain access to the material potentially available in that archive, my study remains the only comprehensive study of the camps.

From the beginning of this research, I embraced Frank Ankersmit's manifesto that the "historian always has obligations towards both the past and the present."<sup>108</sup> This methodological cue is particularly important to bear in mind considering that the subject matter of this study has not "cooled down" completely.<sup>109</sup> The experience of reeducation and labor camps is not only very recent – the last reeducation camp was closed only 26 years ago – it is also still contentious and sensitive in present-day Mozambique. In central and northern Mozambique, evocations of the violence of the camps have political currencies for opposition politics.<sup>110</sup> But the most significant lesson that I take from Ankersmit's manifesto is the need to produce a history that is "meaningful" in the present. In 2012, as I was beginning to formulate the first questions for this research, former president Joaquim Chissano told reporters that "it is a pity that we no longer have reeducation camps" in Mozambique. He claimed that the camps were established to rehabilitate criminals, not to torture people. "We created the camps for assassins and criminals", he said, "the camps were a place where people farmed, they had their income, were educated and learned crafts."<sup>111</sup> Two years earlier, then prime-minister Aires Ali told members of the parliament in Maputo that the experience of reeducation camps should "inspire" the reformation of the country's prison system.<sup>112</sup> These comments do not speak to the lack of objective knowledge about the past only. They also indicate the dangers of silencing the past.<sup>113</sup> One of the dangers is the idealization of an

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<sup>108</sup> Frank Ankersmit, "Manifesto for an Analytical Political History", in Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan, and Alun Munslow, eds. *Manifestos for History*. London: Routledge, 2007, p. 180.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Strayer, "Introduction", in Marc Block, *The Historian's Craft*. New York: VintageBooks, 1953, p. vii.

<sup>110</sup> See Victor Igreja, "Politics of Memory, Decentralisation and Recentralization in Mozambique", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 2 (2013):313-335.

<sup>111</sup> " 'Pena que não continuemos a ter campos de reeducação', diz Joaquim Chissano", *DW África*, 29 Set. 2012. <http://www.dw.com/pt/>. Accessed March 23, 2016.

<sup>112</sup> "Campos de Reeducação devem inspirar novo Sistema Prisional", *Media Fax*, 8 Out. 2010. <http://macua.blogs.com/> Accessed March 23, 2016.

<sup>113</sup> M.R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

unfulfilled – and unrealized – ideal. As I demonstrate in chapters 5 and 6, few detainees were interned for serious criminal acts. The majority were there for petty trivialities. In present-day Mozambique, it is not only politicians who have distorted ideas about what these camps were. The general public is also ignorant about the camps. The lack of outrage from the public when the two statesmen made their comments illustrates how little is known or remembered, particularly in the capital city in the south. Apart from addressing what historian Dipesh Chakrabarty calls “historical wounds”<sup>114</sup>, this study is an attempt to remind people of the human cost of high-minded schemes of social engineering. Political ideas need to be more than good in their intentions to be effective policies.

#### *Note on Interviews*

In 2012, Mozambican filmmaker Licínio Azevedo launched a much acclaimed feature film called *Virgem Margarida*. The film tells the story of a rural virgin teenager named Margarida who is arrested as a prostitute in Maputo in the early days of independence. The girl had gone to downtown Maputo to purchase her trousseau and was caught in a police round up. Along with hundreds of other women, Margarida is sent to an internment camp. For several days, the detainees travel northward on a packed bus without knowing *why* they were arrested and *where* they are being taken. An armed convoy accompanies them throughout the journey. In Nampula province (central Mozambique) the bus stops and the detainees are transferred to a military truck. Several other women – presumably arrested in towns of central and northern Mozambique – have also been assembled at the transit spot. Like the unfortunate southerners, the only possessions these women have are the clothes they were wearing when they were arrested. Clumsily, they all climb aboard waiting trucks and the cars fume for several hours until the final destination.

The reeducation camp is in the middle of the jungle, with no single standing infrastructure. The camp commissar is a woman who is also assisted by female guards. Although a few men armed with AK47 rifles can be spotted here and there, women in military garb run the camp. They distribute hoes and axes to all *reeducandas* and instruct them to start building their huts and prepare the fields to grow their food. A while later, the reeducatees receive their black khaki uniforms (trousers, shirts and boots for some) and the ordeal of camp life begins. The film reaches its climax

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<sup>114</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, “History and the Politics of Recognition”, in K. Jenkins, S. Morgan, and A. Munslow, eds. *Manifestos for History*, p. 77-87.

when a lion devours one of the reeducatees, when she is attempting to escape, and the male political commissar responsible for overseeing all camps in the area rapes Margarida after learning that she was a virgin. In the end, the reeducatees convince the camp commander to release them and they all march out of the camp.

When I began this research I envisioned my work as a scholarly reproduction of what Licínio Azevedo had achieved in *Virgem Margarida* – a simple narrative of what these camps looked like and the injustice and violence that many innocent people like Margarida were subjected to. I had few illusions about the limitations of my project given the sensitivity of the subject. I also did not expect to find any official archival record about the camps. This is not only a sensitive topic, it is also part of the chapter of Mozambique’s recent history that the ruling party would rather have erased from public and historical memory.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, I imagined that the project would be entirely based on oral interviews, newspapers, and the only two fictional representations of the camps (the film and João Paulo Borges Coelho’s novel *Campo de Trânsito* or Transit Camp).<sup>116</sup> As I prepared my field research plans, I hoped that the film would prepare the ground for my research. But the film had little circulation in Mozambique and in Maputo, where I started the research, very few people knew about it.

Nevertheless, I carried a copy of the film with me during my fieldwork in 2014 and 2015.<sup>117</sup> I also carried a copy of the weekly-magazine *Tempo*, with a special edition of the first visit that President Machel made to Niassa’s reeducation camps in October and November 1979. The magazine contains photographs of the camps and several speeches that the President gave during his visit. These two tools not only facilitated my initial interaction with my informants, they also enriched the content of my interviews and opened unanticipated angles for my research. Although I did not show the film to every one of my sixty interviewees, whenever the conditions were suitable I projected it from my laptop.

One such occasion happened in December 2014. After our first interview, Ché Mafuiane insisted that I go see his friend Ana Maria. Ché was a former *reeducando* at Chaimite and Ruarua in Cabo Delgado province. I knew him through Salimo Mohamed. Both had been together in

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<sup>115</sup> Anne Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Post-socialist Mozambique”, *Africa* 76, 1 (2006): 88-112.

<sup>116</sup> João Paulo Borges Coelho, *Campo de Trânsito*. Maputo: Ndjira, 2010.

<sup>117</sup> I thank Professor Fernando Arenas for offering me a copy of *Virgem Margarida*.

Chaimite in 1979 and remained friends ever since. This is how my pool of informants was built – for such a sensitive topic, this was the most sensible way to conduct the research. But it also made me realize that a network of social bonds that developed inside the camps endures up to the present. And Ana Maria was part of that network. She and Ché had been a couple in the past. She was a former *reeducanda* at M’sawize reeducation camp in Niassa, one of the only two camps established exclusively for women. Although Azevedo does not mention the name of the camp in his film, the events on which he based the film certainly took place in M’sawize or in Ilumba (both in Niassa). The circumstances in which Ana Maria was arrested were not totally different from the fictional protagonist of the film. But unlike Margarida, Ana Maria was a sophisticated and outgoing urban girl. In 1977, she was eighteen years old and a high-school student in one of Maputo’s best schools. One night she went to dance with her boyfriend at the famous nightclub Búzio (today Coconuts). When the police appeared unannounced, she was one of the many women arrested as prostitutes. Her nightly dress earned her two years of detention without trial. She was released from M’sawize in 1979. Having her see the film and talk about her experience made it possible to sift fact from fiction.

“This film is very beautiful compared to what really happened in reeducation camps”, she reacted when the film was over.<sup>118</sup> I had observed her reactions as the film was rolling on my laptop in the verandah of her unfinished house, taking note whenever a scene caused her to shake her head in disapproval or nod in approbation. At times, she would utter a comment, not to me, but to Ché Mafuiane, who always found an excuse to convince his boss in the bakery where he worked to accompany me to interview sessions. I sat in the back, notebook and pen in my hands, as the two old friends watched the moving picture attentively, puffing hemp smoke and sipping iced brandy. Most of my interviewees who had been to reeducation camps are vigorous hemp smokers. As Ana Maria told me, “if you did not smoke or drink there you could go crazy and die.” They both pointed out several flaws or misrepresentations in the film, while recognizing that many aspects of camp life depicted in the piece were quite accurate. The most revealing moment of our conversation was when Ana Maria told me that one of her close inmates was a lady named Flora, whom she claimed was President Samora Machel’s younger sister. She also told me that Armando Guebuza – the interior minister and architect of the camps – had a relative detained in one of the

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<sup>118</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

camps in Niassa. Frelimo's vice-president Marcelino dos Santos, and Politburo member and deputy minister of defense Sebastião Mabote also had relatives in the camps.

These were not just astonishing revelations. They changed my whole conception of the reeducation program. Influenced by Lynne Viola's monograph, *The Unknown Gulag*, I began this project to search for the evidence to make a scholarly case for Mozambique's unknown Gulag.<sup>119</sup> Viola's well-researched description of the Russia's special settlements and Azevedo's *Virgem Margarida* put me on a very specific and strictly defined path. If in fact the top leaders of Mozambique's socialist revolution had their close relatives detained in reeducation camps, then there was more to the reeducation program than the story of the unknown Gulag. The very socialist experiment in Mozambique had to be seen with different lenses.

It was in the "phantoms" of Niassa's archive that I uncovered the particulars of the reeducation program and I confirmed the revelations of my gracious and hemp smoking interviewees. Six months after my interview with Ana Maria, I found myself sitting in the verandah of the government building of Niassa province, where part of the archive was kept. I was flipping over one of the reports that the commissar of M'sawize reeducation camp sent to the local department of reeducation services (DPSRN). The file was a list of all the children and their mothers living in detention in the camp. An *x* marked with a blue pen (the only hand-written mark on the document) highlighted the raw number 62. It noted: "Child: Boaventura Aurora/Age: 12 months/Mother: Flora Moisés Machel."<sup>120</sup> This was one among several reports that confirmed my informants' revelations. Several high-ranking party officials sent their close relatives away to reeducation camps. Apart from his sister, President Machel sent his seventeen-year-old daughter to Niassa for reeducation. One of his younger brothers and one of his nieces also served time in reeducation in Niassa.<sup>121</sup> They all committed the moral offense of self-indulgence and hedonism. The women got pregnant out of wedlock. The brother allegedly committed adultery. Some members of the Politburo also had relatives in the camps for similar offenses.

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<sup>119</sup> L. Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*.

<sup>120</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Relação das crianças que se encontram nos campos com as suas mães. s.d.

<sup>121</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Correspondência expedita, 1979-1981.





Fig. 2. *The Archive room in Niassa, 2015. (© Benedito Machava)*

Although these were high profile cases, I found out that people accused of all kinds of moral offenses populated the reeducation camps of Niassa. Very few people were there for murder, robbery, or political opposition to the regime. A considerable number of cases were related to the most mundane and intimate aspects of social life. Although the archival record is very fragmentary, it became clear that the camps were not simple imitations of the Soviet Gulag. And more than pursuing a socialist modernity, Frelimo leaders were engaged in a moral crusade to produce a virtuous society. They did not see intimacy and domesticity as dissociated from the public exigencies of nation-building, even if those matters involved their own family members. To recoup an elegant phrase – and argument – from Ann Stoler, in socialist Mozambique, “matters of intimacy were matters of state”, or as Jean Allman put it in reverse, “matters of state” were “also matters of intimacy.”<sup>122</sup> Attempts to build Mozambique as a modern and developed socialist nation went hand-in-hand with efforts to regiment people’s behavior. Anxieties over moral laxity, the

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<sup>122</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, “Matters of intimacy as Matters of State: A Response”, *Journal of American History*, 88, 3 (2001): 893-897; Jean Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History-writing”, *American Historical Review*, 118, 1 (2013), p. 129.

“harnessing of sentiments”, the policing and criminalization of “carnal relations” and dressing styles were not marginal aspects of politics and policies in socialist Mozambique.<sup>123</sup> These efforts were the very ways in which Frelimo leaders sought to constitute a reputable citizen: the new man and the new woman.

### Overview of Chapters

This dissertation begins with the examination of the socio-political environment in which Frelimo leaders gained political maturity and the context in which their reformist ideology was formed. Chapter 1 argues that the tenets of Frelimo’s agenda to reform Mozambican society did not stem simply from the party’s adoption of socialism but emerged within the political struggles of mission-educated African elites in early colonial southern Mozambique. Long before embarking on the liberation struggle in the 1960s, the mission-educated political activists who constituted the leadership of Frelimo were immersed in a world in which nativist politics<sup>124</sup> went hand in hand with internal arguments over civic virtue and appropriate moral comportment in Lourenço Marques. People like Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel, Joaquim Chissano, Armando Guebuza, Mariano Matsinha, Sebastião Mabote, Aurélio Manave, Josina Muthemba – to mention but few of Frelimo’s top cadres – carried Christian values about acceptable moral behavior into the liberation struggle. Their embrace of Maoism during the armed struggle provided a robust ideology to articulate an old project and a roadmap to achieve it. Frelimo’s socialism was a blend of a Maoist vision of social revolution and a puritan protestant ethic. Their conception of the new man and his antithesis, the enemy within, reflects the symbiotic combination of Maoism and Protestantism in their ideology. The victims of the cleanup campaigns and reeducation were framed in light of this symbiotic ideology.

Chapter 2 discusses the implementation of the reformist project in independent Mozambique and the contradictions that emerged from its inception. The chapter describes the

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<sup>123</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, p. 18-19.

<sup>124</sup> The term *nativist* stands for the ethno-regionalist organizations that emerged in the early twentieth century in colonial Mozambique and whose socio-political activities launched the basis for the development of Mozambican nationalism. For further details see Aurélio Rocha, *Associativismo e Nativismo em Moçambique: Contribuição para o Estudo das Origens do Nacionalismo Moçambicano*. Maputo: Texto Editores, 2006; and Jeanne Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese! Challenging the Political Economy of Assimilation: Lourenço Marques, 1870-1933”, in Leroy Vail, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. London: James Currey, 1989, pp. 255-288.

first cleanup campaigns against urban indecency, and examines Frelimo's formulation of the objectives of reeducation and the failed attempt to produce legislation on the reeducation program. In Chapter 3 I look closely at *Operação Produção*, the largest cleanup campaign launched in 1983. I argue that the campaign resulted from Frelimo's failed attempt to adopt laws on the reeducation program, as the party continued to seek for ways to cleanse the cities of social degeneracy and effect social transformation regardless of legislative barriers and the material constraints imposed by the context of economic decline and chronic shortages. Chapter 4 examines public engagement with Frelimo's project. I argue that ordinary citizens were not bystanders but active participants in the party's reformist program. The chapter demonstrates that Frelimo's reformist project was launched in a fertile terrain where urban residents were already engaged in moral arguments over who was worthy of living in an urban setting long before independence.<sup>125</sup> It was precisely these old arguments, now framed in incendiary socialist vocabulary, that led to the intimate acts of denunciation and ultimately fed the pipeline of reeducation and labor camps. Finally, the last two chapters explore the secluded world of reeducation camps. Chapter 5 attempts to map the distribution of the camps and the everyday life of internment, whereas Chapter 6 illustrates the wretched conditions of the camps and the austere circumstances in which camp authorities had to carry out their work in Niassa. I conclude the study with a brief description of the chaotic way in which Frelimo's reformist project came to an end as the entire country was engulfed in the civil war.

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<sup>125</sup> This a testament to the argument that James Holston and Arjun Appadurai made about the centrality of cities in the making of- and contestations over citizenship. See James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Cities and Citizenship", in James Holston, ed. *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999, pp. 1-18

## **Chapter 1**

### **Protestantism, Maoism, and the Roots of Frelimo's Reformist Ideology**

#### **Introduction**

On September 26, 1970, thirty-seven year old Samora Machel opened the second conference of Frelimo's department of education and culture with a long speech on the role of education in what he described as the most important goal of the revolution: the creation of a "new society with a new mentality" in Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> Machel had been president of the liberation movement for five months, following the tumultuous months after the assassination in February 1969 of Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo's founding president. The conference was held in the party's headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Machel argued that there were two competing systems of education in Mozambique. The first and most dominant was traditional education. "Irrational", "unscientific", and "superstitious", he claimed, this system froze the society in a permanent state of backwardness. Its objective was to keep the youth within the "old ideas" (*ideias velhas*) and induce them to reject all which was new and foreign. In the traditional education, a woman was "conceived as a second-rate human being" and was "subjected to the humiliating practice of polygamy", he said. Acquired "through a sum of money from her family [*lobolo*]" and "inherited by relatives upon the passing of her husband", a woman was "educated to passively serve the man." The second system was colonial education. While "armed" with some level of science, it was meant to perpetuate the exploitation of the "people". And more than preserving the dominant position of the bourgeoisie, colonial education was the major tool in "depersonalizing the Mozambican people." Under colonial education, Machel asserted, the student "is corrupted by the decadent tastes of the colonial society, and must become a black-skinned petty bourgeois, a docile instrument of colonialism, and his highest ambition is to live as the colonizer, in whose image he was educated."<sup>2</sup>

These two systems, Samora Machel declared, were doomed to extinction. In their place would come the revolutionary education system that was already being implemented in the

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<sup>1</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos/Frelimo, II Conferência do DEC (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), Recomendações, Setembro 1970.

<sup>2</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos/Frelimo, II Conferência do DEC (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), Recomendações, Setembro 1970, p. 3.

liberated zones and training camps under Frelimo in northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania. This revolutionary system would create a new man, a new mentality, a new society in independent Mozambique. This society was to be founded on a wholly new “revolutionary morality”, a morality that “promotes the emancipation of women” and “creates a generation with a sense of collective responsibility.” This was to be a society of scientific and rational thinking. A society of politically conscious and collectively industrious citizens. This was to be a society of citizens who cherish “manual labor”; who do not seek material gains and personal benefits, but strive to “serve the people.” The new man was to be virtuous in his behavior, in his mentality and physical outlook. Self-denial, temperance, and frugality were to be his guiding principles. Above all, the new man was to be blind to all other identity colors and devote his efforts to glorify the Party – the vanguard of the Mozambican people – and honor the one and indivisible Mozambican nation. The achievement of this goal, Machel remarked, “demands the destruction of old ideas and inherited corrupt tastes.”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter traces the roots of Frelimo’s reformism. It also examines the intellectual architecture of the party’s ideology of social reform, the essence of which Samora Machel articulated in Nachingwea. The vision of Mozambican society that Machel laid out comprises the substance of Frelimo’s socialist manifesto and the guiding principle of their “revolutionary” ideology. The socio-economic and cultural policies that Frelimo implemented in the first years of Mozambique independence – among them the cleanup campaigns and reeducation camps – were oriented towards achieving the goal outlined in this manifesto: to transform the cultural and moral infrastructure of Mozambican society anew. The nationalistic and socialist stances in this manifesto are substantive and clear. However, the core of the project that the manifesto articulates has a much longer history that predates Frelimo’s nationalism and the party’s embrace of socialism in the late 1960s. I argue that Frelimo’s project grew out of older aspirations of modernity and civic virtue that dominated the political landscape of early-twentieth-century Lourenço Marques, from where the party leadership came. Their embrace of Maoism during the liberation struggle – with its emphasis on individual virtue, collective renewal and social transformation – reinforced their belief that in order to become citizens, the people of Mozambique had to undergo a profound

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<sup>3</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos/Frelimo, II Conferência do DEC (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), Recomendações, Setembro 1970, p. 4-5.

process of reformation in values, attitudes, and behavior.<sup>4</sup> The urban cleanup campaigns against so-called “anti-socials” and their internment in reeducation and labor camps stem from this conviction.

This chapter begins with the discussion of the nativist politics of Lourenço Marques’ African elites, with particular focus on the debates about civility<sup>5</sup> that took place in the African-run newspapers *O Africano* (1908-1918), *O Brado Africano* (1918-1974), and *Clamor Africano* (1932-33). These papers were published under the sponsorship of the *Grémio Africano*, the first nativist association in Lourenço Marques. I draw mainly from the vernacular section (*Secção Landina*) of the newspapers, particularly the letters to the editor written in Ronga, one of the main languages of the people in the bay area around Lourenço Marques. While scholars have largely mined the Portuguese sections of the newspapers, they have not explored the pages in Ronga.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the Portuguese pages were dominated by the writings of the mixed-race or mulato elites (who were mostly Catholic), the vernacular section were mostly the prerogative of the black literati who were largely protestant. Whereas the Portuguese pages were a space of political contestation against the discriminatory laws of exception (the *indigenato*) and other humiliations of colonial rule – at least until the 1930s – the Ronga pages had little content on the grievances with the colonial regime. Instead, they were filled with exhortatory messages and preachifying articles addressed to the African community. The vernacular section was a platform for self-criticism and self-promotion more than for news. Here, editors and contributors pursued moralist agendas geared towards elevating the moral standards of their fellow compatriots. Readers of this section were greeted with exhortations to avoid inebriating drinks; to combat the “shameful” prostitution of women; to earn a living through the honorable means of waged labor or modernize their farming

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<sup>4</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos/FRELIMO, II Conferência do DEC (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), Recomendações, Setembro 1970. See also Ministério da Educação e Cultura, *O Homen Novo*. Maputo: MEC, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> According to Roger Scruton, civility is the “virtue of the citizen, hence the kind of behavior appropriate to ‘good citizenship’”. In particular, those parts of ‘good manners’ which enable people to accept one another as members of a common social order, and so treat one another with due regard for social well-being and quotidian moral rights.” Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave MacMillan Dictionary of Political Thought*. 3 ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> See Jeanne Penvenne, “João dos Santos Albasini (1876-1922): The Contradictions of Politics and Identity in Colonial Mozambique”, *Journal of African History*, 37, 3 (1996):419-464; A. Rocha, *Associativismo e Nativismo*; and more recently, Lilly Havstad, “Multiracial Women and the African Press in Post-World War II Lourenço Marques, Mozambique”, *South African Historical Journal* (2016): 1-25.

techniques to increase productivity; and to educate themselves and their children.<sup>7</sup> The future leaders of Frelimo were exposed to and a product of these exhortations.

In the second section of the chapter I look at the kinds of social projects in which the members of NESAM were engaged in the 1950s and early 1960s. NESAM, the *Núcleo dos Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique*, was a union of African secondary students that Eduardo Mondlane and his mission-school colleagues created in 1949. Although the union never became a political organization as such, it was the main source of the educated members of Frelimo. Most of the people who came to dominate the political leadership of Frelimo gained political consciousness within the circles of student activism in and around NESAM.<sup>8</sup> Although the evidentiary material on NESAM is shallow, Joaquim Chissano's memoir offers some illuminating clues about the intellectual and cultural projects in which the students were engaged.<sup>9</sup> Chissano served as President of the union between 1958 and 1959. His remembrances of NESAM and his time as a student in Lourenço Marques illustrate that, long before joining Frelimo, he and his colleagues in NESAM were engaged in the work of self-promotion along the lines of the exhortatory messages that populated the vernacular section of *Grémio* papers.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example, CRL – “Nturu wa wansati” [The duty of a woman], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 14 Novembro 1924; CRL – “A nturu wa psakunwa” [The work of drinking], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 7 Agosto 1926; CRL – “Hinkwapsu hipsone?” [Is everything alright?], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 9 Maio 1926; CRL – Jimson Sungwini, “A ndyingo” [Temptation], *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 31 Dez. 1932;

<sup>8</sup> Although Samora Machel was no member of NESAM by virtue of his status as an employed nurse in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he was acquainted with some members of the student union, among them Filipe Samuel Magaia (Frelimo's first military commander). Machel also circulated within the underground circles where political activists connected with NESAM and other organizations gathered. It was through these connections that he managed to be among the young activists who met with Eduardo Mondlane during his only visit to Mozambique in February-March 1961, arguably the most important event that galvanized the youth of Lourenço Marques and influenced their decision to join Frelimo a year later. See G. Liesegang, “Samora Moisés Machel”, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> A number of studies have explored the history of NESAM. The pioneering work was done by Isabel Casimiro, “Movimento Associativo como Foco de Nacionalismo: O Movimento Estudantil – NESAM a AMM”, in C. Castelo *et al*, eds. *Os Outros da Descolonização*, pp. 117-134 (originally written in 1979). Eléusio Filipe's thesis is the most up to date and detailed examination of the organization. Filipe offers a series of interesting and up to now obscure points about the life of NESAM. Contrary to previous nationalist literature on NESAM, Filipe is right in arguing that up to 1962 the association did not produce any significant political activity. It was, above all, concerned with providing entertainment for students. For the purpose of this dissertation, I am concerned with the content of the debates and the ideas which members of the nucleus were engaged with. On this particular issue, however, Filipe has little to say. Fortunately, Chissano's memoir shed some light here. See Eléusio Filipe, “Where are the Mozambican Musicians? Music, Marrabenta, and National Identity in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, 1950s-1975”, PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 2012; Joaquim Chissano, *Vidas, Lugares e Tempos*. Maputo: Texto Editores, 2010.

In the last section of the chapter I examine the ways in which the mission-educated southerners joined Frelimo and how their embrace of Maoism produced the symbiotic ideology that informed the reformist project that Samora Machel outlined in Nachingwea. Although they joined the liberation movement in Tanzania through multiple underground channels between 1962 and 1964, it was not until 1970 that, as a cohort with the same social background, they rose to political power and transformed Frelimo after their own image. The ideal of the new man that they determined the socialist revolution ought to produce in Mozambique was the image they had of themselves.

### **Nativism, Civility, and Reformism in Early Colonial Lourenço Marques**

Since the formation of *Grémio Africano* in the port-city of Lourenço Marques in 1908, educated African elites debated vigorously about how their society should be cultural and aesthetically under the mantle of Portuguese colonial rule. The discursive archetypes in which they articulated their vision bear the marks of their religious orientation. Although some were Catholic, and a few were Muslim, the majority were members of various protestant missions and congregations that dominated the religious landscape of southern Mozambique until the rise of the ultra-nationalist government of António Salazar in the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> Their nativist politics combined what Alf Helgesson called the “Gospel of the Hoe” that Protestant missions preached along with aspirations of civil recognition within the realm of the Portuguese “civilizational” and assimilationist modernity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Several protestant missions were established in Mozambique in the 1880s. Most were concentrated in the south. They included the Swiss-Presbyterian Mission, the American Free Methodists, the American Episcopal Methodists, the Wesleyans, and Anglicans. Up into the 1930s, the Portuguese Catholic missions had a weak presence in the south. While the Catholics dedicated most of their religious work to white settlers and the mixed-race, Protestant missions worked with the majority black communities. It was not until the establishment of the *Estado Novo* under Salazar in 1928/33 that the Catholic missions expanded. For details on the history of protestant missions in southern Mozambique, see Jan Van Butselaar, *Africanos, Missionários e Colonialistas: As Origens da Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (Missão Suíça), 1880-1896*. Lausanne, Département Missionnaire des Eglises Protestantes de la Suisse Romande, 1987; Patrick Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries & Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey, 2007; Alf Helgesson, “Church, State and People in Mozambique: An Historical Study with Special Emphasis on Methodist Developments in the Inhambane Region”, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Uppsala, 1994; Teresa Cruz e Silva, *Protestant Churches and the Formation of Political Consciousness in Southern Mozambique (1930-1974)*, Basel: P. Schlettwein, 2001; Robert Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane*. Oregon: Pickwick, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> A. Helgesson, “Church, State and People in Mozambique”, p. 347.



Unlike British indirect rule, the direct form of Portuguese colonialism and its emphasis on assimilation and civilization established the limits within which the modernist aspirations of African elites were formulated and the ways in which they developed. While they decried the discriminatory nature of the assimilation system, they also accepted the Portuguese “civilizational” standard and aspired to achieve it.<sup>12</sup> As Jeanne Penvenne has asserted, gaining civil rights as meritorious Portuguese citizens was the chief political goal of Mozambique’s African elites until well into the 1950s.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, they assumed that their aspiration could be attained if – among other things – all Africans conducted themselves according to the disciplinary norms of “worldly asceticism” that Protestant missions preached.<sup>14</sup> In their estimation, by accepting the “calling” and leading their lives ascetically, the African people would not only prosper and become virtuous before God, they would also be on a good footing to convince the Portuguese to recognize them as worthy citizens.<sup>15</sup> Unlike their contemporary peers in British colonial Africa, for Mozambique’s African elites the question was not “Why am I fit to rule?” nor “What have I done to deserve subjection?”<sup>16</sup> For them, at least until the 1950s, the question was *Why am I not a Portuguese citizen as well?*<sup>17</sup> Their vision of how to achieve full citizenship was not a fully formed, comprehensive roadmap. It was not homogeneous nor consensual. And they did not see their activities in the way that I frame them here. But their hopes informed and shaped the aspirations of the generation that came to political maturity in the 1950s and 1960s. Although significant socio-economic changes took place in Mozambique between the 1920-30s and the 1950s, the

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<sup>12</sup> Jeanne Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese! Challenging the Political Economy of Assimilation: Lourenço Marques, 1870-1933”, in Leroy Vail, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. London: James Currey, 1989, pp. 255-288. However, the acceptance of the Portuguese civilization did not come at the expense of a total rejection of African culture, as early nationalist scholarship assumed. See Allen Isaacman’s compelling introduction in Raúl Bernardo Honwana, *The Life History of Raúl Honwana: An Inside View of Mozambique from Colonialism to Independence, 1905-1975*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, p. 15. See also See Raúl Bernardo Honwana, *Memórias*. Maputo: Marimbiq, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> See J. Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese!”

<sup>14</sup> Max Weber defined the “worldly asceticism” of Protestantism as a “systematic rational ordering of the moral life as a whole.” Protestant asceticism rested on the idea of the “calling”, which “refers basically to the idea that the highest form of moral obligation of the individual is to fulfill his duty in worldly affairs” by being industrious, frugal, and temperate. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976, p. 4; 126.

<sup>15</sup> CRL – “Ku ti kulisa”, [To dignify ourselves], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 14 Novembro 1924.

<sup>16</sup> John Lonsdale, “Writing Competitive Patriotisms in Eastern Africa”, in Derek Peterson and Giacomo Macola, eds. *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009, p. 256.

<sup>17</sup> J. Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese”, p. 272.

notion that a well-educated, industrious, temperate, and well-mannered African community was necessary for civil recognition and political participation was still influential.

Swiss-Presbyterian missionary Henri-Alexandre Junod (1863-1934) was one of the main proponents of this vision.<sup>18</sup> Like most of his contemporary colleagues, Henri Junod was convinced that the effects of industrialization in southern Africa were destroying the picturesque aspects of native life and fostering moral decay. Along with their imperialist wars, he claimed, European civilization brought “vices, curses, debasing influences, and immoral customs that paganism itself had never known.”<sup>19</sup> Besides the scientific aims of its ethnographic material, his monumental two-volume book, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1912/1913), is a moral treatise on how to guide the “heathen natives” in their inevitable transformation in face of the challenges of modern industrialization, or, in his own words, a “remedy” for the “native problem.”<sup>20</sup> Junod’s volumes are filled with lamentations of the negative influences of modernity on Africans, chief among them alcoholism, prostitution, the breakdown of family units and disrespect for social hierarchies. Junod argued that the missionary enterprise in southern Africa had to be devoted to saving the “natives” from degeneracy and a fall from grace. “My conclusion is that the only salvation for the South African tribe”, he wrote, “is in a regeneration achieved by Christianity, Education providing, at the same time, the enlightenment of the mind which also is of primary necessity.”<sup>21</sup> Political maturity and self-government, he argued, would come after an elite group of Africans had been trained in modern professions: “The more qualified physicians, advocates, or ministers can be trained, the stronger will be the elite which, sooner or later, must take the lead in the development

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<sup>18</sup> Junod arrived in Lourenço Marques in 1889 and was the head-leader of the Swiss-Presbyterian Mission in Mozambique until 1920. He was arguably the most influential missionary in Mozambique with high reputation among the African elite of Lourenço Marques. His pedagogical influence reached beyond the Swiss mission. For details on Junod’s work, see P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians*; R.B. Honwana, *Memórias*.

<sup>19</sup> Henri A. Junod, *Le Ba Ronga: Étude Ethnographique sur les Indigènes de la Baie de Delagoa*. Neuchatel: Attinger, 1898, p. 481. See also P. Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians*, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> As he noted in the conclusion of volume two, the aims of his book were twofold: scientific and practical. The scientific one regarded the question: “how far can the actual South Africans be called Primitives.” The practical aim, which was “of superior importance”, had to do with the question: “How can the South African tribe withstand the new condition of things brought about by the XX century civilization?” Henri-Alexandre Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe, volume 2: The Psychic Life*. Neuchatel: Attinger Freres, 1913, p. 534; H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol 1, p. 462. On the background and significance of this book, see P. Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians*, p. 212-15.

<sup>21</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol 2, p. 542.

of the race.”<sup>22</sup> Junod’s thinking was very influential among the mission-educated elites of Lourenço Marques, most of whom were members of the Swiss-Presbyterian mission.

If European missionaries – Protestant and Catholic alike – provided a path to- and a discursive lexicon of modernity, the urban environment of Lourenço Marques and the pressures of an increasingly racist colonial regime pushed African elites to assert their role as representatives of their native community. Up to the late 1940s, this community was not imagined beyond the ethno-linguistic boundaries of southern Mozambique or *Sul do Save*.<sup>23</sup> The effects of rapid urbanization, which, unlike Johannesburg or other cities in the region, were not accompanied by industrialization, became a challenge in the efforts that African elites made to present themselves as respectable members of civic society and earn a place as citizens in their own land. The economic difficulties of the inter-war years and the crisis of unemployment and famine only increased the pressure.

Except for a few mixed-race families who were economically well established, the elite status of most black people was in many ways nominal.<sup>24</sup> Although some enjoyed relatively good jobs in non-Portuguese, private companies (mostly thanks to their mastery of English, an important aspect of Protestant mission-education), most were school teachers and clerks in subaltern positions in the public administration. Despite their criticism of the assimilation laws and the *indigenato*, assimilation became one of the markers of social differentiation among urban Africans.

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<sup>22</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol 2, p. 277. Junod was in favor of the politics of racial segregation in vogue in South Africa and in Mozambique. He agreed with most of his contemporary colleagues and colonial authorities that Africans were not mature to assume political responsibilities yet. But, unlike colonial powers, Junod saw the presence of Europeans in Africa only as a way of helping the “natives” reach religious, political and socio-economic maturity. For a discussion of the wider role of missionaries in southern Africa, see, among many others, Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol. 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution. Vol. 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. For a different view (especially regarding conversion), see Derek Peterson and Darren Walhof, eds. *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief in Politics and History*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> J. Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese!”; A. Rocha, *Associativismo e Nativismo*.

<sup>24</sup> The term “elite” might not be the best way to capture the social position of educated Africans in colonial Mozambique in a way that is historically accurate. But there are little alternatives. Other scholars use “middle class”, “middle figures”, or “intermediaries.” See Benjamin Lawrence, Emily Osborn, and Richard Roberts, “Introduction: African Intermediaries and the ‘Bargain’ of Collaboration”, in Benjamin Lawrence, Emily Osborn, and Richard Roberts (eds). *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 3-34; L. Havstad, “Multiracial Women and the African Press in Post-World War II Lourenço Marques”, p. 2. Jason Sumich is comfortable with using *elite* for the post-colonial period. See Jason Sumich, “Elites and Modernity in Mozambique”, PhD Dissertation, London School of Economics, 2005.

However, up to 1961, when the law of exception were abolished, less than one percent of the total African population achieved the status of *assimilado*.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, elite Africans remained a very small group throughout the first half of the twentieth century. At the start of century they coalesced around the *Grémio Africano*. After its schism along racial lines in 1932, the black Africans formed their own association, the *Instituto Negrófilo*, leaving the *Grémio* to the mulatos.<sup>26</sup> Despite the schism, both groups continued to write for the *Grémio* paper, where part of their socio-political activities took place. The moralist concerns that permeated their writings were enmeshed with their nativist politics. In the same vein that they derided the humiliations of colonial bondage, they also condemned the decadent lifestyles of their fellow urban compatriots and urged them to improve their public and private conduct. They viewed political emancipation – regardless of its format – as being intrinsically linked to the eradication of urban social ills and the elevation of the African population as credible members of society.<sup>27</sup>

Scholars have explored the nativist politics of Mozambique’s African elites during the formative years of Portuguese colonial rule (1910s-1930s) and beyond. But the nativists’ yearning for moral reform and for civility, which animated much of their social concerns and public debates, have not figured in the scholarship. Whenever such concerns came to the attention of scholars, they were dismissed as irrelevant. For example, in his compelling study of Lourenço Marques’ *assimilados* during the republican years (1900-1920s), historian José Moreira regarded the anti-alcohol campaign that *Grémio* members carried out in *O Africano* as “an apparent façade of neutral combat.” For him, the members of *Grémio* were simply concerned with denouncing the Portuguese capitalists who produced wine.<sup>28</sup> Although this was partially the case, there was far more to

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<sup>25</sup> David Hedges e Aurélio Rocha, “Moçambique durante o Apogeu do Colonialismo Português, 1945-1961: A Economia e a Estrutura Social”, in D. Hedges, coord. *História de Moçambique Volume 2*, p. 182.

<sup>26</sup> The “racial” distinction between black African elites and *mestiço* African elites is important for understanding social identities in colonial Mozambique. Although initially the two groups worked together to establish *Grémio Africano*, their conflicting racial identities and religious orientation often led to internal frictions. Up until independence, these two groups remained relatively separate, with minimal contact between them. For details on the racial tensions and the schisms among the elite community of Lourenço Marques, see R.B. Honwana, *Memórias*, p. 101-2; and A. Rocha, *Associativismo e Nativismo*.

<sup>27</sup> By political emancipation I do not mean independence. As many scholars have asserted, fully formed nationalist ideas did not emerge in Mozambique until the early 1960s. However, ideas of political participation – even in the form of recognized citizenship within the Portuguese empire – had been present since the early 1900s. Ideas of political autonomy, however, developed among the liberal section of the colonial society, influence by the presence of the Masonry in Mozambique. See Aurélio Rocha, “Moçambique e a República: Colonialismo, Interesses Locais, e a Ideia de Autonomia”, in Augustro Nascimento, A. Rocha, e E. Rodrigues, orgs. *Moçambique: Relações Históricas Regionais e com Países da CPLP*. Maputo: Alcance, 2011, p. 109-153.

<sup>28</sup> J. Moreira, *Os Assimilados*, p. 82.

*Grémio*'s anti-alcohol campaigning than anti-capitalism. The campaign was part of a larger work of moral reform in which *Grémio* members were involved.

The central tenets of Lourenço Marques' nativist politics revolved around education and vocational training, industriousness, frugality, temperance, personal hygiene, decency in dressing styles, the respect for social hierarchies, the centrality of the family and the respect for traditional gender roles. Even though, by the end of the first World War, the path to civilization seemed more elusive and distant, African elites continued to cling to the promise of the discourse of civilization. Although they came to realize that the republican regime (1910-1926) and the ultra-nationalist *Estado Novo* (1926-1961) narrowed the path for progress and social mobility for the majority of blacks by reinforcing increasingly the "laws of exception" and imposing a more racially stratified social structure, African elites sought to navigate the narrow paths that were still opened.<sup>29</sup> They believed that, if only more people were educated, well mannered, and industrious, the Portuguese would have little margin to justify the continuous denial of civil rights and the acceptance of Africans as citizens of equal merit.<sup>30</sup> Political emancipation would ensure from that gradual progress. This is what Samuel Dabula, a prominent member of that first generation of mission-educated African elites, often insisted in his interaction with his students, most of whom would later become leaders of Mozambique's liberation movement.<sup>31</sup>

### *Urban Decadence and Moral Exhortations in Lourenço Marques*

João dos Santos Albasini or Nwandzengele (1876-1922), the founder and chief-editor of the *Grémio* papers was one of the most vocal reformers in Lourenço Marques. A descendant of a royal African family and a Portuguese hunter of Italian origins, Albasini was a self-taught journalist and a first-rate nativist. Scholars have written extensively on Albasini's energetic work in denouncing

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<sup>29</sup> Aurélio Rocha *et al*, "A História de Moçambique, 1885-1930", in David Hedges, coord. *História de Moçambique Volume 2: Moçambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930-1961*. Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1999, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> CRL – "Ku ti kulisa", [To dignify ourselves], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 14 Novembro 1924.

<sup>31</sup> As Joaquim Chissano recalled in his memoir, Samuel Dabula insisted that independence would come when Mozambique had enough educated people. He used to say: "fifty in each [field], fifty doctors, fifty attorneys, fifty engineers, fifty veterinarians, well, fifty, fifty and we will get there." See Joaquim Chissano, *Vidas, Lugares e Tempos*. Maputo: Texto Editores, 2010, p. 181-2. His son, Eldorado Dabula, also made the same reference to this formulation. See Eldorado Dabula, "O Professor dos Nacionalistas: Samuel Dabula pela Voz do Filho", in A. Le Bon, *Mafalala 1974: Memórias do 7 de Setembro*, p. 274. This kind of thinking was much in line with what Protestant missionaries like Junod held about the future of the Bantu society. H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol 2, p. 277.

the mechanisms with which the Portuguese colonial regime denied citizenship and civil rights to Africans.<sup>32</sup> Jeanne Penvenne has examined the contradictory nature of the politics of Albasini and his generation.<sup>33</sup> Along with his political work, Albasini was also a moral reformer. In several editorials of *O Africano* and *O Brado Africano*, Albasini resorted to his powerful and multifaceted pen to condemn the strings that in his view tied Africans to backward, self-destructive, and non-liberating habits. His main target was *lobolo*, the rampant commerce of alcoholic drinks, and prostitution. In his unmistakably sarcastic tone, he claimed in one of his editorials in 1912 that the only field in which Mozambique had advanced under the Portuguese was in the increase of drunkards, prostitutes, and the dissolution of moral. “Apart from the quay where all goods to Transvaal are unloaded”, he wrote, “nothing else has been done which may signify the life of a colony. The canteens, the colonial wine and the prostitution of blacks are the whites’ sources of revenue and way of living. Its cancer.”<sup>34</sup>

For Albasini, the apathy of the colonial authorities and their unwillingness to deal with the problem of adulterated wine (the so-called *vinho para o preto* or wine for blacks, also known as “colonial”) contributed in the increase of prostitution and vagrancy.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the eminent journalist accused the Portuguese of purposely using alcohol to keep the “poor African souls” in perpetual backwardness and thus exploit their working force. As he wrote again in 1912, “where there should be industrial and agrarian schools, Portugal has installed a series of tanks with pumps in which runs, night and day, a poisoned liquid to kill blacks. This is the colonization.”<sup>36</sup> Albasini was not only concerned with the expansion of Portuguese winery capital, as José Moreira suggested.<sup>37</sup> Albasini was also concerned with the destructive effects of alcohol on the black population and the consequences of what he perceived as an epidemic of drunkenness in the civilizational progress of Africans and in the development of Mozambique. Here lies his fierce

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<sup>32</sup> César Braga-Pinto and Fátima Mendonça, *João Albasini e as Luzes de Nwanzengele: Jornalismo e Política em Moçambique, 1908-1922*. Maputo: Alcance Editores, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> J. Penvenne, “João dos Santos Albasini (1876-1922): The Contradictions of Politics and Identity in Colonial Mozambique.”

<sup>34</sup> J. Albasini, “Depois de procelosa tempestade”, *O Africano*, Lourenço Marques, 23 Fevereiro 1912, in C. Braga-Pinto and F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p. 114-6. See also his earlier piece on the colonial wine, “O Vinho Colonial”, *O Africano*, no. 4, Lourenço Marques, 24 Abril 1909, in C. Braga-Pinto e F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p. 84-6.

<sup>35</sup> On the “wine for blacks” see José Capela, *O Vinho para o Preto: Notas e Textos sobre a Exportação do Vinho para África*. Porto: Centro de Estudos Africanos, e-book, 2009 [1973].

<sup>36</sup> J. Albasini, “Depois de procelosa tempestade”, p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> J. Moreira, *Os Assimilados*, p. 82.

attack of the canteen culture. In his view, African men wasted their earnings and with it the honor of an entire society pouring in the “colonial” at the canteens. It was also here that, in his estimation, women found refuge from the bondage and misery of *lobolo*, earning their living as comfort women.<sup>38</sup> Like missionary Henri Junod, Albasini believed that the elimination of *lobolo* and the shutting down of all canteens was a form of ending prostitution and alcoholism, and pave the way for the civilization of the African population.<sup>39</sup>

Albasini’s editorials and commentaries, like most of the writings in the Portuguese pages, were largely addressed to the white settler society and political authorities. Albasini and his Portuguese-writing colleagues spoke to the colonial regime on behalf of the majority black from the high seat of privilege. The vernacular writers, by contrast, addressed the African readership directly in the language of brotherhood. Although they seem to have been less convinced about the need to eliminate *lobolo*, they were particularly incensed by the effects of alcohol consumption among their fellow compatriots.<sup>40</sup> Their letters to the newspaper editors were dominated by concerns about the destructive effects of *psakunwa* (drinking) and the proliferation of *businge* (depravity) in the city. In addition to *ndondyo* (education), *psakunwa* and *businge* were the two most recurring themes in the *Secção Landina* in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>41</sup> Over the years, edition after edition, contributors to the papers exhorted their fellow countrymen to stop drinking in order to elevate the “black race” to a respectable status in the eyes of the colonizers. The vernacular writers believed that, by ending alcoholism and its immoral by-products (adultery, the breakdown of families, prostitution, and vagrancy), the path was open for the rise of a civilized, respectable,

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<sup>38</sup> J. Albasini, “A devassidão”, *O Africano*, Lourenço Marques, 17 Dezembro 1913, in C. Braga-Pinto and F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p. 203-4.

<sup>39</sup> J. Albasini, “Colonisação – Educação - Instrução”, *O Africano*, Lourenço Marques, 8 March 1912, in C. Braga-Pinto and F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p. 150-1. About *lobolo*, which he decried, missionary Henri Junod wrote: “A wife is nothing but a piece of family property, bought by *lobola*, and which is consequently inherited by other men when her husband dies. They are not moral human beings and free human beings. (...) The eradication of the *lobola* will take long, but it must take place if native society is to overcome the level of collective social life, and to be raised to the status of a civilized community.” H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol. 1, p. 217;328.

<sup>40</sup> I should stress that Albasini’s views on *lobolo* – which are similar to missionary Henri Junod’s – were not consensual among African elites. In fact, the theme of *lobolo* had always been marked by pros and cons from the beginning. For an analysis of *lobolo* in Mozambique’s history and legal system after independence, see Albie Sachs and Gita Honwana Welch, *Liberating the Law: Creating Popular Justice in Mozambique*. London: Zed Books, 1990, p. 86-110.

<sup>41</sup> See CRL – “O alcoolismo ni bubabyi bya lifuba” [Alcoholism and tuberculosis], *O Brado Africano*. Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 9 Agosto 1924 [by G.T.]; CRL – “A ntiro wa psakunwa” [The work of drinking], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 7 Agosto 1926; CRL – “A Byala” [Alcohol], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 7 Agosto 1926.

God-loving, and industrious society in Mozambique.<sup>42</sup> This was the crux of Protestant missionary thought, which permeates the writings of Henri-Alexander Junod.<sup>43</sup> The religious overtones of vernacular writers in *Grémio* papers were remarkably salient. Not only did they evoke the teachings of the Christian faith and drew biblical allegories to establish parallels with their contemporary predicaments, but also they exhorted their readers to convert to Christianity in order to rid themselves of social evils. Their writings were not only moral exhortations. They also sought to proselytize, and they never shied away from exposing the most intimate affairs of their private life to influence others.<sup>44</sup>

For example, one Mr. Hubele wrote to *Clamor Africano* in December 1932 to “lament” and “cry” before his *bamakweru* (brothers) for the disgrace that befell his family.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Hubele was a widow and father of four girls. The first two ventured to *xilungwini* to sell mangoes in the municipal bazar. The first daughter, Elvira – “*wa ku shonga psanga i mati*, so beautiful like water” – ran away with a white man (a tax guard) and never came back. The second, Rosa – “*wa ku rula psanga i mbuti*, so serene like a goat” – died of an ill-induced abortion. She got pregnant from an unknown man in the city. His third daughter, Maria, asked permission to go to the bazar to sell mangoes, and was losing her ways. A devout Christian, Hubele claimed that, like the apples of the book of Genesis that induced Eve to sin, the mangoes in his backyard led his daughters to the sin citadel of Lourenço Marques where they all fell from grace. He alerted his “brothers and sisters” that if they wanted peace and happiness in their homes they ought not plant mangoes trees because “mangoes are a Satan in the home.” Like many of his contemporary peers, Mr. Hubele was mobilizing his personal tragedy to showcase the dangers of the city, particularly for women. For him, *Xilunguine* (the place of the whites) and its modern culture challenged the authority of fathers

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, CRL – Zeferino Franklin, “A Ndondyo” [Education], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 9 Março 1922; CRL – “Ku ti kulisa”, [To dignify ourselves], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 14 Novembro 1924.

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, CRL – Rodrigo Amaral, “Kulukumba a Kone” [God Exists], *O Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 5 Janeiro 1916; Magwaza, “A Nau wa Yesu” [The Law of Jesus], *O Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 16 Agosto 1916; “Mindyingo ya sathana” [Temptations of Satan], *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 8 Julho 1927.

<sup>45</sup> CRL – Hubele, “A Mimanga ni ntiru ya yone”, *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 10 Dez. 1932. *Clamor Africano* was a temporary name for *O Brado Africano*. In 1931 the newspaper was interrupted because of legal disputes. In order to keep the publication running, the *Grémio* attributed another name while the case was in court.



and husbands over their daughters and wives, thus turning the moral order of the *tiku* or patria upside down.<sup>46</sup>

These anxieties were not motivated by imaginary fears only. The men and women who wrote to newspapers drew from their own experiences and talked about them in a manner that made readers feel a sense of shared experience. The editors of the vernacular section of *Grêmio* papers – whenever they saw fit – emphasized the commonality of contributors’ experiences by referring the case of such and such person. Some of the most controversial cases furnished editors with materials for several editions. One such case was brought by Rafael Macandya in December 1932. Macandya found it difficult to get a “civilized” girl to marry him in *KaMpfumu* (the local name for the district of Lourenço Marques). He went to Johannesburg several times to earn the money for *lobolo*, but the women he found fell short of his expectations. The first one could not write, so he “ended up forgetting her” while in the mines in South Africa. The second one could write, and he was “so in love” with her. But when he returned, he brought meat and asked her to prepare beef. He was shocked to learn that she did not know what beef was. He left her and went to the Swiss Mission “to find” another potential wife. The girl he found at the mission was educated, but was not prepared to handle the duties of housekeeping. He concluded that the girls of *KaMpfumu* were “spoiled” (*va bolile*), and therefore the men of Mozambique had no country to call their own. “*A hi na tiku; a hi siba na tiku* – we don’t have a country, we don’t have a country yet”, he wrote exasperatedly.<sup>47</sup>

Apart from his personal experience, Rafael Macandya took inspiration from a popular song by one Matias Mfumu, in which the girls of *KaMpfumu* were considered spoiled, “*a ba nhwanyana ba ka Mpfumu ba bolile, pyetu.*”<sup>48</sup> This might have been a very popular song at the time, given the familiarity with which other contributors who engaged with Macandya’s letter referred to it. Macandya’s article provoked a great deal of debate about women in Lourenço Marques. The newspaper received four letters from women rebuking Macandya’s claim that women were spoiled and that their unpreparedness for the duties of housekeeping was hampering the reputation of the Tsonga nation. The newspaper editor, while lamenting that Macandya caused a lot of anger among

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<sup>46</sup> On local designation of Lourenço Marques as *Xilunguine*, see Alexandre Lobato, *Lourenço Marques, Xilunguine: Biografia da Cidade*. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1970 and J. Penvenne, *African Workers*.

<sup>47</sup> CRL – Rafael Macandya, “A banhwanyana va ka Mpfumu” [The Girls of *KaMfumu*], *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 31 Dez. 1932

<sup>48</sup> CRL – Rafael Macandya, “A banhwanyana va ka Mpfumu”

the women readership, claimed that Macandya was right in his assessment. None of the letters that rebuked Macandya's claims were published immediately. Instead, the editor – keen on keeping the debate in one direction, the direction that was in line with his moral project – published Azarias Mabhunu, who congratulated Macandya for his enlightening story.<sup>49</sup> Mabhunu claimed that women were not to be blamed for their wickedness, but the men who spoiled them; the men who lured women with false promises and then disgraced them. One of the few women whose letter the editor published was written by Luiza, who concurred with Rafael Macandya's assessment that Lourenço Marques' girls were alienated and unprepared for the duties of housekeeping; duties that in her view were key for the reputation and respectability of the African people and the country at large.<sup>50</sup> Luiza urged mothers to send their daughters to João Albasini School at Xipamanine, where a special program was designed to train girls in housekeeping.<sup>51</sup> As Luiza put it, "*hi wona ntiru wa wansati lowo*, this is the proper duty of a woman."<sup>52</sup>

As we shall see in chapter 2, President Samora Machel voiced the same concerns in his first speech in 1975, employing an equally vitriolic language against urban women. Here we see how women mobility in the city became object of contention and a site of anxiety among urban Africans long before the socialist rhetoric of Frelimo revolutionaries. As scholars have illustrated, with the expansion of urban areas in Africa, women mobility became one of the main locus of nativist political imagination.<sup>53</sup> The anxiety about the increasing presence of women in the city – a widespread phenomenon in colonial Africa, and a trade mark of patriotic nativism across the continent – is at the heart of conservative gender politics in post-colonial Africa.<sup>54</sup> The men and women who wrote to the African run-newspapers of Lourenço Marques saw the unpreparedness of women to take up the duties of housekeeping as a hindrance to the making of an African civic society and ultimately the reputation of the nation. As a migrant worker, Macandya was clearly comparing the Ronga women of KaMpfumo and those of Johannesburg, and through them he was measuring the level of civilization and progress of his *tiku*. The reputation of the Tsonga as a nation

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<sup>49</sup> CRL – Azarias Mabhunu, "A banhwanyana va ka Mpumfu", *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 7 Jan. 1933

<sup>50</sup> CRL – Luiza, "Nturu wa wansati", *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 21 Jan. 1933

<sup>51</sup> The school was named after journalist João Albasini – a pioneer and tireless advocate for women education – who passed away in 1922.

<sup>52</sup> Clearly the gender rhetoric adopted by OMM, which I examine in chapter 3, has an obvious precedent here.

<sup>53</sup> Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, "Introduction", in Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy eds. *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann., 2001, p. 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> See D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p. 286.

– and any possibility of Africans to enter the public sphere of politics as Portuguese citizens of equal merit – depended on having dutiful, obedient wives and respectful daughters who stay away from the corrupting bazars where men (white men in particular) could take advantage of them and lead them to perdition.

The putative wickedness of urban women was not the only challenge that African nativists wrested with. Drunkenness was also at the top of their priorities as they strove to bring their community to a respectable standing. In countless editions between 1909 and the early 1930s, *O Africano* and its successor *O Brado Africano* ran an advertisement in the vernacular section, calling attention to the dangers of alcohol and trying to convince people to drink water instead: “*Alcool bulala, mati butomi*, alcohol enmity, water life.”<sup>55</sup> Although the newspapers drew funding from commercial advertisements, this advert seems to have been self-funded. Sometimes it was accompanied with poems and liturgical sermons. Several readers contributed with articles in which they described their misery because of alcohol and offered examples of overcoming their dependence for others to follow. In 1932, Jimson Sungwini narrated in a letter to the editor of *O Clamor Africano* how a friend convinced him to abandon the traditional African beer, *uputsu*, to drink wine. His friend, a Christian like him, claimed that wine was the blood of Jesus (this is how he interpreted the lesson about the Last Supper). Seeing the color of red wine, Jimson was convinced that indeed it was blood and could surely give him life. He became addicted to it and saw his life ruined. Having recovered from his addiction, Jimson felt the urgency to alert his fellow countrymen of the dangers of drinking. “*Bamakweru, ba Africano kulori, a hi tyhikeni a psa ku nwa psi taka hi dlaya* – brothers, fellow Africans, let’s stop drinking because drinking will kill us”, he wrote.<sup>56</sup>

A decade before, in 1914, the mission-educated elites signed a petition addressing the newly appointed governor, Joaquim José Machado. The petitioners asked the incoming governor to ban the trade of alcohol and shut down the canteens. They stressed that the future of the “African race” was at serious risk of disappearing due to drinking and widespread immorality. They claimed that

The canteens live and thrive from our women, daughters and sons, for this is where they all get drunk. Adultery is current fashion; nobody is afraid of anything. What desolation, Excellency! We

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<sup>55</sup> See one example of the ad in CRL – *O Brado Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 14 Fevereiro 1925.

<sup>56</sup> CRL – Jimson Sungwini, “A ndyingo” [Temptation], *Clamor Africano*, Secção Landina. Lourenço Marques, 31Dez. 1932

see most of the canteens with two or three barrels of the Colonial Wine. They sell nothing else. They seem like mousetraps armed to our miserable and helpless ignorance. Our land, Sir, is on the way to perdition. Morality has disappeared. If this state of things continues like this we shall all die, victims of the Colonial Wine.<sup>57</sup>

The background of this letter is unclear. It could most probably have been crafted by João Albasini, who published it in an editorial with introductory remarks in *O Africano*. But the alarmed language of “race extinction” that permeates the petition was also one of the features of missionary Henri Junod’s anthropological discourse.<sup>58</sup> The petitioners seem to have succeeded in convincing the governor to impose taxation upon canteens’ activities and the importation of alcoholic drinks to the colony.<sup>59</sup> But no single store was closed down because, among many other reasons, a great number of politically influential settlers owned and earned their living from selling wine in the *cantinas*.<sup>60</sup>

Standing resolute in their decision to fight alcoholism, in 1916 members of the Swiss-Presbyterian mission founded a temperance society known in Ronga as *Va Matitroni* (the sobers). The society, also known as *Cruz Azul* (Blue Cross), was molded on the International Federation of the Societies of the Blue Cross, a temperance organization founded in the late nineteenth century in Switzerland.<sup>61</sup> Extending beyond the Swiss-Presbyterian church, the *Va Matitroni* included members from other Protestant congregations, particularly Methodists and Wesleyans, and they are believed to have grown close to 7,000 members by the mid 1940s.<sup>62</sup> The political activists who later became leaders of Mozambique’s nationalism were very familiar with this temperance

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<sup>57</sup> “No Paiz da Bebedeira”, *O Africano*, no. 264, Lourenço Marques, 29 October 1914, in C. Braga-Pinto e F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p. 260-263; In the same year, João Albasini wrote an equally alarming article, in which he argued that the black race was being exterminated by the “colonial wine.” See J. Albasini, “O Exterminio d’uma raça”, in C. Braga-Pinto e F. Mendonça, *João Albasini*, p.244-248.

<sup>58</sup> In *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Henri Junod wrote: “I cannot conceal the fact that I consider the situation of the South African tribe, under present circumstances a very serious one. If these influences [of European civilization: alcohol] are not checked, I believe in the possible extinction of the race, in the long run, and I think every thoughtful observer will come to the same conclusion.” H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol 2, p. 541. It is unclear whether Junod contributed in the writing of the petition or not. But he was in Lourenço Marques when the petition was elaborated, having returned to Mozambique a few years before from a forced furlough. He stayed in Mozambique until his retirement in 1920. P. Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians*, p. 210, 221. According to Nancy Hunt, the discourse of “race extinction” was widely shared among the missionary-anthropological world of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Nancy Hunt, *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> J. Capela, *O Vinho para o Preto*, p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> J. Penvenne, *African Workers*, p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> P. Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians*, p. 26. They might have also been influenced by the powerful “dry” movement that succeeded in imposing the Prohibition in the United States.

<sup>62</sup> See T. C. e Silva, *Protestant Churches*, p. 37. The *Va Matitroni* are still active today.

society. It is not surprising that, in 1974, Frelimo requested the *International Blue Cross* to help the Mozambican government combat alcoholism. In their response, the Blue Cross appointed none other than Pastor Daniel Rochat, a Swiss-Presbyterian missionary who worked in Mozambique in the 1960s, and one of the main supporters of *Va Matitroni*.<sup>63</sup>

The campaigns against alcoholism, the condemnation of prostitution and vagrancy, the exhortations for Africans to pursue education, and the attempts to control women mobility in urban spaces were not dissociated, marginal endeavors in the larger field of nativist politics in early twentieth-century Lourenço Marques. These were the very ways in which African elites sought to constitute a reputable community to be reckoned with by the colonial regime. The vibrant culture of civic debate that they spearheaded – which had in the African-run newspapers one of its most important forums – shaped the political imagination of their descendants in profound ways. If it were not for the consolidation of the *Estado Novo* in the mid 1930s, that culture would have continued to develop in the same way that patriotic arguments flourished in other colonies in the post-second world war in Africa.

From 1937 onwards, weary of any form of dissent, the *Estado Novo* shut down all the avenues of public debate. In the words of Fátima Mendonça, the *Estado Novo* extinguished “the confrontation of ideas and the relative freedom of speech that characterized the republican government.”<sup>64</sup> From here on, there was a considerable decline in the number of contributions to *O Brado Africano*. The very bold nature of the paper’s editorials, with its frontal confrontation of the injustices of colonial rule, disappeared. By the early 1960s, Marcos Zicale, then editor of the vernacular section, authored most of the articles with very little if no interaction with the paper’s readership. While the moralistic approach continued in Zicale’s editorials, his were liturgical sermons and fawning exaltations of the colonial administration.<sup>65</sup> Only occasionally did he include

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<sup>63</sup> CDSM/Questões Partidárias/IPM – A Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique (Missão Suiça) e a sua Obra, Julho 1974. Daniel Rochat was a descendant of Louis-Lucien Rochat, the founder of the International Blue Cross.

<sup>64</sup> Fátima Mendonça, “Dos Confrontos Ideológicos na Imprensa em Moçambique”, in Cláudia Castelo *et al*, eds. *Os Outros da Descolonização: Ensaios sobre o Colonialismo Tardio em Moçambique*. Lisboa: ICS, 2012, p. 206. As Jeanne Penvenne put it, “by the late 1930s the public self-confidence and ebullient challenges typical of the bright elite of the early Republican period had been replaced by a sickening servility. The challenge of claiming what was one’s due as a Portuguese citizen had been replaced by unsolicited assurances of gratitude for minor concessions from an unpredictable patron state”, J. Penvenne, “We are all Portuguese”, p. 281.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, CRL – Marcos Zicale, “Nkulukumba a Lwa ni bungoma bya bangoma”, *O Brado Africano*, Suplemento dya Xironga. Lourenço Marques, 31 Agosto 1968; CRL – Marcos Zicale, “Bayete! 28 de Maio”, *O Brado Africano*, Suplemento dya Xironga. Lourenço Marques, 28 Maio 1966. In this article Zicale celebrates the

exhortations urging his readers to mend their immoral ways. One such case was a 1966 cartoon that contrasted an honest and well-dressed African worker with a vagrant in ragged clothes. The cartoon exhorted urban residents to follow God’s commandments, to seek waged work, live honestly, and avoid the social ills that lead to vagrancy and impious life. That the editor focused on vagrancy speaks to the growing number of African urbanites in the 1960s, and the rise of the infamous *mabandido* (gangsters) in Lourenço Marques and Beira at the time.<sup>66</sup>



Fig. 3. “A worker on a resting day; A vagrant on a working day” (*O Brado Africano*, Lourenço Marques, 21 Maio 1966). The pose of the worker, in his most modern and clean attire, conveys confidence and pride, while the vagrant walks in shame, with his head down. The background behind the two figures is also revealing. The worker stands in front of a beautiful farm-house, while the vagrant stands in the wild. This seems to have been the first recourse to cartoon illustrations, a practice that would become a dominant feature of Mozambique’s print media after independence, epitomized by the figure of Xiconhoca (see chapter 3).

inauguration of the *Estado Novo*. After independence, Frelimo detained him in a reeducation camp as a traitor because of his pro-colonial regime articles and his association with the “fascist” party ANP.

<sup>66</sup> Calane da Silva & Kok Nam, “Mabandido: Um mal do colonialismo”, *Tempo*, 212, 20 Out. 1974.

The leaders of Mozambique's liberation front and vanguards of the socialist revolution may have not seen this cartoon – as it was published when they were already in Tanzania. However, they grew up in the same nativist environment that inspired the author of the cartoon and motivated Marcos Zicale to edit and publish it. The moralist debates about civic virtue that populated the pages of *Grémio's* papers, in which women's mobility and putative licentiousness in the city were regarded as a danger to the credibility of the African society were part of the intellectual environment in which Frelimo leaders gained political consciousness. They grew up listening to- and believing that urban social ills like prostitution, drunkenness, and idleness were not only a sin, but a serious harm to the motherland and its future prospects as a civilized and prosperous nation. They carried these and other moralist concerns with them into the liberation movement. Tempered with the revolutionary teachings of Mao Zedong, they turned these moralist concerns into a concrete political agenda.

### **NESAM and Social Reform: A Short Note from Joaquim Chissano's Memoir**

Most of the future leaders of Frelimo were members of NESAM or had acquaintances who were active members of the student union before joining the struggle. Eduardo Mondlane, the founding president of Frelimo, created the union with his colleagues from the *Juventude* of the Swiss-Presbyterian mission in 1949.<sup>67</sup> NESAM drew its members from the youth section of the *Instituto Negrófilo*, now called *Centro Associativo dos Negros da Colónia de Moçambique* (CAN) or Negroes Association of the Colony of Mozambique.<sup>68</sup> When he presided over the student union for a brief year, Mondlane was still being prepared to become the leading head of the Swiss-Presbyterian Church in Mozambique. After his departure in 1950 to Lisbon and then to the US to

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<sup>67</sup> In Mozambique's Protestant churches, *Juventude* is the organizational collective of bachelor young adults who have finished their training in the *Mintlawá* (the youth patrols for the youngsters) and are ready to enter adult life. See Elisabeth Morgenthaler, *Catecismo da Juventude. Tidyondzo ta Mintlawá*. Edição Bilingue. Johannesburg: Missão Suíça/Central Mission Press, 1956; IPM. *Buku dra Jaha. O Livro do Rapaz*. Maputo: IPM, Momento, 1991.

<sup>68</sup> The *Instituto Negrófilo* changed its name to CAN in 1937, as part of the *Estado Novo's* increasing control of social organizations to avoid political dissent. Some of the most prominent members and first leaders of CAN included Enoque Libombo, Levi Maximiano, Jeremias Dick Nhaca, Samuel Dabula, Raúl Bernardo Honwana, José Cantine, and Brown Paulo Dulela. Dulela was the association's first president, followed by Enoque Libombo (who held the position for 15 years). Almost all of these individuals were active members of the Swiss-Presbyterian church and other Protestant congregations (Methodists and Wesleyans). With very few exceptions, their sons and daughters, students and mentees, came to hold key positions in Frelimo during the liberation struggle and after independence. See R. B. Honwana, *Memórias*, p. 101-2.

pursue further education, Mondlane left behind a legendary aura.<sup>69</sup> He became the exemplary model of elevated personhood that Africans needed to achieve in order to force the Portuguese to concede civil rights. For the African literati of Lourenço Marques, if Mozambique could had more Mondlanes the path for full citizenship and political emancipation was certain. The youth of Lourenço Marques around NESAM dreamed of being like Mondlane. Their parents – most of whom were senior members of CAN – told them to work hard to reach the status of Mondlane who was so smart and dedicated, so the myth went, that the Portuguese offered him, a black man, a scholarship to study in a Portuguese university.<sup>70</sup>

Joaquim Chissano was one of those young men who admired Mondlane and, under his fathers' severe instructions, learned all the details about the trajectory of Mondlane.<sup>71</sup> He too, was working hard to become like Mondlane and fulfill the nativist aspirations of his father's generation and of his own generation. When the members of the NESAM elected him President of the student union, over which he presided between 1958 and 1959, Chissano dedicated his tenure to promote the tenets of the nativist political aspirations that made possible the rise of a figure like Mondlane. Together with his best friend and deputy, Pascoal Mocumbi, they revitalized the sessions of group study and tutoring lessons for students, they organized excursions and camping, and promoted events of choir singing, dancing, theater, and sports.<sup>72</sup> These activities came from the playbook of educational and cultural programs that the CAN youth had been doing under *professor* Samuel Dabula since the early 1940s.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> For a biography of Eduardo Mondlane, See Herbert Shore, "Resistance and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane", in E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, p. xxiv; André D. Clerc, *Chitlangou: Son of a Chief*. Westport: Negro University Press, 1971; Teresa Cruz e Silva, "Identity and Political Consciousness in Southern Mozambique, 1930-1974: Two Presbyterian Biographies Contextualized", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 1 (1998): 223-236; Nadja Manghezi, *O Meu Coração está nas Mãos de um Negro: Uma História da Vida de Janet Mondlane*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 2001; For a fascinating assessment of the influence of Mondlane's Christian upbringing in the Mozambican nationalist movement, see R. Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique*.

<sup>70</sup> On the immense admiration that Mondlane enjoyed among the educated young southerners, see N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 190-5. It may have not been well known in Lourenço Marques that before Mondlane, another Mozambican, Kamba Simango, went to the US to pursue education in the 1920s. The fame of Kamba Simango may have been strong in central Mozambique where he came from. See Leon Spencer, *Toward an African Church in Mozambique: Kamba Simango and the Protestant Community in Manica and Sofala, 1892-1945*. Lilongwe: Mzuni Press, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 113.

<sup>72</sup> I. Casimiro, "Movimento Associativo como Foco de Nacionalismo", p. 124.

<sup>73</sup> Samuel Dabula was a versatile figure: teacher, counselor, essayist, playwright, composer, radio announcer, and sportsman. He was a senior member of the Swiss-Presbyterian church and a member of CAN's board of directors.



As leader of NESAM, one of Chissano's concerns was the pronounced "elitism" of his associates, particularly their "ignorance" about rural life. After all, these were no longer the cattle-herders of the early 1930s, and Lourenço Marques was no longer a small town but a booming metropolis. To reverse the cultural alienation that he saw among his peers, in 1959, Chissano organized an excursion to his hometown João Belo (today Xai-Xai, the capital city of Gaza province). As he put in his memoir, the excursion was meant to put "African students in contact with the reality of the countryside, and, possibly, with peasants. We wanted them to feel the smell of mud and the aroma of rice mixed with the smell of men's sweat. The smell of life."<sup>74</sup> In one occasion, Chissano wrote and directed a play to teach his associates about the virtues of country life. The play featured an urban young man who visits his relatives in the country. "The message of the play", he writes, "was that we should not be ashamed of our origins, and that the youth of the city had a lot to learn from the countryside and vice-versa." At the end of the play, he concludes, "*o jovem da cidade acabou por gostar da Makwaela, e dos trabalhos manuais do campo*" ("the young man of the city ends up liking *Makwaela* and country manual labor").<sup>75</sup>

Here we see the germ of what would later become the pillar of Frelimo's social reformism and political culture. Long before his encounter with socialism, Chissano held the countryside as the source of moral order. True to his Christian and nativist upbringing, for Chissano the countryside was a sanctified place; a place of simplicity and hardworking people. The city, in contrast, was alienating and vicious. Here, the youth had no respect for elders, had no compassion for the less fortunate, and saw no value in manual labor. Chissano's reference to *Makwaela* as one of the virtuous aspects of life and culture in the countryside is also very significant. *Makwaela* is a folk dance originally from the mining metropolis of South Africa that migrant workers brought to southern Mozambique where it is very popular. The dance became one of the main cultural activities in Frelimo's training camps, along with study group sessions, excursions and camping, singing, dancing, theater, and sports. As we shall see in chapter 5, *Makwaela* was a mandatory dance in reeducation camps.

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On his influence on NESAM and Frelimo elite members, see E. Dabula, "O Professor dos Nacionalistas", p. 278; J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 182; and E. Filipe, "Where are the Mozambican Musicians?", p. 242-9.

<sup>74</sup> J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 178.

<sup>75</sup> J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 163-4. *Makwaela* is a folk dance, originally from South Africa. It was imported to *Sul do Save* and significantly reshaped by returning migrant workers, becoming one of the most popular folk dances in southern Mozambique.

The other aspect of urban life that troubled Joaquim Chissano in Lourenço Marques was prostitution. Writing about his departure in 1960 to pursue a degree in medicine in Portugal, and having to pass through one of the brothels to reach the airport, Chissano comments in his memoir: “I was soon pursued by the memory of *Matlotlomane*, the *bairro* of prostitutes, where as a child I had in several occasions to go visit my relatives who lived there and sold themselves to survive. At that time [as a child], I did not fully understand the evil that took place there.”<sup>76</sup> That Chissano’s last memorable vision of Lourenço Marques before his trip to Portugal was the city’s most famous place of ill repute in the *caniço* area speaks volumes about the kind of image he held of urban areas when he joined Frelimo in 1962. This iconic symbol of moral degradation in Lourenço Marques was very vivid in his mind when he ascended to the top of the liberation movement. The same can be speculatively said of Samora Machel, who lived just a few yards from *Matlotlomane* and from *Vasco da Gama* (another center of “low life” in the *caniço* area). Machel’s memories of his home in Mafalala, from where he fled to join the struggle in 1963, may have also been clouded by the “sodomitic” images and sounds of late-night drinking, dancing, gambling, and prostitution at *Vasco da Gama*.<sup>77</sup> These two places were among the first targets of the cleanup campaign carried out in October and November 1974, which resulted in the detention of hundreds of people sent to reeducation camps. While ironic, it is also significant that, after the cleanup campaign, *Vasco da Gama* was converted into the provincial headquarters of Frelimo in Maputo.

While Chissano’s narrative indicates his gradual transformation from a Tsonga nativist to a nationalist activist and revolutionary leader, the persistent conflation of ideas of civility and politics pervades his entire memoir. In several passages of his book, he mentions the influence the leaders of CAN exerted on him, particularly Samuel Dabula and Levi Maximiano. His interaction with the latter was more intense, not only because the two were acting presidents of the two most important organizations of educated black Africans at the time, but also because one of the daughters of Mr. Maximiano was his girlfriend.<sup>78</sup> The African elite of Lourenço Marques lived in a small circle of social relations. Political activism and family relations often intersected. When the NESAM activists joined Frelimo, most had very close relations and acquaintances. In other

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<sup>76</sup> J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 229.

<sup>77</sup> In his 1982 speech in Maputo, “Rompamos definitivamente com a burguesia para consolidar o poder popular: Documento do Presidente Samora Machel no comício de 22 de Junho em Maputo”, *Tempo*, 8 Agosto 1982.

<sup>78</sup> J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 183.

words, they knew one another directly or indirectly. This is an important detail. The community that these young southerners formed in Tanzania was a convergence of brothers and sisters, cousins and uncles, couples, long-time friends, schoolmates, and neighbors. This was the equation that produced the political cohesiveness that defined the Frelimo leadership after 1970 and the party's political culture.

### **Frelimo, Ethnic Cohesiveness, and the Rise of Christian-Maoist Vanguard**

When Frelimo was founded in Dar-es-Salaam in 1962, the leadership of the organization was a heterogeneous mixture of people from different ethnolinguistic origins, with different cultural and educational backgrounds. They had disparate anti-colonial sentiments and conflicting ideas about how to liberate the country. More importantly, the leadership had no clear idea about what kind of country independent Mozambique would be after the fall of the Portuguese.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, the party was immediately immersed in a crisis that almost led to its dissolution, with almost half of the founding members leaving the organization in a few months. This internal crisis is known in Frelimo's official historiography as *the crisis of the two lines*. But the crisis was much more complicated than that.<sup>80</sup> On the one hand, the crisis ensued from power struggles along ethnic rivalries. On the other, the crisis was a reflection of the mounting challenges of warfare and the transformation of Frelimo from a simple nationalist movement into a military organization. Frelimo's leaning towards Maoism resulted from this crisis. The crisis reached a boiling point during the Second Congress in 1968 and after the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane. It was this succession of events that paved the way to power for the mission-educated, Maoist vanguards from Lourenço Marques. Under the charismatic guidance of Samora Machel, they reshaped the nature of the party as well as the course and objectives of the liberation struggle. From now on, the

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<sup>79</sup> Luis de Brito, "Une Relecture Nécessaire: La Genèse du Parti-État Frelimo", *Politique Africaine*, 29 (1988), p. 16-17.

<sup>80</sup> This crisis has been in the limelight in the historiography of contemporary Mozambique, yielding perhaps one of the most heated debates on the history of Frelimo. It has been chronicled in several studies with varying perspectives. For earlier accounts of the crisis, see, among many others, Walter Opello, "Pluralism and Elite Conflict in an Independence Movement: Frelimo in the 1960s", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2,1 (1975):66-82; Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins*. London: Longman, 1983, p. 102-113; Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1983, p. 96-7. For the most recent reading of the crisis, see Georgi Derluguian, "The Social Origins of Good and Bad Governance: Re-interpreting the 1968 Schism in Frelimo", in Eric Morier-Genoud, ed. *Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique*. Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 79-101.

struggle became a vehicle to carry out a much ambitious goal than simply defeating the Portuguese and declaring independence. The goal was to build a wholly new society, with a new mentality, and a new morality.<sup>81</sup>

After Eduardo Mondlane's return to Mozambique on a visit leave in February 1961 – now as an eminent official working for the United Nations and the only Mozambican to ever earn a doctorate degree – NESAM became the center of fervent political agitation. A living hero, Mondlane had galvanized the youth politically and had promised scholarships for higher education in the US and Europe.<sup>82</sup> As soon as the news about the formation of Frelimo under Mondlane arrived in Lourenço Marques, there was a wave of clandestine flights by the youth to join the new organization. NESAM and the underground network of political activism built around the student union was the main channel of these flights to Tanzania. It was through this channel that Joaquim Chissano, Pascoal Mocumbi, Filipe Magaia, Sebastião Mabote, Armando Guebuza, Josina Muthemba, Judas Honwana, Aurélio Manave, Matias Mboa, Samora Machel, and many others managed to reach Dar es Salaam in successive waves between 1962 and 1963. The prospect of earning a scholarship for further education as medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, and other professions was the main motivation behind their decision to face the dangers of an unknown journey to Tanzania. Few of them had traveled outside the *Sul do Save* before. But they believed that with the diplomas in hand, and all the professions that Samuel Dabula and other CAN mentors instructed them to pursue, the Portuguese would be forced to recognize them as full citizens.<sup>83</sup> The idea of an armed struggle was not part of their imagination. Eduardo Mondlane did not fully

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<sup>81</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos/Frelimo, II Conferência do DEC (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), Recomendações, Setembro 1970.

<sup>82</sup> As Amaral Matos recalled from Mondlane's visit, "he did not talk to us about independence. He spoke about the need for us to go further on our education, and that we should mobilize young students who would benefit from scholarships abroad." In fact, as soon as Mondlane returned to the US, he established with his mentor André Clerk and his wife Janet Johnson a secret organization to help fund Mozambican students pursuing college degrees in Portugal and elsewhere. Joaquim Chissano and Pascoal Mocumbi (who were in Lisbon), Luis Bernardo, and many others were beneficiaries of these funds. See Amaral Matos, "Crónica Oral Histórica", in Alexandrino José e Paula Maria Meneses, orgs. *Moçambique 16 Anos de Historiografia: Focos, Problemas, Metodologias, Desafios para a Década de 90*. Maputo: Notícias, 1991, p. 130; N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 213; J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 206.

<sup>83</sup> For detailed descriptions of the flights to Tanzania (the successful and the failed ones), and the motivations behind them, see the testimonies of Abner Muthemba, Albino Magaia, Amós Mahanjane, André Nkuna, Cândido Mondlane, João Pelembe, Lina Magaia, José Moyane, Juvenália Muthemba, and Milagre Mazuze in Ana Bouene Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*. Maputo: Marimbique, 2012. On the reference to Samuel Dabula's influence on the youth who joined Frelimo to further their education, see J. Chissano, *Vidas*, p. 269.

consider such a course when he exchanged his academic life for a political career.<sup>84</sup> Given their higher level of education compared to the majority of militants from central and northern Mozambique, the mission-educated southerners quickly assumed leadership roles in the organization as secretaries and deputy-secretaries of the various branches of the party.<sup>85</sup>

For example, Mondlane appointed Joaquim Chissano as his secretary, from where the former president of NESAM rose to the position of Secretary of Security and chief representative of Frelimo in Tanzania. He put Pascoal Mocumbi and Judas Honwana in charge of the Department of Information and Propaganda. He nominated Aurélio Manave as secretary for Health. Armando Guebuza became the secretary for the Department of Education and Culture, and later assumed the important position as the party's chief political commissar.<sup>86</sup> Although the predominance of southerners in the party's top positions was partly due to their qualifications, the central point is that Mondlane was more comfortable with militants from his ethnic and regional origins. After the initial schisms that led to the expulsion and defection of most of the founding members of the party – which happened in his absence – Mondlane sought to build a team that he could trust and in which he could exert more control.<sup>87</sup> It seemed natural to him that such team was comprised of the young cadres who spoke his mother tongue, who were educated by his missionary instructors, who matured politically in the student union that he created, and above all, who revered him like a living messiah.<sup>88</sup> With his constant diplomatic traveling, he could count on the devotion of these cadres to run the party in his absence. The same cannot be said of other cadres, particularly the two most senior members of the party leadership, vice-President Uria Simango and Marcelino dos Santos (the then secretary for foreign relations). Based on the letters he sent to his wife Janet Johnson in 1964, Mondlane did not trust them.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See R. Faris, *Liberating Mission*.

<sup>85</sup> L. Brito, "Le Frelimo", p. 115.

<sup>86</sup> AGGPN/Documentos da Frelimo/O Segundo Congresso da Frelimo – Discurso Oficial do Comité Central, 1968; See N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 261.

<sup>87</sup> See N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 213. At the time of the formation of Frelimo, Mondlane had left the UN to take a faculty position at Syracuse university. It was during his absence while he was trying to finish his contract at Syracuse that most founding members of the party left the organization, some purged out and others on their own. For details on this, see J. Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique*, p. 55-62.

<sup>88</sup> Abner Sansão Muthemba equated Mondlane with the biblical Moses. As he told Ana Mussanhane in an interview: "The Swiss never talked to us about politics, but they often talked about the exodus of Israelites from Egypt. This had a profound impact on us, and for us, Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane was Moses." A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 27.

<sup>89</sup> In one letter to Janet in 1964, he wrote: "I am not sure if Simango will continue to be my ally in this struggle for freedom. What I hear about him from time to time makes me think if he is not ambitious enough to use anything he

Mondlane's preference for southerners created a great deal of resentment among militants from other ethnic groups. The appointment of Samora Machel as chief commander and Secretary for Defense was perhaps the most polemical of all. Filipe Magaia, who Mondlane chose to lead the first group sent to Algeria for military training and then became Frelimo's first Secretary of Defense and army commander, was tragically shot by one of his men in 1966. Instead of his deputy, Casal Ribeiro (from central Mozambique), Mondlane appointed Samora Machel as the new army commander.<sup>90</sup> Although Machel had proved himself as one of the best military commanders – especially after leading the establishment of the first training camp in Kongwa and then in Nachingwea – there was more to his appointment than military expertise. He had far more in common with Mondlane than most military commanders. Machel was one of the enthusiastic youth activists who went to see Mondlane in Lourenço Marques during his glorious visit in 1961. The two leaders were originally from Gaza. Their grandparents had been in the army regiments of the pre-colonial Nguni empire of Gaza, for which they fought during the 1894 and 1890 wars against the Portuguese. This was a heritage they both felt very proud about.<sup>91</sup>

By 1967, therefore, a somewhat parallel leadership team dominated by mission-educated southerners had been formed around Eduardo Mondlane. Its headquarters was the military training camp in Nachingwea, not Dar es Salaam.<sup>92</sup> Either by intention or by an “accidental” outcome of social affinities, this ethnically cohesive team alienated militants from other ethnic groups. It is not surprising that Uria Simango and others resented their neglected position, especially when it came to important decisions in the organization.<sup>93</sup> The increasing demands of warfare, which placed the military aspects of the struggle at the center of the party's efforts, ushered the process

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might have against me one day.” As to Marcelino dos Santos, Mondlane did not approve his bohemian lifestyle and his unwillingness to stay in Dar es Salaam. See N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 249-50.

<sup>90</sup> Luís de Brito argues that there was “a southern complot” in the succession of Filipe Magaia. Casal Ribeiro (from central Mozambique) should have been his successor as deputy-secretary of Defense, but Mondlane could only trust a southerner in such an important position. The same pattern was followed after Mondlane's death, with Machel taking the seat instead of vice-president Uria Simango. Luís de Brito, “Le Frelimo et la Construction de l'Etat National au Mozambique”, PhD Thesis, Université de Paris 8, 1991, p. 115-6.

<sup>91</sup> See Ian Christie, *Samora Machel: Uma Biografia*. Maputo: Ndjira, 1996, p. 27; A. D. Clerc, *Chitlangou*.

<sup>92</sup> See testimony by Cândido Mondlane in A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 264-5. As Cândido Mondlane recalled, “all the life of Frelimo was managed from Nachingwea. I think that this created problems and intensified the conflicts within the party leadership because Eduardo Mondlane was always in Nachingwea, where he came to give talks.”

<sup>93</sup> See AGGPN/Documentos da Frelimo/Situação Sombria na Frelimo, por Uria Simango, 3 Nov. 1969.

of “ethnic cohesiveness” in the party leadership. Military commanders like Samora Machel became more influential than the senior political leaders like Simango.<sup>94</sup>

The two years leading to the Second Congress in July 1968 strengthened the dominance of the southerners in the Front’s leadership even more. This does not suggest that southerners did not have politico-strategic – or even personal – disagreements among themselves. While they certainly had differences, and continued to have differences after independence, their common background and strong affinities facilitated a degree of cohesiveness that other sub-groups within the party did not possess. One of the most important outcomes of this cohesiveness was the strong commitment to *pensamento único* (consensus), a tradition that is still very strong in Frelimo’s political culture.<sup>95</sup> The party had to speak in *one* single voice. Multiple voices meant disunity and dissent. No decision could be taken before all members of the Politburo or the Central Committee have reached consensus. If hours, days, or weeks were needed to reach one single thought on a given subject, then the meeting would take as long as necessary.<sup>96</sup> Consensus within the party leadership was one of Mao Zedong’s key prescriptions for a successful revolution.<sup>97</sup> The Soviets called it democratic centralism.<sup>98</sup> Yet, long meetings to reach consensus were part of southern Tsonga tradition. They were so impressive that missionary Henri Junod considered them one of the most picturesque yet beautiful aspects of “tribal life” that missionaries should strive to preserve.<sup>99</sup> Protestant congregants solved problems in long meetings in which everyone had a say.<sup>100</sup> Eduardo Mondlane found it hard to build consensus in the multi-ethnic Central Committee before the arrival of the stream of young southerners.<sup>101</sup> As he prepared the reports and the points of agenda for the Second Congress – which was scheduled to take place in Mozambican territory in July 1968 – Mondlane had the outline of the resolutions that were to be approved in the meeting. The resolutions had

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<sup>94</sup> See Colin Darch and David Hedges, “ ‘Não Temos a Possibilidade de Herdar Nada de Portugal’: As Raízes do Exclusivismo e Vanguardismo Político em Moçambique, 1969-1977”, in Gláucia V. Boas, ed. *Territórios da Língua Portuguesa. Culturas, Sociedades, Políticas. Anais do IV Congresso Luso-Africano-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais, Rio de Janeiro, 1 a 5 de Setembro de 1996*. Rio de Janeiro, UFRJ-IFICS, 1998, p. 139.

<sup>95</sup> “Estatutos e Programa da Frente de Libertação de Moçambique”, in João Reis e Armando Pedro Muiwane, org. *Datas e Documentos da História da FRELIMO*. Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional, 1975, p. 51.

<sup>96</sup> See S. Lefanu, *S if for Samora*, p. 195.

<sup>97</sup> See M. Tse-Tung, “Methods of Work of Party Committees”, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 377.

<sup>98</sup> Neil Harding, *Lenin’s Political Thought: Theory and Practice in Democratic Revolution*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1977, p. 58.

<sup>99</sup> H. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol 1. p. 328.

<sup>100</sup> T. Cruz e Silva, *Protestant Churches*, p. 46.

<sup>101</sup> N. Manghezi, *O Meu Coração*, p. 249-50

been consensually discussed and approved with his closest allies. Frelimo would emerge from the Congress as a socialist party with a Maoist guerrilla strategy and an agenda for social reform.

*The Second Congress, Maoism, and the Radicalization of Frelimo*

Frelimo's Second Congress in July 1968 was the turning point in the liberation struggle and in the ideological transformation of the party. The Congress also marked the beginning of the rise of Samora Machel and a cohort of southern mission-educated cadres to the top ranks in the leadership of the party. The particulars of the Congress and the subsequent developments have largely been covered in the historiography of Mozambique.<sup>102</sup> But it is important to recapitulate some of the key events in order to understand the significance of the southerners' takeover of the party leadership and the reorientation of the objectives of the liberation struggle.

The Congress was called on to resolve the mounting crisis within the party. Starting with a small group of 250 men in 1964, Frelimo grew to more than 8,000 guerrillas in 1968.<sup>103</sup> From the beginning of the war, Frelimo operated both as a liberation force and a provisional government.<sup>104</sup> With the initial success of the struggle, the Front had relative control over vast areas in Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces – the so-called *zonas libertadas* or liberated zones. This double-task overstretched the party's capacity to coordinate the production and trade networks disrupted by the war, as well as to provide social services such as education and health care to local populations in the liberated areas. The Portuguese counterinsurgency took away the initiative from the guerrillas and the euphoria of the first two years. The patience of the rural populations of northern Mozambique was running low – much of the war effort rested on their backs. They provided food, intelligence, shelter, and their sons and husbands who made the bulk

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<sup>102</sup> E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*; B. Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins*, p. 108-129; A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution*, p. 97-8.

<sup>103</sup> AGGPN/Documentos da Frelimo/O Segundo Congresso da Frelimo – Discurso Oficial do Comité Central, 1968. See also João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Protected Villages and Communal Villages in the Mozambican Province of Tete (1968-1982): A History of State Resettlement Policies, Development and War." Ph.D. thesis, University of Bradford, 1993, p. 176.

<sup>104</sup> As Eduardo Mondlane elaborated in 1968: "The emerging political structure follows the characteristic pattern of one party democracy; and Frelimo, as well as being the driving force behind the liberation struggle, is becoming the government in the liberated areas", E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, p. 167-9. For a more elaborated argument of Frelimo as a proto-state during the armed struggle, see Michael Panzer, "A Nation in Name, a State in Exile: The Frelimo Proto-State, Youth, Gender, and the Liberation of Mozambique, 1962-1975", Ph.D. Thesis, State University New York, 2013; and Michael Panzer, "Building a Revolutionary Constituency: Mozambican Refugees and the Development of the Frelimo Proto-state, 1964-1968", *Social Dynamics*, 39, 1 (2013): 5-23.



of the guerrilla army. The soldiers, mostly recruited among the refugee communities who crossed the Rovuma river into Tanzania, were also running out of stamina (many deserted in droves, either going back to their homes, finding refuge in Malawi, or handing themselves over to the Portuguese).<sup>105</sup>

This dispirited state of things was even more acute among students at the Mozambique Institute – a secondary school founded and directed by Mondlane’s wife, Janet. Seeing little progress in the struggle, students refused to undergo military training and to serve in the war effort and demanded scholarships to go abroad.<sup>106</sup> They questioned Mondlane’s presidency. Various factions emerged, each proposing a different strategy to fight the Portuguese. Frelimo needed urgently to ascertain that it had political and military capacity to continue the struggle against a much powerful enemy and convince the people that their sacrifice would take much longer than expected. This is where the teachings of Mao Zedong and the Chinese model of protracted warfare came to play a key role in the ideological orientation of Frelimo. The Second Congress was meant to revamp the struggle and institutionalize the Maoist strategy.

Frelimo’s leaning towards socialism happened slow and incrementally. It was not until 1968 that the party began to speak more openly about its socialist orientation.<sup>107</sup> Until then various brands of socialism circulated within the movement, and only a few members regarded themselves Marxists, particularly the mullato-clique (Marcelino dos Santos, Jorge Rebelo, Sérgio Vieira, and Óscar Monteiro).<sup>108</sup> The most important development in Frelimo’s socialist leaning was the increased importance of military commanders in the party’s leadership. Samora Machel was certainly the most important figure within this group. Since Machel founded the training camp of Nachingwea in late 1965, he had the assistance of Chinese military instructors who came to Tanzania as part of the cooperation package that President Nyerere obtained from his first trip to

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<sup>105</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da Frelimo/Josina Muthemba – Relatório, 1968-1969/Palestra sobre Militante da Frelimo, 26 Janeiro 1969.

<sup>106</sup> M. Panzer, “A Nation in Name, a State in Exile.” I discuss this in more detail in chapter 2.

<sup>107</sup> E Mondlane, “The Evolution of Frelimo”, in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader: Documents of the National Liberation Movements*. Vol. 2. London: Zed Press, 1982, p.121-2.

<sup>108</sup> The mullatos-clique’s initiation into Marxism happened in Portugal where they were students. Influenced by the Portuguese Communist Party, they professed a classical European Marxism, more aligned with the ideology of outlawed communist parties across the western world. See Sergio Vieira, *Participei, por isso Testemunho*. Maputo: Ndjira, 2010.

China in 1965.<sup>109</sup> According to Hélder Martins (Machel's personal physician between 1965 and 1968), the presence of Chinese instructors in Nachingwea was the most influential factor in Machel's ideological maturity. The Chinese, Martins wrote, "were not only military instructors, [they were] also political instructors. They suggested readings for Samora, and through their suggestion, Samora read almost all the 'Complete Works of Mao Zedong.'"<sup>110</sup> Whether Machel did in fact read all of Mao's works cannot be determined with certainty. But an examination of all his speeches from 1970 onwards clearly shows that he did indeed "drink" from Mao Zedong, sometimes copying and pasting entire sentences from the Chinese Chairman into his own writings.<sup>111</sup>

As early as 1965 Machel had been implementing Maoist methods in training Frelimo soldiers in Nachingwea. The notion of reeducation was also part of the Chinese influence. Nachingwea soon became the most important training camp, and almost all military instructors were trained here under the direct influence of Samora Machel.<sup>112</sup> When Machel assumed the important post of chief army commander in 1967, he certainly instructed other military commanders and military instructors to follow his method.<sup>113</sup> By this time, Machel and his closest comrades in the Department of Defense – all of whom were largely influenced by Chinese instructors – were convinced that the Chinese model of protracted guerrilla warfare was the best strategy to regain the initiative of the war against the Portuguese.<sup>114</sup> The strategy was based on an emphasis on the political mobilization of the peasantry and the socio-economic transformations in

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<sup>109</sup> Although the Tanzania-Zambia railway is the most emblematic result of Tanzania-China relations, one of the first key aids that Tanzania received from China was military assistance. This came after the mutiny of soldiers which Nyerere had to crush with the help of the British assistance. But with the Rhodesian unilateral declaration of independence, relationships with Britain deteriorated and Nyerere was looking for new partnerships without the neo-liberal strings. Frelimo might have trailed to get their share of the Chinese aid package. See Martin Bailey, "Tanzania and China", *African Affairs*, 74, 294 (1975), p. 40.

<sup>110</sup> Hélder Martins, "Samora na Luta Armada (1965-1968)", in António Sopa, ed. *Samora Homem do Povo*. Maputo: Meguezo, 2001, p. 111.

<sup>111</sup> Although Samora Machel mentioned Marx and Lenin more than Mao, the imprint of Mao permeates all his speeches and writings. One of the most Maoist texts that Samora Machel wrote was the speech on the occasion of the investiture of the transitional government, which had whole formulations copied and pasted from Mao Zedong.

<sup>112</sup> See the testimony of Cândido Mondlane in A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 260-1.

<sup>113</sup> See H. Martins, "Samora na Luta Armada (1965-1968)", p. 99-115; See also the interview with José Moiane in "O Direito e a Justiça nas Zonas Libertadas", in *Justiça Popular*, 8,9 (1984): 11-14. The unpublished manuscript on the history of the liberation struggle is more revealing on this, Luís de Brito, João Paulo Borges Coelho, e José Negrão, *História da Luta Armada de Libertação Nacional*. Maputo: UEM, 1985 [Unpublished Manuscript].

<sup>114</sup> Cândido Mondlane recalled that the political commissariat of Frelimo's army, the FPLM, was made up almost entirely by militants trained in China. See A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 260.

the areas that the guerrilla occupied. These transformation included economic production and commerce, education and campaigns against “traditional education.” Under this “revolutionary model”, political objectives prevailed over military or tactical strategy. In other words, the military commanders had begun conceiving the liberation struggle as a revolution towards socialism.<sup>115</sup>

Given the inaccessibility of Frelimo’s archives, it is not fully clear yet how Eduardo Mondlane was brought into the same “revolutionary” thinking. The most suggestive clue lies in his strong proximity with Machel and the military commanders from southern Mozambique such as Sebastião Mabote, Cândido Mondlane, Aurélio Manave, José Moiane, and others. As Cândido Mondlane recalled, president Mondlane (who was his uncle), visited Nachingwea frequently to discuss all aspects of the party’s life and to give talks to instructors. Cândido Mondlane – who was also the chief military instructor under Machel – maintained that the General Staff of the Army in Nachingwea was the *de facto* party leadership (“*Toda a vida passou a ser gerida em Nachingwea; A Frelimo era o tal Estado-Maior*”).<sup>116</sup> In Nachingwea people spoke the revolutionary language of Maoism with great enthusiasm and conviction. President Mondlane did not escape the powerful charm of his subordinates’ revolutionary fervor. In the Second Congress he recognized the importance of the Maoist method in shaping the disciplinary and political line of the party cadres, and singled out Samora Machel with a praising note:

The other militant whose contribution deserves a special mention at this moment is Samora Machel, who established the political and military training camps of Kongwa and Nachingwea. The political line and military discipline that comrade Samora was able to instill in the spirit of the militants in these two camps has settled so deeply in the life of Mozambican guerrillas who now serve as the basic elements in the struggle for national liberation, without whom our struggle would not have advanced as it did in the last three and a half years.<sup>117</sup>

Soon after the Congress – in which Mondlane secured a victory for a second mandate and the Maoist warfare strategy was approved by a majority vote – the president consented for the first time in an interview that “Frelimo is now really far more socialist, revolutionary, and progressive than ever before, and now tends more and more in the direction of socialism of the Marxist-

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<sup>115</sup> L. Brito, J. P. Borges Coelho, e J. Negrão, *História da Luta Armada de Libertação Nacional*, p. 48-55.

<sup>116</sup> A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 264-5.

<sup>117</sup> AGGPN/Documentos da Frelimo/O Segundo Congresso da Frelimo – Discurso Oficial do Comité Central, 1968, p. 13.

Leninist variety.”<sup>118</sup> While Mondlane had clearly embraced socialism by this time, he continued to see no contradiction between his Christian orientation with the new ideology of his party. As he said in the same interview in 1968:

The training of politico-military cadres includes instruction about socialism. So that those who come to the movement with a Catholic religious background continue to be Catholics but Marxist Catholics. It is possible!<sup>119</sup>

Mondlane’s reference to Catholics here speaks to the fact that most Frelimo guerrilla recruits were either Catholic or Muslim.<sup>120</sup> This statement also confirms that, as Herbert Shore once asserted, Mondlane was still looking for a way to reconcile his Christian and socio-democratic orientations with socialism. According to Shore, Mondlane was “deeply attracted to the top-roots of the American Revolution and read extensively on the life and work of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine.”<sup>121</sup> Having lived in the US for more than a decade, he was looking for a way to combine the best of the American revolutionary experience and the early republican spirit with the promising vision of rapid progress and egalitarianism of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Mao Zedong. As Shore noted, in reading the classics of Marxism, “it was the dynamic than dogma that interested Mondlane.”<sup>122</sup> The same cannot be said of his academically less prepared subordinates, who absorbed the teachings of Mao Zedong almost unfiltered. Although they spoke of Marxism-Leninism, in fact they professed the Maoist version of Marxism-Leninism. We will never know what kind of ideological synthesis Mondlane would have produced. Whatever he was working on in that fatidic day of February 3, 1969, it all went on smokes as the parcel bomb that the Portuguese secret police implanted in a copy of Plekhanov’s book exploded and took his life.<sup>123</sup> Now it was up to his subordinates to forge the ideological synthesis. And they did. Some scholars have called it *Marxismo de Samora* or *Samorismo*.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> E. Mondlane, “The Evolution of Frelimo”, in A. de Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 2, p. 121.

<sup>119</sup> E. Mondlane, “The Evolution of Frelimo”, in A. de Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 2, p. 121.

<sup>120</sup> Compared to the south, the presence of Protestant missions was not very significant in northern Mozambique.

<sup>121</sup> Herbert Shore, “Resistance and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane”, in E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, p. xxiv.

<sup>122</sup> H. Shore, “Resistance and Revolution” p. xxiv.

<sup>123</sup> H. Shore, “Resistance and Revolution.”

<sup>124</sup> Aquino de Bragança, “O Marxismo de Samora”, *Três Continentes*, 3 (1980): 43-50; I. Christie, *Samora Machel*, p. 245.

### *Samorismo and the Reformist Ideology of Frelimo*

Samora Machel succeeded Mondlane after a contentious and very tense transition. Uria Simango, the vice-president, had for a long time been alienated from the main political decisions of the organization and had little chances to assume the reins of power. In addition to approving a Maoist military strategy, the most decisive outcome of the Second Congress was the extension of the number of members in the Central Committee from 20 to 40.<sup>125</sup> The cohort of young southerners who already held bureaucratic positions in the organization filled most of the new high-ranking posts. They not only distrusted Simango because of his ethnic origins and detachment from the military aspects of the struggle, they also saw him lacking in the ideological fervor that they now shared. On his part, Simango did not see any sense in the new ideological craze that had taken over the party. As he angrily wrote in the pamphlet he titled “Gloomy Situation in Frelimo”: “the question of scientific socialism and capitalism in Mozambique should not be allowed to divide us.”<sup>126</sup> His angry and denunciatory pamphlet sealed his fate. In May 1970, the Central Committee gathered and decided to expel him from the party and elected Samora Machel as the new president. The note that the Central Committee published on Simango’s expulsion was brief. It did not say anything about Simango’s actual crime. Instead, it focused on his moral and political behavior:

Having analyzed the political and moral behavior of Uria Simango, characterized by counterrevolutionary action, opportunism, ambition, corruption and irresponsibility, the Central Committee concluded that he does not have the qualities to be a member of Frelimo and decided to expel him from our organization.<sup>127</sup>

This mode of condemnation became the new trend in the party’s lexicon and political culture. A heavily moralist, puritanical, belittling, and often ambiguous language suddenly replaced the careful and somewhat conciliatory language of Eduardo Mondlane, particularly his tendency to remain politically correct. Much of this change can be attributed to the aggressive and combative character of Samora Machel. However, while he certainly embodied the new aggressive

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<sup>125</sup> B. Munslow, *Mozambique*, p. 108.

<sup>126</sup> AGGPN/Documentos da FRELIMO/Situação Sombria na FRELIMO, por Uria Simango, 3 Nov. 1969. Also published as *Gloomy Situation in FRELIMO*. In his pamphlet, Simango denounced what he saw (and partly rightly so) as a forceful and illegal takeover of power by the southerners. While some of his claims were true – for example the rampant use of corporal punishment in guerrilla bases and the execution of deviant soldiers – his long letter showed his lack of political tact.

<sup>127</sup> “Comunicado do Comité Central”, in J. Reis e A. Muiuane, org. *Datas e Documentos da História da Frelimo*, p. 79-80.

spirit of the revolutionaries, his views were largely consensual within the new Central Committee. Although Aquino de Bragança and Ian Christie – the two scholars who coined the term *samorismo* – would certainly disagree with my analysis, the essence of Samora’s Marxism was the quasi-evangelical harangues that he delivered in speeches and the doctrinaire pamphlets that he wrote about moral comportment and revolutionary asceticism.

As soon as he assumed power, Samora Machel combined his work as military commander, political leader, and a vigorous moral crusader. In communiqués, directives, editorials, and speeches delivered to Frelimo cadres and civilian populations between 1970 and 1974, Machel condemned the moral decay within the liberation movement. He urged Frelimo militants to cleanse their inner selves from “decadent habits” allegedly inherited from feudalism and colonialism, such as intrigue, individualism, drinking, sexual promiscuity, idleness, and carelessness. He defined these habits as moral enemies living inside the mind of individuals, bred by colonial and traditional society. For him, the Mozambican people – not just the party cadres or guerrillas – had to be morally upright and lead a righteous life. They had to possess the qualities that both Christianity and Maoism held dear: those of solidarity, kindness, collectivism, self-discipline, and so on. These qualities, Machel believed, could only be attained through a revolutionary education and reeducation; through criticism and self-criticism; and through the emulation of the example of revolutionary leaders.<sup>128</sup> As he warned his subordinates in Nachingwea in September 1970:

If we do not engage in a serious fight against the decay in our minds, against the putridness that exists in our zone, the representatives of the enemy in our midst, sooner or later, shall disunite and destroy us. *We must fight the moral enemy* through the lessons from our leaders, from the meetings, from the sessions of criticism and self-criticism, and above all, from the effort that each one of us does to liquidate the internal enemy. [My emphasis]<sup>129</sup>

The messianic and moralist overtones of *samorismo* are not exceptional. The very doctrine of Marxism was born out of moralist condemnations of capitalism and social decay, and as philosopher Byron Kaldis notes, “there are moments when [Karl Marx himself] writes in the tonalities of an Old Testament prophet.”<sup>130</sup> But the Maoist imprint in Samora’s words is

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<sup>128</sup> Frelimo, “Revolutionary Education”, in A. Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 3, p. 194-5.

<sup>129</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da Frelimo/Samora Machel - Nota de Estudo para os Instrutores Compreender a Nossa Tarefa, 6 December 1970, p. 10.

<sup>130</sup> Byron Kaldis, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*. SAGE Publications, Online, 2013. See entry for Marx and Marxist Ethics. For further elaborations on Marxism and morality, see Steven Lukes, *Marxism and*

unmistakable.<sup>131</sup> More than teaching him how to organize and run a guerilla army of largely illiterate peasants with sheer discipline and verticality, the Chinese Chairman furnished Machel with a more powerful language for a moral critique of Portuguese colonialism and the colonial society as part of the ‘hateful’ global capitalist system. Mao also offered him a more seductive understanding of the link between the liberation struggle and individual self-betterment. Like the founding fathers of socialism, Mao’s writings are permeated with moral condemnations of capitalism and imperialism, and calls for the permanent reformation of the individual self as an integral, essential element of socialist revolution.<sup>132</sup>

As scholars of Mao Zedong’s political thought have asserted, the Chinese Chairman lauded the virtues of the peasantry and the rural world. He praised the hardworking and modesty of peasants’ lifestyle and their revolutionary predisposition, which he contrasted with the “corrupting effects of material well-being” of the urban bourgeoisie and the Western society at large.<sup>133</sup> For him, the struggle for the self was pivotal for the emergence of the “new humanity and new [communist] society” or “Great Harmony”, in which the “selfless service to the collectivity” would be the most virtuous of human values.<sup>134</sup>

Samora Machel had the entire collection of Mao’s red books, particularly the volumes of his *Selected Works*.<sup>135</sup> Mao’s catechisms about unity, collective manual labor, uprightness of conduct, frugality, temperance, moral rectitude, and self-sacrifice for the greater cause of liberation rang very deep in his heart. They resonated very well with his Protestant background and that of

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*Morality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983; Kai Nielsen, *Marxism and the Moral Point of View: Morality, Ideology, and Historical Materialism*. London: Westview Press, 1989; Nicholas Churchich, *Marxism and Morality: A Critical Examination of Marxist Ethics*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1994.

<sup>131</sup> See John Lewis, *Leadership in Communist China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963; Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>132</sup> S. Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 123-8.

<sup>133</sup> S. Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, p.123-8. According to Schram, Mao’s moralist exhortations for self-reformation were instrumental during the Cultural Revolution, in which he “sought to root out the egoism which had its source, he had come to believe, not simply in the unequal distribution of rewards according to a hierarchical salary structure, but in the heart of man” (p. 12).

<sup>134</sup> Mao’s reference to Great Harmony shows links with New Harmony, one of the earliest socialist experiments undertaken by Robert Owen in Indiana in the United States in the 1820s (Joshua Muravchik, *Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002, p. 31-59.) On Mao’s reference to Great harmony, see “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship”, in *Selected Works*, vol 4, p. 414. See also Denis Janz, *World Christianity and Marxism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 127. For a compelling discussion of socialism and Christianity, see Joe Slovo, “Shared Values: Socialism and Religion”, *The African Communist*, (1994): 46-9.

<sup>135</sup> Machel’s personal archive in Maputo include all the red books by Mao Zedong. From my analysis, most of his Marxist assertions come from Volume 4 of Mao’s *Selected Works*.

his closest mission-educated comrades. Throughout his political career, Machel pursued these virtues with obsessive fervor. He sought to instill them in every militant – and after independence, in every citizen. In 1970, the Central Committee synthesized the qualities in a pamphlet entitled *Qualidades de um Membro do Comité Central* (Qualities of the Member of the Central Committee).<sup>136</sup> In a huge collection of Frelimo key texts, this is the most evangelical and equally Maoist pamphlet that the party produced. In essence, it outlined the qualities of the new man. After independence, it informed Frelimo’s conception of citizenship and demarcated the line between citizens and non-citizens. Non-citizens – those found lacking in the qualities of the new man – had to be reeducated in labor camps.

### *The Moral Attributes of Frelimo’s New Man and the Enemy Within*

The organizer of the most recent collection of Frelimo’s key texts attributes the authorship of the pamphlet on the qualities of the member of the Central Committee to Samora Machel.<sup>137</sup> Earlier collections do not mention any individual author. The text seem to be originally written and circulated among top cadres in late 1968 or early 1969, and workshops were promoted for members to study and debate it while Eduardo Mondlane was still alive.<sup>138</sup> It might have been authored by him, and later on revised by Samora Machel. The title of the pamphlet seem to have been changed from “*Qualidades de um Membro da Frelimo*” to focus on the Central Committee, following the schism within the leadership and the eviction of Uria Simango. Despite its title, which only refers to the highest-ranking officials, the text was in fact concerned with the qualities expected from *all* members of the liberation movement. It is a pedagogical text par excellence, reading like a biblical sermon. After independence, it served as the basis for subsequent elaborations on the attributes of the socialist new man (see chapter 2).

The symbiotic imprint of the “Gospel of the Hoe” and Maoism are very pronounced in this document. The author of the document seem to have been inspired by Mao Zedong’s “*Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention*”, a set of rules that the Chinese Chairman

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<sup>136</sup> “Qualidades de um Membro do Comité Central”, in J. Reis e A. Muiuane, org. *Datas e Documentos da História da Frelimo*, pp. 87-110.

<sup>137</sup> Carlos Siliya, coord. *Samora Machel na Memória do Povo e do Mundo: Discursos Volume 1*. Maputo: CPHLLN, 2011. For Frelimo’s official publications, see Colin Darch, “As Publicações da FRELIMO: Um Estudo Preliminar”, *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 2 (1981): 105-120.

<sup>138</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da Frelimo/Josina Muthemba – Relatório, 1968-1969/Palestra sobre Militante da Frelimo, 26 Janeiro 1969.



elaborated to discipline the Red Army in the 1920s. In the “*Three Main Rules of Discipline*”, Chairman Mao determined that cadres had to: “1) Obey orders in all your actions; 2) Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the Masses; 3) Turn in everything captured.” And in the “*Eight Points for Attention*”, he added: “1) Speak politely; 2) Pay fairly for what you buy; 3) Return everything you borrow; 4) Pay for anything you damage; 5) Don't hit or swear at people; 6) Don't damage crops; 7) Don't take liberties with women; and 8) Don't ill-treat captives.”<sup>139</sup>

The author of *Qualidades* did not list the rules for party cadres in a systematic way. The text is rather a long harangue about how party members ought to behave. The party militant – often referred to as *he, the man* (but including *her, the woman*) – was expected to be in a constant battle for his moral betterment; to be conscious of his mistakes; to always strive to acquire new qualities; and distinguish himself by “revolutionary virtues.”<sup>140</sup> A Frelimo militant was expected to be the model for the Mozambican new man. He had to “sacrifice private interests for the benefit of the *povo*”; he had to be “disciplined and respectful to his hierarchical superiors.” He had to “always be honest, kind, and courteous in criticizing his colleagues.” He had to “stand against *ideias velhas* (old ideas and values: tribalism, individualism, racism, and intrigue).” The pamphlet also stressed the need for internal matters to be settled internally, through criticism and self-criticism within the *estruturas* or party structures, until consensus was found.<sup>141</sup> And, finally, as a disciplined, self-denying, and self-reliant man, the militant of Frelimo was expected to cherish collective manual labor and rely on his sweat for shelter and food.<sup>142</sup> These were the qualities of the new man.

Like Mao Zedong's “*Three Main Rules of Discipline*”, Frelimo's Central Committee produced and publicized the pamphlet on the qualities of the party militant during the critical period of the armed struggle. In 1970 the Portuguese army launched *Operação Nó Górdio* (operation Gordian Knot), by far the largest military campaign that they undertook in the entire colonial war.<sup>143</sup> Although the campaign failed in its goal of rooting out the guerrilla, it made tremendous damage to Frelimo. The aggressive phase of the war demanded a new and more

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<sup>139</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, “On the Reissue of the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention – Instruction of the General Headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army”, in *Selected Works, Vol 4*, p. 155.

<sup>140</sup> Frelimo, “Qualidades de um Membro do Comité Central”, p. 87.

<sup>141</sup> This particular point addressed one of the key issues in the internal schism that ended with the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane in February 1969 and the expulsion of vice-President Uria Simango in May 1970.

<sup>142</sup> Frelimo, “Qualidades de um Membro do Comité Central.”

<sup>143</sup> For details on Operation Gordon Knot, see, among many others, John Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa: The Portuguese Way of War, 1961-1974*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998; and J. P. Borges Coelho, “Protected Villages and Communal Villages”, p. 173.

vigorous response from the guerrilla commanders. Mao Zedong's catechisms proved detrimental for Samora Machel and his commanders in creating a cohesive, disciplined and tightly organized guerrilla force and a politically engaged civilian population to provide the necessary support for the struggle. However, as the chief military commander, Machel was not only interested in instructing his subordinates to be tactically skilled guerrillas. He wanted them to be magnanimous, honest, kind, and morally upright individuals, the "agents of change."<sup>144</sup> In his view, the struggle in which Frelimo was involved went beyond military operations. As much as defeating the Portuguese and winning the war was important, the liberation struggle had to operate profound changes in the mindset of the guerrilla. The struggle was a process of personal and collective purification, and Machel was its master crusader. As Samora Machel lectured a group of military instructors in the training camp (CPPM) of Nachingwea in 1972, their work was not to train killers, but agents of moral change, the very new man:

The work of the CPPM is not to produce 'killers', but to train true revolutionary fighters, authentic FRELIMO soldiers. What characterizes the FRELIMO soldier is his political consciousness. We train fighters whose essential task is to build a new society. (...) A fighter is therefore a conscious and active agent in the transformation of society. The CPPM is the laboratory where we create this agent of change, the New Man. The fight against the enemy in our own minds – the capitalist ideology imposed by colonialism and the feudal ideology inherited from tradition – consolidates our physical victory, lays the foundations for the new society, and makes our progress irreversible. [But] the fight against the enemy that lives in the mind is the toughest. The CPPM, in its way of life, demands a radical change in values, attitudes and behavior.<sup>145</sup>

For Machel, guerrillas and party cadres had to be impeccable in all aspects of their behavior. The success of the struggle, he reasoned, was dependent on the strict moral comportment of soldiers, not simply on their military skills. Moral behavior was the line that demarcated the boundary between revolutionaries and enemies. The enemy was not simply the physical agent of the Portuguese colonial apparatus. The enemy encompasses everything from direct collaborationist actions to the more mundane aspects of daily life. Machel pointed some of those aspects in 1970: "We came to the Revolution loaded with vices and defects. Some came impelled by ambition, to get high positions in independent Mozambique. Others came because they like

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<sup>144</sup> AGGPN/Documentos da FRELIMO/Curso de Formação Política/1974. See also José Luís Cabaço, "O Homem Novo: Breve Itinerário de um Projecto", in A. Sopa, ed. *Samora Homem do Povo*", p. 142.

<sup>145</sup> S. Machel, "Leadership is Collective", p. 16

easy life, drinking, and women.”<sup>146</sup> In Machel’s thought, behavioral manifestations of the enemy weakened the liberation movement and lead to actual traitorous actions. Personal ambition, moral corruption, individualism, elitism, disrespect and abuse of women, idleness and robbery, superstition and religious fanaticism, etc.; these were characteristics of the enemy which could destroy the liberation movement (and the Mozambican dream) from within:

the demarcation between the enemy and us is not merely physical; it is at the level of consciousness, and it manifests in all aspects of life and behavior. (...) Moral slackness and liberalism destroy the demarcation between the enemy and us. And when the boundary line is destroyed, the physical agents of the enemy can spring unrecognized, for nothing else would distinguish their life and actions from ours.<sup>147</sup>

As scholars of radical politics have long asserted, political change (revolutionary or otherwise) needs the figure of the traitorous enemy to validate its legitimacy.<sup>148</sup> When the goals of a given political change go beyond the simple overthrowing of an oppressive regime, and aim at a profound reformation of society, the enemy is often more than the direct oppressor. The enemy is a broad category. It includes all obstacles – tangible and intangible, visible and invisible, the very embodiment of evil – which are regarded as impairing the realization of change.<sup>149</sup> And such obstacles, radical activists are often convinced, come from within the social movement or society seeking change. Obstacles are conceived as impurities that need to be cleansed. Traitorous enemies, be they actual physical agents, manners or behavior, are seen as moral impurities which the social movement must get rid of by purifying its own ranks.<sup>150</sup> Thus, even before seizing power, radical activists engage in a vigorous attempt at ideologically defining and cataloguing their enemies so as to facilitate their subsequent prosecution or purification.<sup>151</sup> The identification and purification of enemies from the social movement allow the leaders to present themselves as the “sublime, pure object”, the example of purity against which the mass of followers can measure their way of life.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> “Das Contradições no Nosso Seio”, *A Voz da Revolução*, January 1970, p. 7.

<sup>147</sup> “Tarefas das Bases de Apoio”, *A Voz da Revolução*, No. 20, December 1973, p. 3-4.

<sup>148</sup> Tobias Kelly and Sharika Thiranagama. “Introduction: Specters of Treason”, in S. Thiranagama and T. Kelly (eds), *Traitors: Suspicion, Intimacy, and the Ethics of State-Building*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> J. Aho, *This Thing of Darkness*, p. 23.

<sup>150</sup> B. Moore, *Moral Purity and Persecution in History*; M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

<sup>151</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: A Harvest Book, 1985, p. 423.

<sup>152</sup> S. Zizek, *For they know not what they do*, p. 262.



*Fig. 4. Samora Machel addressing Frelimo guerrillas in Nachingwea, 1972. Source: A Voz da Revolução, No 10, June 1972.*

The qualities of the member of the party that the new leaders of Frelimo outlined in their pamphlet was the image that they projected of themselves. Their exemplary self was to serve as a model for all militants – and after independence, for all citizens – to follow. Machel articulated this poignantly in his lecture in Nachingwea:

We must fight the moral enemy through the lessons from our leaders, from the meetings, from the sessions of criticism and self-criticism, and above all, from the effort that each one of us does to liquidate the enemy. It is evident that example is a powerful weapon in this combat. The trainees learn about our life and mentality through the example that we give them. The fight against alcoholism is null and void if the instructor is the first to drink. It is of no use to cry out that we want the emancipation of women, if the soldier in the feminine detachment gets pregnant from her instructor. It is a waste of time to create a sense of responsibility and the collective spirit, if the example that we give is that of irresponsibility and individualism. The chief method in the instruction [of militants], the one that if not successful will cause the downfall of all our work, is the example that we give.<sup>153</sup>

When the first version of the pamphlet was issued in early 1969, the party organized workshops, talks, and sessions of group study to disseminate its message among militants. In these

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<sup>153</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da FRELIMO/Samora Machel - Nota de Estudo para os Instrutores Compreender a Nossa Tarefa, 6 December 1970, p. 10.

sessions, leaders armed with blackboards listed the virtuous qualities of the militant in one side and the behavior of enemies on the other. They urged their listeners to acquire the qualities of the militant and reminded them that those who failed to do so could not be considered members of the liberation movement. In one of these sessions in January 1969, Joaquim Chissano, then Secretary for the Department of Security, with his finger pointed to the list behind him, remonstrated his subordinates in Nachingwea: “if you do not have these qualities listed here”, he said, “you are enemies of Frelimo. It is necessary to have those qualities to be a militant.”<sup>154</sup> And he continued, stressing a point that ran deep to his concerns: “if a woman behaves well here but there outside she sells her body then she is not a militant, she does not have the required qualities.”<sup>155</sup> Chissano’s remarks are particularly significant. His warnings, like all Frelimo’s moral prescriptions, were bent towards the future. Chissano was demarcating a line that would later define not merely who had the qualities to be a member of the party, but most importantly who could become a citizen of independent Mozambique. We shall see in the following chapter how these qualities were extended to define citizenship after independence, and how those found short in the moral attributes of the new man were rounded up in towns and sent to reeducation camps. It is not surprising that women viewed as “sellers of their bodies” – of which Chissano made a particular observation in his lecture – were the first targets of the urban cleanup campaigns during his tenure as prime minister of the transitional government.

### **Conclusion**

The reformist ideology that produced the urban cleanup campaigns and reeducation camps in Mozambique did not result from a simple adoption of socialism. It grew out of socio-political developments in colonial Mozambique. The mission-educated revolutionaries from southern Mozambique who joined Frelimo in 1962/3 and by 1968/70 had taken over the leadership of the party were heirs of nativist politics that regarded civility as a necessary condition for political participation and emancipation. This nativism developed within a particular brand of Protestantism in Lourenço Marques in the early twentieth century. The top leaders of Frelimo were raised and

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<sup>154</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da Frelimo/Josina Muthemba – Relatório, 1968-1969/Palestra sobre Militante da Frelimo, 26 January 1969.

<sup>155</sup> “Uma mulher que aqui comporta-se bem mas lá fora vende o seu corpo não é militante porque não tem qualidades exigidas.” CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da Frelimo/Josina Muthemba – Relatório, 1968-1969/Palestra sobre Militante da Frelimo, 26 January 1969.

educated within a political culture dominated by aspirations of modernity and a reformed society that earlier generations articulated and sought to build. They carried these aspirations with them into the liberation movement. Their embrace of Marxism-Leninism during the liberation struggle produced a hybrid ideology (*samorismo*) that combined the aspirations imbued in their nativist culture and Maoism. This combination resulted in a markedly messianic and salvationist quest to build a new social order and create a new man. Along with the urgent need for military victory, the armed struggle became a moral crusade, an arena for a reformist experimentation that they came to regard as fundamental for the success of the revolution and nation building. With the same earnestness with which they devised military strategies to counter the Portuguese aggressive campaigns, they commanded their subordinates to embrace the austere morality of the new man, in preparation for when independence would come. This was not a simple work of imagination. It was a work of practical, pedagogical experimentation. The next chapter explores how this work of pedagogical reform to create a new man and a new society was transformed into a concrete political program during the first years of Mozambique's independence.

## Chapter 2

### Urban Cleanup Campaigns and the Contradictions of Reeducation in Early Independent Mozambique, 1974-1982

#### Introduction

As soon as Frelimo assumed power, the party took immediate steps to implement the pedagogy of revolution to create a new society in Mozambique. With the instruments of state power at their disposal, Frelimo officials wasted no time putting their reformist agenda in action. They launched campaigns to clean the cities of social degeneracy and compelled citizens to conduct themselves according to new moral aesthetics. Exuberant, overconfident, and blinded by their salvationist ideology (*samorismo*), they saw no obstacle before their “revolutionary task.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter describes the initial campaigns that Frelimo launched against prostitution, alcoholism and vagrancy – the very social ills that earlier generations of African urban elites dedicated their energies fighting against as part of their socio-political aspirations. While earlier moral reformers used exhortatory persuasion and religious teaching to combat social ills and to elevate the moral standards of their fellow compatriots, their nationalist descendants – tempered in revolutionary ideology – had the political power to compel people to mend their behavior. The chapter also examines Frelimo’s definition of reeducation as the party confronted the contradictions of their reformist program as early as 1976. The failed attempt to produce legislation on the camps not only highlights the contradictions of the reeducation program, it also shed light on the divide between salvationists and professional technocrats within the party. Up to the late 1980s, the salvationists dictated the course of events. If on the one hand the makeshift character of the reformist program was the product of structural and material impediments, on the other it reflected the tensions between salvationists and technocrats. The chapter concludes with the description of President Samora Machel’s *Ofensiva Política e Organizacional* (*political and organization offensive*), which was his attempt to singlehandedly solve the contradictions of the reeducation program and the rule of law. While the *offensive* interrupted the intensity of the cleanup campaigns

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<sup>1</sup> Samora Machel, “Frelimo’s tasks in the struggle ahead”, p. 14-17.

and relaxed the movement through the reeducation pipeline, its final outcome was more disastrous than the previous cleanup campaigns.

### **The Birth of the Pipeline: Urban Cleanup Campaigns and the First Reeducation Camps**

The reeducation program began in the tumultuous period of transition. On October 21, 1974, skirmishes between Portuguese soldiers and Frelimo guerrillas in the down-town area of Lourenço Marques spurred a wave of violence that claimed many lives.<sup>2</sup> Following the riots, the transitional government arrested 1,200 people allegedly involved in the killing and looting. The police released most of them after questioning. About 200 of them were unable to provide evidence of formal occupation in town.<sup>3</sup> The government established the first internment camp to reeducate this group of “unoccupied and marginal individuals.”<sup>4</sup> The camp was in a remote area of Inhassune district in Inhambane province, 450 km (280 miles) north of Lourenço Marques. Jorge Tembe, the State Secretary for Agriculture, surveyed the site for the camp on October 29, 1974. Ten days later the first *reeducandos* (reeducatees) arrived. Amós Mahanjane, one of the many NESAM activists who did not manage to reach Tanzania, was put in charge of Inhassune as camp commissar with the aid of thirty soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

The establishment of reeducation camps took place while the European population was hurriedly abandoning the country, leaving behind empty houses, taking everything they could and

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<sup>2</sup> Two episodes of violence in the capital city marked the transition to independence. The first episode was the settler’s rebellion on September 7, 1974, the day Frelimo and the new Portuguese government signed the peace agreement in Lusaka. Most settlers felt betrayed by the agreement, which recognized Frelimo as the only legitimate political force in Mozambique. The bloodier events of October 21 were in some way a continuation of the crisis of September 7, with disoriented Portuguese soldiers clashing with Frelimo guerrillas. For details on these events, see James Mittleman, “State Power in Mozambique”, *Issue: A journal of Opinion*, 8, 1 (1978):4-11; A.D. Harvey, “Counter-coup in Lourenço Marques”; B. Machava, “Galo Amanheceu”; R. Cardoso, *O Fim do Império*; A. Le Bon, *Mafalala 1974*.

<sup>3</sup> “Operação policial para eliminar focos de banditismo: Comunicado”, *Tribuna*, 28 Outubro 1974; “Povo exige nome de agitadores”, *Tribuna*, 28 Outubro 1974. Although Frelimo had the upper hand in the transitional government, the camps were created with the assent of the Portuguese authorities. The first inmates of Inhassune were detained in a joint operation undertaken by Frelimo guerrillas and the remaining Portuguese police corps. The few white settlers detained in this operation were later sent to Niassa and, after a few months, they were deported to Portugal.

<sup>4</sup> “Recuperação de Marginais em Inhambane”, *Notícias*, 30 Oct. 1974; “Inhambane: Campos de recuperação começam a funcionar”, *Tribuna*, 11 Nov. 1974; “Em Inhambane: Recuperação de Marginais”, *Notícias*, 12 Nov. 1974.

<sup>5</sup> A.B. Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional*, p. 145.



destroying or sabotaging what they could not.<sup>6</sup> The threat of a South African or Rhodesian invasion of Mozambique was very real, and acts of sabotage of economic infrastructures by angry settlers were rampant.<sup>7</sup> There were, therefore, urgent security demands for the new and understaffed government to manage. But Frelimo viewed the reeducation program as being equally urgent.<sup>8</sup> However, the urgency of reform was not accompanied with the technicalities necessary for the implementation of the reeducation program. Rank-and-file officers charged with establishing and running the camps expected them to function as disciplinary institutions endowed with appropriate conditions to rehabilitate the “anti-socials” and reinsert them into society as useful citizens. Inhassune was established with this vision in mind. When he surveyed the camp site, Secretary Jorge Tembe told the press that the camp was “temporary.” A permanent camp was to be established near the Save river and each *reeducando* would be granted two hectares of land and provided with seeds, equipment, and technical assistance from the Agricultural Services.<sup>9</sup> Tembe envisioned the reeducation camp as an agricultural settlement to be transformed, in the long run, into a productive village for the urban unemployed with government support. This long term vision contrasted with the desire for immediate results demanded by top party leaders.

The rapid establishment of camps throughout the national territory did not follow any concrete planning. The speed with which the reeducation program was carried out outpaced the “well-meaning” idea of productive agricultural villages. As round up operations and mass arrests in towns increased across the country, overflowing the small prisons left by the Portuguese, the number of camps grew exponentially. The two hectares of land and government assistance that minister Tembe promised remained a dead letter.<sup>10</sup> When 90 detainees arrived in Inhassune, the camp had only a cleared area and a few huts that local peasants built under government orders

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<sup>6</sup> In acts of anger and revenge, before leaving the country, some settlers sabotaged and destroyed factory and farming machinery, killed cattle, and ransacked their houses. There were cases in which homeowners left the water taps open, flooding the house before leaving. See J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: Revolution under Fire*, p. 48. For a literary depiction of these events, see the humorous novel by João Paulo Borges Coelho, *Crónica da Rua 513.2*. Lisboa: Caminho, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> See D. Wield, “Mozambique: Late colonialism and early problems of transition.”

<sup>8</sup> The reeducation of the country’s wayward members of society was one of the key topics during the first meeting of the Council of Ministers on July 9-25, 1975. As the meeting minutes attest: “the Council of Ministers deliberated to concede priority to the issue of reeducation of detainees, which will be carried out by the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice.” AGGPN/Programa Geral de Atividades do Conselho de Ministros; Tarefas e Funções que Competem a Cada Ministério; Decretos do Conselho de Ministros. 25 Julho 1975, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> AHM – “Recuperação de Marginais em Inhambane”, *Notícias*, 30 Oct. 1974

<sup>10</sup> This idea resurfaced in 1980, with the creation of *zonas verdes*. See chapter 3.

before the arrival of their new “guests.” Moreover, the huts were most probably occupied by the thirty camp overseers. The inmates had to build their own huts from scratch, and begin immediately to clear the fields to grow their food. No technical support was provided. Although Inhassune and other camps near Maputo or Beira could easily be supplied with food rations, the camps in Niassa and Cabo Delgado – which were in very remote places to the north – were constantly struck by crises of hunger, as their fields or *machambas* hardly produced enough to sustain the entire camp population (see chapter 6). In 1976 Inhassune was still a temporary camp, now with 403 *reeducandos*.<sup>11</sup> Some camps had close to a thousand inmates living in decrepit huts and in some cases – as in Revia in Niassa – in unsanitary and inhuman conditions. None of the camps were transformed into productive settlements and the reports that the camp commissars sent to the Ministry of the Interior (hereafter MINT) were filled with desperate cries for help (see chapter 6). To fully understand why the program quickly descended into chaos, we need to take a look at the arbitrary ways in which the cleanup campaigns were carried out.

#### *Operação Limpeza: The Campaign Against Prostitution and Alcoholics*

On November 3, 1974, interior minister and national political commissar Armando Guebuza claimed that there were 75,000 prostitutes in Lourenço Marques alone.<sup>12</sup> He announced that they would all be sent to reeducation camps, which were being created in the countryside. The source of his astronomical figure was an article that journalist Albino Magaia (an old friend of his from NESAM) published in the weekly *Tempo* magazine. The article had illustrations of bawdy houses by the famous photographer Ricardo Rangel. In the article, entitled *Prostitution: Sex trafficking kills hunger*, Magaia claimed that Lourenço Marques was the “capital of prostitution.”<sup>13</sup> He affirmed, without any reliable statistical basis, that the city’s suburban population was placed at 600,000, half of which were women. He stressed that there were more women than men in the city. In his calculation, of the more than 300,000 African women living in Lourenço Marques, “150,000 earn their living from semi-prostitution and 75,000 are declared prostitutes.” He concluded that “fifty percent of Lourenço Marques women live under one of the most shameless forms of

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<sup>11</sup> “Inhassune: Campo de Reeducação Político-ideológica”, *Tempo*, 26 Mar. 1976.

<sup>12</sup> “Frelimo Cria Campos de Reeducação”, *A Capital* [Lisbon], 20 Nov. 1974.

<sup>13</sup> Albino Magaia e Ricardo Rangel “Prostituição: Tráfico sexual mata a fome”, *Tempo*, 211, 13 Outubro 1974.

exploitation.”<sup>14</sup> For Minister Guebuza and his colleagues in the transitional government, this alarming observation offered a convincing confirmation of their own old assumptions. The minister announced to the press that the government had initiated a campaign and a reeducation program to cleanse the cities of prostitutes and anti-socials.<sup>15</sup>

There was little truth in Albino Magaia’s article. The astronomical numbers that he provided were unfounded if not fabricated. The eminent journalist did not define his categories (prostitution and semi-prostitution), nor did he provide the source of his fabulous numbers. By semi-prostitution he might have had in mind the situation of single women who maintained non-conventional relationships with men – somewhere between the “malaya” and “wazi-wazi” forms of prostitution that historian Luise White identified in her seminal study of prostitution in colonial Nairobi.<sup>16</sup> With inaccurate if not fabricated figures, Albino Magaia amplified what was rather a less alarming situation. A survey that the municipality of Lourenço Marques conducted in 1971 indicated that 360,000 people lived in the *caniço* area of Lourenço Marques. By 1974 that number had slightly risen to 400,000.<sup>17</sup> Given the historical gender imbalance and the tightened restrictions for women’s mobility in urban areas – a common phenomenon in colonial cities in South-East Africa – the male ratio in Lourenço Marques was around 140 men for every 100 women.<sup>18</sup> Although these figures changed after independence, up to 1980 the capital city (and all major cities in Mozambique) continued to be predominantly male. If Magaia’s presumptions were correct, all women in the capital city would be prostitutes.<sup>19</sup> In his 1968 survey of Lourenço Marques’ African residents, anthropologist and colonial civil-servant António Rita-Ferreira estimated the number of

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<sup>14</sup> Albino Magaia e Ricardo Rangel, “Prostituição: Tráfico sexual mata a fome”, *Tempo*, 211, 13 Outubro 1974.

<sup>15</sup> “Frelimo Cria Campos de Reeducação”, *A Capital*, 20 Nov. 1974.

<sup>16</sup> Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> See Krisno Nimpuno et al, *The Malhangalane Survey: A Study of an Unplanned Settlement in Maputo, 1976*. Gothenburg: Chalmers University of Technology, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> See Areosa Pena, “O Bairro do Caniço muda de face”, *Tempo*, 33-2, 2 Maio 1971. Although mobility in the racially segregated urban areas was restricted for all Africans, the control of women was even harsher. While African men were forced to carry transit passes since 1914 to circulate in urban areas, to move from one location to another, women had to have the approval of their fathers, brothers or any male tutor, apart from the required identification documents. (See António Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*. Lourenço Marques: IICM, 1968. p. 156.) These colonial laws reinforced the idea of the city as a male space. Even after the racial laws were revoked in 1961, the gendered cityscape of Mozambique’s urban areas remained the same, with the number of urban male residents far surpassing that of women.

<sup>19</sup> In 1976 there were 500,000 inhabitants in Lourenço Marques (excluding the satellites of Matola and Machava). By 1980 the city reached 740,000 inhabitants (383,000 men and 356,000 women). See RPM/CCR/1° Recenseamento Geral da População, 1980.

“professional” prostitutes in less than 500, and a few thousand more who combined prostitution with other trades such as beer brewing to get by in the city.<sup>20</sup> The situation could not have changed so radically in just six years.

But Magaia was a reformer with little regard for accurate statistics and objective assessments of social reality. His views about the social life of his native city were already set. His essay was a reverberation of conservative and chauvinistic anxieties that dominated the nativist politics of earlier generations of African elites in colonial Mozambique. Magaia, like minister Guebuza, was a descendant of Lourenço Marques nativists and a bearer of the same old alarms about the moral decay of urban society. The idea of women “selling their bodies” – about which Joaquim Chissano lectured his subordinates in Nachingwea in 1969 (chapter 1) – was a nightmarish image that, more than any other social ill, threatened their modernist aspirations. Although their hopes for civil recognition had been achieved with independence, they still held to the notion that loose women – like vagrants, intemperate and idle men – were a hindrance to their political aspirations and brought a disrepute to the nation. The only difference is that, now, those anxieties were expressed in the language of socialism, of exploitation of men by men. The grim picture that Magaia painted of Lourenço Marques did not call the social pathologies of the city to the attention of the transitional government, it simply confirmed and reinforced their views of urban degeneracy and the urgent need for social reform.

Minister Guebuza codenamed the campaign that he announced to deal with degeneracy “*Operação Limpeza*” (Operation Cleaning). The combination of militaristic and clinical vocabularies to designate state policies was a trademark of Frelimo’s governmentality.<sup>21</sup> The act of governing was a *battle* carried through *campaigns*, *operations*, and *offensives*. The reformist program was a clinical endeavor to *cleanse*, *disinfect*, *heal*, and *purify*. Guebuza’s choice of the word *limpeza* conveys exactly the understanding that he and his comrades had of the task at hand. The cities were full of human dirt, of social pathologies that needed urgent cleansing to avoid further contamination of the entire social fabric. The campaign started on November 7, and resulted

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<sup>20</sup> A. Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*, p. 279.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of Frelimo’s multiple discursive vocabularies, see A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 78 and Maria-Benedita Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas: Literatura, Nação e Teoria Póscolonial em Moçambique*. Lisboa: Vendaval, 2006.

in the detention of 200 women.<sup>22</sup> In June 1975, few weeks before the declaration of national independence, the transitional government decided to launch a “decisive blow” against prostitution.<sup>23</sup> The city had to be “clean” before the important day. All cabarets and brothels at *Rua Araújo* were closed down. Rather than working overnight, from then on bars were to serve from 7 in the morning to 7 in the evening. The Mayor of the capital city, Alberto Massavanhane, congratulated the government’s vigorous “blow to the immoral business” of prostitution: “the city council can only be pleased that the city is cleaner”, he told reporters.<sup>24</sup>

The campaign was extended to other cities: Beira, Nampula, Quelimane, Tete and Chimoio. As soldiers and police officers invaded pre-selected places of leisure late at night, they scooped up everyone inside, women and men alike. They not only targeted brothels and dance clubs in the cities’ red-light districts, but also restaurants, bars, including cinemas and theaters. Men found without papers (ID or passport) in those places were also taken into detention as promoters of moral corruption, as vagrants, alcoholics and drug addicts. Women in mini-skirts, high-heel shoes, painted nails, rice powder on their faces, and “afro” wigs – the modern fashion of the time – were regarded as “low life women” (*mulheres de má vida*) and arrested without contemplation.<sup>25</sup> Women often found it hard to convince the police that they were not prostitutes but people who had gone out to dance, drink and have fun. In fact, as journalist Fernando Lima commented in an article in 1976, by claiming that they went out for fun, women were literally “confessing” their guilt, because Frelimo security cadres could not entertain the idea that a woman could go out at night just for fun.<sup>26</sup> If the security forces found women with white male partners, not even marriage certificates convinced them of their “innocence.” Despite Frelimo’s anti-racist rhetoric, for the party leaders and their cadres – and for ordinary urbanites in general – an African woman living with a white man was nothing but a seller of her body. In residential areas in the *caniço*, local authorities regarded single mothers, divorcees, and *amancebadas* (women in some

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<sup>22</sup> “Para onde foram as prostitutas?”, *Tempo*, 237, 31 Agosto 1975. See also K. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*, p. 155. See O. R. Thomaz, “Escravos sem dono”, p. 178.

<sup>23</sup> AJN – “Desferido golpe eficaz na prostituição e intermediários: Encerrados os cabarés da Major Araújo, mulheres desejam mudar de vida”, *Notícias*, 10 Junho 1975.

<sup>24</sup> AJN – “Desferido golpe eficaz na prostituição e intermediários: Encerrados os cabarés da Major Araújo, mulheres desejam mudar de vida”, *Notícias*, 10 Junho 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Fernando Lima, “Como encarar a prostituição”, *Notícias*, 13 Ago. 1976.

<sup>26</sup> F. Lima, “Como encarar a prostituição”, *Notícias*, 13 Ago. 1976.

kind of common-law relationship with men out of wedlock) as moral degenerates.<sup>27</sup> Like the “spoiled girls” of Lournço Marques half a century before, the disreputable condition of these women dragged the reputation of the nation to the mud. Many were arrested as prostitutes and sent to reeducation camps. Some were sent away in visible state of pregnancy, others with nursing babies in their trebling arms.<sup>28</sup>

As I elaborate in chapter 4, these campaigns were not a solo act of security forces. Newspaper editors, reporters, and ordinary citizens furnished authorities with information as to which places they should target.<sup>29</sup> While the campaign was running, *Tempo* and *Notícias* published several articles and letters to the editor by readers alerting the authorities that, after the initial swoops, “prostitutes” were devising more creative ways to continue their trade by going to “respectable” places such as restaurants, cinemas, and theaters.<sup>30</sup> The expectation of the incoming declaration of independence and the following two years released tremendous energy and participatory enthusiasm in the general public.

Along with *Operação Limpeza*, the transitional government was also conducting a campaign against alcoholism.<sup>31</sup> The triumph of the socialist revolution depended on the temperance, self-denial, and industriousness of the nation’s citizens. Drinking was often conflated with vagrancy, prostitution, adultery, drug addiction, crime, and internal enemies plotting to bring down the revolution. The authorities made little effort to distinguish pastime drinking from the pathology of alcohol abuse or dependence. As long as people gathered in a beer hall there was alcoholism.<sup>32</sup> The government prohibited the installation of any new brewing or distillation factory

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<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of Lourenço Marques-Maputo women’s marital status (*amancebadas*), and its implications in their livelihoods, see Jeanne Penvenne, *Women, Migration and Cashew Economy in Southern Mozambique, 1945-1975*. Rochester: James Currey, 2015, p. 155-179. For an account of how women were identified as prostitutes in Mozambique, see Fernando Lima, “Como encarar a prostituição”, *Notícias*, 13 Ago. 1976.

<sup>28</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Relação das crianças que se encontram nos campos com as suas mães. s.d.

<sup>29</sup> As a member of the editorial board of *Tempo* magazine, Albino Magaia had a full platform at his disposal to aid his comrades in the revolutionary task of cleaning the cities. See Jacimara Sousa Santana, *Mulheres Africanas de Moçambique na Revista Tempo (1975-1985)*. Itajaí: Casa Aberda, 2014, p. 66. These campaigns do not feature in Emídio Machiana’s important study of *Tempo*. See Emídio Xavier Machiana, *A Revista Tempo e a Revolução Moçambicana*. Maputo: Promédia. 2002.

<sup>30</sup> See “Para onde foram as prostitutas?”, *Tempo*, 237, 31 Agosto 1975; “O combate para acabar com a prostituição faz parte da luta contra o capitalismo: Part 1”, *Notícias*, 18 Nov. 1977.

<sup>31</sup> “Combate ao álcool: Governo toma medidas”, *A Tribuna*, 7.12.74; “Mafalala: Luta contra alcoolismo”, *A Tribuna*, 26 Dezembro 1974

<sup>32</sup> As President Machel told the residents of Lourenço Marques in his first speech after independence in July 1975, “we know that in the cities there is alcoholism. Alcohol allows the practice of crime.” He went on to claim that “where there is alcoholism, there is backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, crime, immorality, and disrespect. That is

in the country and introduced new regulations for the selling of alcoholic drinks.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the party instructed local party cells or *Grupos Dinamizadores* to combat alcoholism in residential areas, to dismantle informal brewing installments and denounce sellers and consumers of alcohol.<sup>34</sup> *Tempo* and *Notícias* – which were also vigorous campaigners against social ills – published several articles exhorting the “masses” to stop drinking. For months they dedicated an exclusive page on the “struggle against alcohol”, including readers’ statements and opinions about the campaign. One Baptista Panguana, a clerk, told *Notícias* in November 1974 that the “struggle against alcohol is the most important task of party committees in the *bairros* at this moment”<sup>35</sup> Jossefa Macie, a resident of *bairro* Hulene in Lourenço Marques informed *A Tribuna* that in his neighborhood the people met every Saturday “to be lectured on the dangers of alcohol drinking.” He told the reporter that the committee of his *bairro* prohibited all residents from selling drinks. “Those who continue to sell in secret are being discovered”, said Macie, “because the committee gave orders to denounce all individuals who sell alcoholic drinks in the *bairro*.”<sup>36</sup>

Armed with AK-47 rifles, security forces and members of *Grupos Dinamizadores*, including members of Mozambique’s Women Organization (OMM) invaded homes known for producing and selling alcoholic drinks.<sup>37</sup> Authorities made no distinction between distilled, highly intoxicating spirits (*tontonto* or *sope*) and low alcohol grain and fruit base drinks (*uputsu*, *bukanyi*, or *xicaju* – which were, as Jeanne Penvenne has observed, “an important part of social renewal and the pleasures of summertime” in southern Mozambique).<sup>38</sup> In most cases the raids ended with the destruction of brewing implements, the pouring out of the inebriating liquids, and the remonstrations of the owners and their clients. In other cases, depending on the mood of the law enforcer in charge of the operation, the raids resulted in arrests and the apprehension of the evidence of the crime. Women were the main victims of these raids, since they were the main

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why”, he concluded, “we must strongly fight alcoholism in our country.” “República Popular de Moçambique: A 1ª Ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 252, 3 Ago. 1975.

<sup>33</sup> “Combate ao álcool: Governo toma medidas”, *A Tribuna*, 7.12.74; “Mafalala: Luta contra alcoolismo”, *A Tribuna*, 26 Dezembro 1974

<sup>34</sup> “Campanhas contra o álcool: Comité em acção”, *Tribuna*, 22 Nov. 1974; “Comité do bairro combate alcoolismo”, *Tribuna*, 25 Nov. 1974

<sup>35</sup> “Alcoholismo”, *Notícias*, 26.11.74

<sup>36</sup> “Campanhas contra o álcool: Comité em acção”, *A Tribuna*, 22.11.74

<sup>37</sup> For the history of the OMM and its role in the revolution, See Barbara Isaacman and June Stephan, *A Mulher Moçambicana no Processo de Libertação*. Maputo: OMM, 1982; Stephanie Urdang, *And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique*. London: Monthly Review Press, 1989.

<sup>38</sup> J. Penvenne, *Women, Migration*, p. 55.

brewers, distillers, and sellers of drinks. In December 1974, for example, the police arrested 144 people in beer halls in the city of Quelimane in central Mozambique. They charged the offenders with “suspicion of vagrancy, drug addiction, and other offenses.” As *Notícias* reported, during the operation the police apprehended “200 liters of homemade brandy.”<sup>39</sup> The campaign against alcohol reproduced the violent scenes of Portuguese colonial authorities on horseback mounting raids in African neighborhoods in Lourenço Marques and other cities to enforce the prohibition of production and sale of alcohol among the natives.<sup>40</sup> For the victims of Frelimo’s campaign, like Mwachivombi Cossa who saw her weeks of hard labor being tarnished mercilessly (fig. 6), there was no difference between the old and the new regime.



*Fig. 5. Producers and sellers of alcohol apprehended with the tools of their “criminal activity.” Maputo, December 1978. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.*

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<sup>39</sup> “Rusga em Quelimane: 144 detidos”, *Notícias*, 24.12.74

<sup>40</sup> J. Penvenne, *Women, Migration*, p. 61-2. For a literary account of these raids, see Calane da Silva, *Xicandarinha na Lenha do Mundo*. Maputo: AEMO, 1987.





Fig. 6. Militias and OMM activists pouring down Mwachivombi Cossa's beer (*uputsu*). Maputo, December 1978. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.

Frelimo's crusade to cleanse the cities was not restricted to rounding up and sending people to reeducation camps. The party was also invested in transforming the very sites of ill-repute into dignified locales for public works. For instance, as *Operação Limpeza* was under way in November 1974, Frelimo militants were busy transforming the ill-reputed bar *Vasco da Gama* into the party's national headquarters. The conversion of the bar into an office building was financially supported by President Machel, who was still in Tanzania.<sup>41</sup> When he first visited the headquarters in 1975, he told the press that "the selection of that place was not mere chance." He told them that the goal was to transform the "bastion of corruption" into a "center for the diffusion of new ideas."<sup>42</sup> Like most of his peers, before joining Frelimo, Machel lived in Mafalala, a few yards from *Vasco da Gama* and not far away from the brothel of *Matlhotlhomane*. The "troubling" memories of the buzzing noise of drinking and *marrabenta*, which often went all night long, were

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<sup>41</sup> See Matias Mboa, *Memórias da Luta Clandestina*. Maputo: Marimbique, 2009. p.58; and Dinis Muhai, "Da mecânica aos grupos de esclarecimento", in A. Le Bon, *Mafala 1974*, p. 148.

<sup>42</sup> "Para onde foram as prostitutas?", *Tempo*, 237, 31 Agosto 1975, p. 28.

still very alive in the President's mind when he returned home.<sup>43</sup> He felt relieved to see *Vasco da Gama* converted into a center of social transformation. Likewise, the infamous sin street of Lourenço Marques, *Rua Araújo*, was renamed *Bagamoyo*, after one of Frelimo's former training camps in Tanzania.

### *Arbitrariness of Power*

From the very beginning, arbitrary round ups characterized the campaigns. The arbitrariness was not only because the categories considered in need of moral reform were amorphous and left ample room for independent interpretations about who should be targeted, but also because the victims were not given any judicial hearing. As Tzvetan Todorov once wrote about communist camps in Eastern Europe, the arbitrariness of power was not a perversion of well-intentioned policies. Arbitrariness was a "fundamental trait" of autocratic regimes.<sup>44</sup> Six decades ago, H.G Adler noted that mass incarceration in detention camps is "impossible" under the normal rule of law, "impossible in a formal sense and because of the great number of persons affected."<sup>45</sup> Frelimo's campaigns were not launched with considerations for the rule of law or civil rights, and neither MINT nor any branch of the government contemplated bringing the thousands of detainees to trial. Besides, with the flight of Portuguese settlers, the judicial apparatus was paralyzed and was not re-established until 1978. Therefore, the campaigns were not carried out under any form of legislative coverage. But even if the judicial system was in place, the number of detainees could not have been processed in a timely and effective way. In July 1975 only, the security forces arrested a total of 15,000 people.<sup>46</sup> In just two days, in November 1975, the police arrested 3,000 people.<sup>47</sup> Although the police sometimes carried out a quick triage at the police station before sending the victims away to reeducation camps, the campaigns victimized many innocent people.

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<sup>43</sup> Marrabenta is a popular musical genre in southern Mozambique. Immediately after independence, dancing *marrabenta* was considered pornographic and prohibited. See Albino Magaia, "Pornografia e sensualidade, imoralidade e desinibição (um tema cultural)", *Tempo*, 382, 29 Jan. 1978, p. 50-3. For the history of leisure in colonial Lourenço Marques, see António Sopa, *A Alegria é uma Coisa Rara: Subsídios para a História da Música Popular Urbana em Lourenço Marques (1920-1975)*. Maputo: Marimbique, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, "Communist Camps and their Aftermath", *Representations*, 49 (1995): 120-132

<sup>45</sup> H.G. Adler, "Ideas Toward a Sociology of the Concentration Camp", *The American Journal of Sociology*, 63, 5 (1958), p. 521.

<sup>46</sup> MHN – "Mozambique's Re-education Camps", *The Review of International Commission of Jurists*, Geneva. December 1981, pp. 14-15.

<sup>47</sup> MHN – *Daily News* [Dar-es-Salaam], 3 Nov. 1975; "FRELIMO Cria Campos de Reeducação", *A Capital*, 20 Nov. 1974.

Aside from not submitting the victims of the round ups to any fair hearing, the carriers of the campaign – the agents of change – did not notify the relatives of the detainees about their “evacuation” (*evacuação*). If some people managed to contact their relatives while in police custody, the majority went to the camps without their relatives taking notice. People simply disappeared. We may never know how many managed to contact their relatives from the camps. While some camps had a rudimentary mailing system, others were completely cut off.<sup>48</sup> The archival record of the cabinet of Niassa’s governor and the local DPSR is filled with letters and telegrams by wives, husbands, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and friends writing from all over the country inquiring as to the whereabouts of their loved ones. Some desperate husbands wrote directly to President Machel pleading him to release their wives. Some put together evidence of formal engagement (sometimes a marriage certificate, a stamped statement from the local *Grupo Dinamizador*, or a photograph of the couple with their children).<sup>49</sup>

One such letter was written by João Monteiro in March 1977, addressed to President Machel. Monteiro’s wife, Serafina Saide, was detained in Nampula city. She was found with a man in a bar and arrested as a prostitute. Monteiro, a driver, was in Maputo on a work-related mission. “When I came back from Maputo”, he wrote, “I heard that my wife had been detained. I gathered documents and went to the Police, but they told me she had been sent to reeducation in Niassa.” His wife had told the police that she was married and her husband was in Maputo, but no one believed her. Monteiro tried all avenues to get his wife back with no avail. Seven months later he took the courage to write directly to the President. Besides the dreadful pain of not having his wife, Monteiro claimed that he was facing serious problems with his in-laws who accused him of having orchestrated her arrest. As we shall see in chapter 4, it was common for people to use the campaigns to get rid of “embarrassing” family members. Monteiro wrote that he feared going back home because his in-laws were threatening him with death if Serafina was not brought back. “Her relatives are blaming me, they say it was me who arranged for her detention. They can assassinate me for not taking care of my wife”, he wrote in desperation, pleading with the President to send

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<sup>48</sup> Normally the DPSR organized the mailing service. But the system was largely dysfunctional, and correspondence for and from detainees could take several months and in some cases years to reach the addressee. In Niassa, the violation of correspondence and the appropriation of goods sent to detainees by camp overseers was rampant. AGGPN – DPSRN/Correspondência expedida, 1976-1979.

<sup>49</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978.

orders for her release.<sup>50</sup> The President's cabinet rarely ignored these pleas. Letters like these kept the presidential staff very busy, as the President often instructed them to clarify the situations brought to him. As to how effective such efforts were, it is yet unclear. In the case of Monteiro, the president's deputy chief secretary, Luís Bernardo Honwana (a former NESAM activist), forwarded Monteiro's letter to Niassa's governor Aurélio Manave to inquire about the location of Serafina. Initially the DPSRN could not locate her, but a few months later she was found in one of the camps. Although the record indicates that the camp authorities were awaiting orders as to where she had to be sent, the archival record is silent as to closure of the case.<sup>51</sup>

Another desperate husband, Carlos do Rosário, sent his marriage certificate from Quelimane to Lichinga (Niassa) in August 1976, with the hope of having his wife, Argentina Jaime do Rosário, released from M'sawize. He did not know why and how she was arrested, but she was "very much missed by her infant children", he wrote.<sup>52</sup> Another unfortunate husband, José António Ramos, also sent a statement from Beira to Lichinga in February 1977, testifying that Verónica Júlio Monjane (also known as Ana Paula) was his wife. She was detained in October 1975 and sent to Ilumba reeducation camp in Niassa.<sup>53</sup> While some people were lucky to be reunited with their loved ones, most were not. Mr. Tunzane's daughter, Elizabeth Tunzane, from Inhambane, was arrested in November 1975 and sent to Niassa, but she "could not be located" (*não conseguimos localizar*).<sup>54</sup> But ordinary citizens were not the only people seeking to find out the whereabouts of victims of the round ups. Factories, companies, departments of public administration, including embassies wrote either to the president, to minister Guebuza, or to provincial governors looking for their employees who "disappeared."<sup>55</sup> In May 1982, the Consul of Portugal inquired about the whereabouts of a Portuguese woman named Ilda Carolina, who was detained in one of Niassa's camps since February 1976. In reply, the reeducation services said they could not find her.<sup>56</sup> Governor Aurélio Manave wrote to the Consul informing him that the woman was "probably in Malawi" along with other detainees who had fled from the camps before they

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<sup>50</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem n.º 222, de 7/6/1977.

<sup>51</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/ N.º 324/GAB/F/9/77, de 15/6/1977.

<sup>52</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/ N.º 466/SR/976, de 23/9/1976.

<sup>53</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/ N.º 88/SR/977, de 10/2/1977.

<sup>54</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/ N.º 1026, de 6/7/1977.

<sup>55</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/ N.º 89/SR/977, ao Governador do Niassa, 10/2/1977.

<sup>56</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Consulado Geral de Portugal, ao Governador do Niassa, 11 Maio 1982.

were closed down in 1981.<sup>57</sup> The idea of escape from a camp was often a good excuse, especially if the detainee had died as a result of the harsh conditions of camp life (see chapter 6). Foreigners were not “immune” to the cleaning campaigns. A group of seven women from South Africa who did not have passports during the operation in October 1975 were taken from Maputo to Ilumba. The papers attesting that they were on a visit to relatives in Mozambique arrived two years later.<sup>58</sup>

Several reports from Niassa’s DPSR to MINT noted that many detainees were arrested “mistakenly” and “arbitrarily.”<sup>59</sup> In the female camp of M’sawize, with about 400 detainees in 1977, camp overseers listed 125 women as “unduly detained” (*detidas indevidamente*), and 63 were serving indefinite sentences for “unknown” or “doubtful” motives.<sup>60</sup> In May 1976, M’sawize and Ilumba, the two camps established exclusively for women in Niassa, housed a total of 1,223 women detainees.<sup>61</sup> This figure was way below the inflated number of prostitutes that journalist Albino Magaia suggested and that minister Guebuza quoted at the beginning of the campaign. In 1976, women comprised sixty percent of Niassa’s 2,102 inmate population.<sup>62</sup> While the DPSRN listed the offenses of many of them as “suspects of prostitution”, the majority of these detainees were listed as “undocumented” or “unknown motives” (*motivos desconhecidos*). Many were single mothers and divorcees who failed to produce IDs during round ups. Others were handed over to security forces by residential party cells for adultery and quarrels with neighbors and husbands.<sup>63</sup> As I illustrate in chapter 4, in addition to the cleanup campaigns, these people were also victims of vigilantism and the intimate politics of denunciation in residential areas and working places.<sup>64</sup>

Frelimo leaders at the highest level were well aware of the arbitrariness of the campaigns and the sheer contradictions between their reformist ambition and the reality of the process. Their

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<sup>57</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem n.º. 342, de 23/7/1982.

<sup>58</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem ao Sr. Governador da Província do Niassa, 26 Janeiro 1977.

<sup>59</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Indevidamente detidas, M’sawize. s.d; AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Casos duvidosos, M’sawize. Sd; AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente se propõe o seu regresso à procedência, 24 Março 1978.

<sup>60</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Indevidamente detidas, M’sawize. s.d; AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Casos duvidosos, M’sawize. sd. I elaborate on this in more detail in chapters 6 and 7.

<sup>61</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976.

<sup>62</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976.

<sup>63</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Indevidamente detidas, M’sawize. s.d; AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Casos duvidosos, M’sawize. Sd; AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente se propõe o seu regresso à procedência, 24 Março 1978.

<sup>64</sup> As Maputo Province Governor, José Moiane indicated in his 1978 annual report to President Machel, there were “500 collaborators in the district of Matola [alone] helping in the fight against drunkenness and prostitution.” AGGPN/Síntese do relatório do primeiro semestre de 1978 do Governador da Província de Maputo à sua Excelência o Presidente da Frelimo e Presidente da República Popular de Moçambique. Maputo, 31 Julho 1978

attempt to fix the problem led to a legal definition of reeducation and of the objectives of the camps.

### **Towards a “legal” Definition of Reeducation and The Failed Attempt of Legislation**

The contradictions of Frelimo’s reformist project became apparent from the very beginning of the reeducation program. The urge to cleanse the cities of degeneracy as swiftly as possible was not aligned with the practical and material considerations necessary for the implementation of the program. Aside from the arbitrariness of the round ups and the internment of innocent people, the massive detentions that resulted from the campaigns were not accompanied by any work to create appropriate conditions to settle the detainees. By 1976, MINT had established more than 20 camps distributed in eight of the country’s ten provinces.<sup>65</sup> The party leadership was aware that the real conditions of the camps did not reflect their high-minded idea of reform. In a meeting of the Council of Ministers in July 1976, President Samora Machel warned his colleagues that given their “current state”, instead of rehabilitating the anti-socials, the camps could produce “agents” of the enemy. “As they are now”, he said, “the camps can become centers for the recruitment of enemies. There is no political work, it all boils down to manual labor.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, he was unable to offer any practical solution or to interrupt the cleaning campaigns. That the massive detentions and the problems of the camps were interconnected was not taken into consideration. The urge to clean the cities of anti-socials and reform society was one thing. The actual work of reforming them was something else. As we shall see in the next chapters, these disjointed pieces of the reformist program – which reflected a much wider feature of Frelimo’s governmentality – created tremendous confusion for professional rank-and-files. Minister Tembe’s promise in Inhassane exemplify the genuinely technical perception that rank-and-file administrators had of the reeducation program. But the abstract urgencies of top party leaders collided with the technicalities of the program. With insufficient assistance from the government, the camps became sites of abandonment where supervisors and detainees were left to fend for themselves.

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<sup>65</sup> Due to their proximity with Rhodesia, with which Mozambique entered in direct military confrontation immediately after independence, Manica and Tete provinces had no camps.

<sup>66</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 7 Sessão Ordinária do Conselho de Ministros de 9 de Julho de 1976. Síntese XI-Parte – Centros de Reeducação, p. 3.

These glaring contradictions of the reeducation program and the arbitrary detentions forced MINT to pass legislation on the camps. In January 1976 minister Guebuza drafted a proposal of law and a “confidential” circular.<sup>67</sup> In both pieces, the legislator articulated a “formal” definition of reeducation, laid out the objectives of the reformist program, and provided a long list of social ills and categories of people who should be subjected to reeducation. Although the main particulars of his proposal appeared in local newspapers (especially the preamble),<sup>68</sup> these two documents were confidential. The circular was sent to provincial governors, police departments and camp overseers to instruct them on the new rules to avoid more “arbitrariness” in the revolutionary task of cleaning the cities. The proposal was shared with members of the Council of Ministers for appreciation and commentary. In the end, the law did not pass and the attempt to legislate the reeducation program failed. The reason why the legislation failed, the content of the proposal, and the discussions that took place around it offer a unique window into Frelimo’s governmentality and the competing forces within the party. If on the grass roots level the reformist program was shaped by the intimate politics of enmity and denunciation among ordinary citizens – as I demonstrate in chapter 4 – at the high level, the collision between *salvationists* and *technocrats* dictated the makeshift character of the reformist program.

The preamble of the confidential circular outlined the objectives of reeducation. It is a perfect example of Frelimo’s Marxist eschatology. In it, the legislator claimed that the “long period of colonial domination” under the Portuguese (500 years) “left deep wounds” in the physical and psychological fabric of Mozambican society. Such wounds went from “prostitution to alcoholism, vagrancy to drug abuse, and banditry to idleness.” In addition, he asserted, colonialism “subverted some mentalities, initiating them in the subtle game of the decadent tastes of the bourgeoisie.” All these “abject social ills” (*males sociais abjectos*), the legislator wrote, were in stark opposition to the new society that Frelimo was invested in building. Consequently, the party was launching a new “battlefront against the vices of the bourgeoisie, against the social evils, against ideological deviations.” This battle implied the creation of a new man who, according to the legislator, had to be “politically conscious, physically apt, and mentally sound.” He asserted that the camps were established to rehabilitate the “elements of the population of our country that are affected by any

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<sup>67</sup> AGGPN – MINT-Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação, Jan. 1976; AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Confidencial. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5.

<sup>68</sup> See “Centros de Reeducação em Moçambique”, *Tempo*, 264, 23 Março 1976.

of the above ailments, both physical and ideological”, and transform them into politically conscious, morally upstanding, collectively engaged, and physically active citizens.<sup>69</sup> To accomplish these important goals, the legislator determined that reeducation camps were to have “appropriate political conditions” to help *reeducandos* “rediscover themselves as valid elements” and “gain proper political consciousness and the physical vigor that they lack.” The following passage from the circular is illuminating in its definition of *reeducandos*:

All *reeducandos* are individuals who by their ideology, by their addictions or health condition, undermine the advancement of the revolutionary process. So it is necessary to transform them into elements that can make a contribution to the cause of the revolution, by reeducating them, by healing them from the evils that affect them.<sup>70</sup>

In the proposal of law, the legislator listed a series of “erroneous behaviors” (*comportamentos desviantes*) that were an impediment to revolutionary process and he laid out the ultimate goals of reeducation:

Reeducation aims, essentially, to offer the *reeducando* an environment and conditions of life and work that allow him or her to become conscious of the erroneous in his or her previous conduct, and then be reintegrated into society as an element with a new consciousness, capable of participating in the construction of Mozambican society.<sup>71</sup>

The legislator listed 18 offenses that should be subjected to reeducation, included “lack of discipline in the work place”; “impairing social harmony”; “intrigue”; “domestic violence and disharmony”; “rumor mongering”; “buying or consuming stolen products”; “economic sabotage”; “vices against nature” (*vícios contra a natureza*); “disobeying the orders of the party”; “discouraging people from participating in revolutionary tasks”; “practicing sorcery”; and “producing, selling and consuming alcoholic drinks.”<sup>72</sup> Of all the categories listed in the proposal, vagrancy and prostitution were the only *males sociais* for which the legislator provided a definition. He defined prostitutes as “women above 16 years of age who habitually dedicate themselves to the practice of sexual relations with the purpose of obtaining remuneration or

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<sup>69</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Confidencial. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 January 1976.

<sup>70</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Confidencial. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 January 1976.

<sup>71</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Proposta de Decreto Lei/77 sobre Reeducação, 1976.

<sup>72</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Proposta de Decreto Lei/77 sobre Reeducação, 1976.



economic advantage.” The legislator did not mention the male clients of the prostitutes. Although he referred to “individuals” who “consciously promote, facilitate and foster the practice of prostitution or who intervene in prostitution for profit-making”, he gave a pass to men who sought the services of prostitutes. In general, the term prostitute was never associated with men, unless one was – as the proposal indicated – an owner of a cabaret or any house of “ill repute” where prostitution was promoted. The chief offense of men was vagrancy. The legislator defined vagrants as:

Those individuals without any means to secure their sustenance, who do not perform any profession or craft in which to earn a living, who avoid work and instead dedicate themselves to the habit of idleness, and show no serious and honest effort to improve their condition, without any evidence of the unavoidable circumstances that justify their situation.<sup>73</sup>

The elastic and amorphous nature of most of these categories is self-evident. One wonders how law enforcers and citizens ought to know what a “vice against nature” looked like, or decide what acts “impaired social harmony.” The line in the circular regarding people whose “health condition” undermined the advancement of the revolution is particularly striking. The concrete meaning of what the legislator meant by health condition was not outlined in the document. It seems to indicate drug addicts and alcoholics. But another possible reading of the passage suggests that the legislator regarded urban decadence in general as a social pathology. Prostitutes, alcoholics, drug users, and vagrants – whose numbers were astronomically inflated in government statistics – were sociopaths that needed the revolutionary government’s full attention to avoid further “contamination.” At the same time, the two documents are filled with puritan inflections and salvationist vows. The legislator’s definition of vagrancy framed it as an act of self-indulgence (instead of working and producing for the wellbeing of the nation, individuals frequented places of leisure seeking pleasures). It also conflated idleness and unemployment, as both appear as a deliberate unwillingness to work. One way to identify the vagrants was through their lack of documentation – an ID attesting to one’s professional occupation. In the legislator’s further elaboration, the urban unemployed were jobless not because there was lack of waged work, but because people were lazy and enjoyed living in towns as parasites.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the reeducation

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<sup>73</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Proposta de Decreto Lei/77 sobre Reeducação, 1976.

<sup>74</sup> As I discuss in detail in chapters 3 and 4, these were widely shared assumptions in Mozambique. AGGPM/Decisão no. 1/CM/Confidencial/Plano de tarefas e prazos para a implementação pelo Conselho de

program was as an act of *caritas* aimed at *saving* the people from their *evils* (“*salvar dos seus males*”). Reeducation was thus meant to *purify* the people from the negative effects that the “long years of colonial domination” imparted on society – intemperance, self-indulgence, and idleness. Reeducation was meant to *save* people from these evil, which were both physical and mental. The legislator stressed that, contrary to the “vindictive” penal system in the “capitalist world”, the system that Frelimo was introducing was “uniquely” based on the “principle of rehabilitation”, “recovering”, and “reintegration of the individual back to society.”<sup>75</sup>

### *Salvationists versus Technocrats and the Limits of “pensamento único”*

There are three related reasons why MINT’s proposal was not passed into law. First, all members of the Council of Ministers who had to approve the proposal knew that shortages in human and material resources created the bottleneck. They knew that most people went from the police station directly to a reeducation camp, without any formal judicial hearing. Without judges to interpret the law and pronounce sentences, there was no urgency for legislation. Besides, the ministry of justice was busy trying to reinvent the justice system, to adjust it to the “people’s” state. The few jurists and students of law in the country – less than a dozen – were racing against time to re-establish courts (the first “people’s courts” did not open until late 1978).<sup>76</sup> Second, the legislator was unable to narrow down the objective targets of the reeducation and distinguish *behaviors* that needed redress from trivialities. All members of the council knew that rather than convicted criminals and anti-socials, the camps were in fact a dumping ground for people accused of all sorts of wrongdoing regardless of their nature and seriousness. The camps were filled with soldiers and police officers who failed to salute their hierarchical superiors; with clerks who arrived late at work or quarreled with their bosses; with drivers who used vehicles from their work units to transport private goods; and teachers accused of sexual harassment; reckless pupils who smoked in the school yard or peered at their teachers’ skirts or used insolent language; couples found holding hands or kissing in public; and so on (see chapter 5). In order to address this problem, those in detention had to be sifted first. Such tasks required human resources that were not available. The

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Ministros e Aparelho de Estado da decisão de lançar a guerra ao inimigo interno. Maputo, 19 Abril 1980; See also “As fontes do sanguessuga”, *Tempo*, 1 Jan. 1978, p. 20-25.

<sup>75</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Proposta de Decreto Lei/77 sobre Reeducação, 1976.

<sup>76</sup> See A. Sachs and G.H. Welch, *Liberating the Law: Creating Popular Justice in Mozambique*.

third and most important factor in the failure of the legislation rested in the very contradiction of the program. If the need for clear rules was justifiably necessary, the fundamental principle and the salvationist character of the reeducation program was *incompatible* with normal legislation. Reeducation camps were born extra-legally – not even a decree was issued when the program began. The legislation of the program required objective definitions of offense, which had to be inscribed in the larger body of law in force in the country. The proposal that minister Guebuza drafted was in line with the conception of the reeducation program as an exceptional penal system, therefore his proposal was to produce an exceptional law.

The debate and commentaries that followed the submission of the proposal exposed the two competing forces within the ruling party. If everyone was on the same page on the idea behind the reeducation program, they did not agree on how to legislate on the camps. As Joseph Hanlon observed in 1984, whenever the party failed to come to an agreement, “no action is taken”, which means that the “problems remain unresolved for long periods of time.”<sup>77</sup> This was one of the costs of Frelimo’s culture of *pensamento único*, and the reason why the party did not take any significant action to address the structural problems of the reeducation program until 1979.

The then minister of labor, Teodato Hunguana, a trained jurist who later took charge of the justice ministry, was one of the commentators on the proposal of law. Although he did not disagree with the need for reeducation camps, he disagreed with the exceptionality of the proposal.<sup>78</sup> In his estimation, any attempt to legislate on reeducation camps had to consider the whole body of legislation and the reformation of the whole penal system to avoid the “contradictory” situation of having two carceral regimes. He pointed out that the “basic principle” of the proposed law – reeducation through labor – ran counter to the international convention of forced labor that Mozambique signed. He noted that once ratified, international laws automatically became internal laws. Therefore, legislation on the reeducation program had to account for all the laws in force in the country to avoid “profound contradictions” in the legislative body. He also observed that the draft was very “ambiguous” and some articles were “too vague” (*muito vagos*), leaving ample room for “arbitrariness.”<sup>79</sup> On the article on vagrancy, for example, he commented that the

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<sup>77</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 249.

<sup>78</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação. Comentários à proposta de lei, 1976.

<sup>79</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação. Comentários à proposta de lei, 1976.

definition of vagrants was “so wide that it can easily include the unemployed”, who, under the civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution could not be “deprived of freedom” simply because of their condition.<sup>80</sup> “Because this is about granting the power to maintain or suspend the freedom of a person”, he wrote, “the criteria for the exercise of that power need to be defined with clarity, rigor, and precision.”<sup>81</sup>

For minister Hunguana, one of the main issues of the proposal was the lack of objectivity in the definition of “who” should be subjected to reeducation and, more importantly, for “how long.” The proposal suggested that people could be held between 24 hours to 3 years. Hunguana called for the “settlement” (*fixação*) of a very specific period of detention according to individual crimes. The draft suggested that “undisciplined” or “reckless” workers were to be subjected to reeducation. Hunguana disagreed. He commented that problems related to discipline in the workplace should not be included in the list of “deviant behavior” that were subjected to reeducation. He noted that such cases fell “off the purview of the penal system” and should be dealt with through discharge or other measures such as deprivation of remuneration. But never incarceration. In the very least, he suggested, discharged workers could be persuaded to “voluntarily accept” to undergo reeducation. On the intriguing section on “health conditions”, Hunguana commented: “*não é matéria da legislação penal ou reeducacional mas de sanatórios especializados*” (this is not a matter of penal legislation or reeducation, but of specialized sanatoriums”). Instead of interning alcoholics and drug addicts in labor camps, these people should be assisted medically. Hunguana also disagreed with the fact that MINT was charged with the responsibility to reform people. He claimed that such role should be granted to institutions of justice not the police. His overall position was that respect for individual liberties should be preserved and objective criteria on who the program should target was necessary to avoid abuses of power and arbitrariness.<sup>82</sup> The following passage from his comments is very significant:

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<sup>80</sup> “A definição de vadio utilizada é tão ampla que facilmente nela se incluem os desempregados, pois nem sempre será fácil provar a ‘necessidade de força maior que os justifique de se acharem nessas circunstâncias.’” AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação. Comentários à proposta de lei, 1976.

<sup>81</sup> “*Tratando-se de atribuir a faculdade de manter ou suspender a privação da Liberdade de uma pessoa é necessário definir com clareza, rigor e precisão quais os critérios do exercício dessa faculdade.*”

<sup>82</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação. Comentários à proposta de lei, 1976, p. 5-6

*Só deste modo se garantirão eficazmente os direitos e liberdades individuais consagrados na nossa Constituição, e nos inseriremos numa perspectiva correcta de funcionamento e realização da justiça no nosso país.*

Only in this way we can effectively guarantee the individual rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution, and position ourselves in a correct perspective of the function and implementation of justice in our country.<sup>83</sup>

Hunguana's comments may have convinced the members of the council of ministers of the impracticality of legislating on the reeducation camps. If the failure of the legislation shows that the party *did* have disagreements over policies, it also illustrates the competing forces between the salvationists forged in the liberation struggle (who elaborated the proposal) and the technocrats who joined the party after independence. Armando Guebuza and Teodato Hunguana had the same social background. The two men were members of NESAM and were well acquainted before the liberation struggle. They both agreed about the need to address urban degeneracy. But Hunguana did not go to Tanzania. While Guebuza was being ideologically tempered in the struggle – with an unfinished high-school education – Hunguana was attending Law School at Lisbon University. Guebuza was one of the “prototypes” of the new man produced in the struggle. Like Samora Machel, he wanted to see immediate results. The revolution had to produce social order regardless of where social degeneracy existed: it could be in the public space or in the most secluded world of domesticity. The mental and physical wounds that the “old society” imparted on society had to be addressed, whether they resided in the short dress of a women and what happened in close doors with her partner (s), or in the lack of temperance and asceticism of those who spent their pastime in beer halls and dance clubs indulging in worldly pleasures. By contrast, Hunguana was not tempered in Maoism. He was a technocrat, a man of law. He assessed the structural impediments to legislate on the camps based on objective analysis of what was possible and what was not. In the political context in which he found himself, and based on his role as minister of labor and then of justice, one can hardly say that he was a democrat. But he was not an autocrat and had a clear sense of the limits of power. His comments clearly indicate that his major concern with the proposal outlined by minister Guebuza was its excessively autocratic breadth and its disregard for the normal rule of law. Guebuza was an ardent moral reformer, a salvationist for whom the law

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<sup>83</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – Serviços de Reeducação. Centros de Reeducação. Comentários à proposta de lei, 1976, p. 5-6

should be at the absolute disposal of the party. Hunguana regarded his political work as a technical, professional exercise within the parameters of law.<sup>84</sup>

Although the law was not passed, the reeducation camps continued to operate unchanged. The confidential circular, which was not taken out of “circulation”, became a decree in of itself. When Teodato Hunguana was nominated minister of Justice in 1978, he had to preside over legislative decisions with which he did not agree, including the death penalty by firing squad.<sup>85</sup> This was the number one rule of *pensamento único* consecrated in the pamphlet that defined the qualities of the member of the central committee (see chapter 1). According to this rule, disagreements are kept inside the party. Outside the party everyone spoke the same language in one single voice. As we shall see in the next chapter, as the party moved towards the implementation of *Operação Produção*, the very technocrats who did not agree with the campaign on technical grounds were compelled to make it happen and, on the public stage, they had to put on the persona of the new man and hail the campaign as a revolutionary *battle* to forward socialism. Because the salvationists held the reins of power, technocrats knew well the price of going off the “unanimous” script – one was either on the side of the revolution or on the side of the enemy.<sup>86</sup>

### **The Calm Before the Storm: *Ofensiva* and the Relaxation of the Reeducation Pipeline**

If the law on reeducation never saw the light of day, the basic principles that minister Guebuza outlined in the proposal and in the confidential circular continued to circumscribe the functioning of the reeducation program. The attempt to legislate on reeducation camps testifies to Frelimo’s genuine belief in the righteousness of their reformist project. But the two desires – to uphold the rule of law and keep the carceral institution – could not be reconciled. Because the yearning for

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<sup>84</sup> These fundamental differences in the conception of politics and the rule of law within the party are important for understanding not only the makeshift character of the reeducation program, but of other aspects of the socialist experiment in Mozambique.

<sup>85</sup> See “Justiça Popular em Debate”, *Tempo*, 413, 03 Set. 1978, p. 23-25. According to José Cabaço, when the Council of Ministers decided to pass the *Lei do Chamboco* (flogging) in 1983, Teodato Hunguana was the only person who voted against it (Interview: José Cabaço, Maputo, 25 Feb. 2015). Yet, on the public stage, he never voiced any opposition to public floggings or even to the death penalty (which was amended to include black marketeering in 1983). See “O que é o crime? A posição do nosso país perante esta questão”, *Tempo*, 19 Out. 1980, p. 11-14.

<sup>86</sup> Even detainees knew that one had to speak in the unanimous voice of the party when asked about their opinion on their own reeducation process. See “A Reeducação é uma Escola onde se Forma o Homem Novo”, *Notícias*, 24 Nov. 1978.

social transformation was stronger than the respect for the constitutional rights of citizens, the party leadership came up with a strategy to preserve the camps while attempting to prevent further arbitrariness in the cleanup campaigns. The strategy involved the reorganization of urban areas – to tackle the problem of rural to urban immigration (which the party saw as increasing urban disorder and crime) – and to speed the re-establishment of the judicial system. Economic considerations were also on the table in devising these strategies, as the continuing decline of the economy and the chronic shortages in consumer goods were also responsible for increasing social unrest in urban areas.<sup>87</sup> The drive behind these two strategies was a rather peculiar political campaign that President Machel launched in late 1979. Codenamed *Ofensiva Política e Organizacional* (political and organizational offensive), this Maoist-style campaign sought to tackle the internal problems of state organization which, in President Machel’s understanding, were the reason behind the slow advance of the revolution.

Since 1975, the Catholic Church and ordinary citizens sent floods of letters addressed to the president, with complaints about the rampant abuses of power by security forces and the indefinite detentions of innocent civilians.<sup>88</sup> But citizens complained about all kinds of issues – corruption in the real-estate agency (APIE), illegalities within the security forces (including SNASP), and the malfunction of public services in general.<sup>89</sup> If these complaints alerted the president to one political fact – the declining popularity of the party and the waning down of the initial enthusiasm of the masses – they also reinforced his salvationist fervor as he took the matters into his own hands and sought to correct structural problems with moralist exhortations and a beating stick. The first step that he took was to create the department of State Inspection under his direct command. Bypassing the Council of Ministers (where people seemed unable to come to

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<sup>87</sup> By 1978-79, Mozambique was faced with a breakdown of social services (transports, electricity, water, health, and housing) and chronic shortages of basic consumer goods. Like all socialist countries affected by what economist János Kornai calls “shortage economy”, Mozambique saw the rise of contraband, smuggling, and black marketeering. Lines (locally known as *bichas*) elongated endlessly in front of empty stores and bus stops. The rationing system, introduced in 1977 in Lourenço Marques and later extended to the rest of the cities, failed continuously to alleviate the situation. See Bridget O’Laughlin, “From Basic Needs to Safety-Nets: The Rise and Fall of Urban Food-rationing in Mozambique”, *European Journal of Development Research*, 8, 1 (1996), p. 207; Philip Raikes, “Food Policy and Production in Mozambique since Independence”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 29 (1984): 95-107; and János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*. Vol. A. Amsterdam: NHPC, 1980, p. 1-2.

<sup>88</sup> “Na prática da Ofensiva pela legalidade libertamos muitas pessoas: Inspector de Estado Raimundo Pachinuapa à *Tempo*”, *Tempo*, 609, 13 Jun. 1982.

<sup>89</sup> “Na prática da Ofensiva pela legalidade libertamos muitas pessoas: Inspector de Estado Raimundo Pachinuapa à *Tempo*”, *Tempo*, 609, 13 Jun. 1982.

agreement), and all other state departments, President Machel instructed the head of the State Inspection, Raimundo Pachinuapa, to conduct investigations on the roots of the problems that citizens complained about in their letters. The reeducation camps were the main focus of the investigations.<sup>90</sup>

Pachinuapa and his team conducted surveys in several reeducation camps in Niassa, in which they compiled a number of cases of unjust detentions.<sup>91</sup> In Chiputo there were soldiers serving sentences since 1975 for failing to salute their hierarchical superiors, for cases of adultery, and other similar trivialities. The majority, however, were Frelimo's former guerrillas who deserted during the liberation struggle.<sup>92</sup> With the report of the survey at hand, in October 1979 President Machel made his first visit to Niassa since independence. In several meetings with reeducatees, the President re-enacted the show trial of Nachingwea by singling out individual detainees who were compelled to narrate their past of betrayal or confess their wrongdoing.<sup>93</sup> In the end, the president gave amnesty to all detainees in Chiputo and Unango. Around the same time, other reeducation camps were closed down in southern and central Mozambique (but the main motivation here was the intensification of the war with Renamo, as the camps were one of the main targets of the rebel movement. Detainees in Sacudzo were either released, incorporated in the army, or transferred to camps in Cabo Delgado and Niassa).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Various teams were constituted under the newly create department. The most important teams for the purposes of this study were three. One team was sent to investigate the conditions of reeducation camps (this team was headed by chief inspector Raimundo Pachinuapa). The second team was instructed to investigate the illegalities within the security forces, especially SNASP. And the third team was instructed to investigate the state housing agency, APIE. "Na prática da Ofensiva pela legalidade libertamos muitas pessoas." These inspection teams continued to work up to 1981. See MHN – "Inspection of re-education centres in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province", *Summary of World Boradcasts*. Maputo, 1030 GMT 19 Oct. 1981.

<sup>91</sup> The only surveys that survived in the archival record were related to detainees in Chiputo, most of whom were former Frelimo guerrillas who deserted during the liberation struggle. The survey team was mostly interested in knowing how and why they deserted from Frelimo and what activities they developed until independence. More importantly, the team wanted to know if they thought they deserved reeducation or not, and what they thought of Frelimo and the revolutionary process. Not a single detainee made negative comments about their internment and about the party. With no exception, they all said that they deserved to be reeducated and that the process had been a transforming one. As João Carlos Trindade, who was in the survey team in Chiputo, recalled, "all detainees were terribly afraid because they did not know what was to happen." AGGPN/DPSRN – Inquérito Tipo B (Desertores). 1979; Interview: João Carlos Trindade, Maputo, 10 Sept. 2014.

<sup>92</sup> AGGPN/DPSRN – Inquérito Tipo B (Desertores). 1979.

<sup>93</sup> The entire visit to Niassa was widely publicized. *Tempo* dedicated a special edition to cover all the events that took place during the presidential visit. See *Tempo*, Número Especial Dedicado à Viagem Presidencial à Província do Niassa, 26 Dezembro 1979.

<sup>94</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 Nov. 2014; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Beto Tembe, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015.





*Fig. 7. President Machel addressing reeducatees at Ruarua Reeducation Camp. Cabo Delgado, October 1981. Photo by D. Elias. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo*

If on the one hand the visit to Niassa was meant to address the problems of reeducation camps, on the other it was a preparation for the implementation of the ten-year economic plan (*Plano Prospectivo Indicativo* or Indicative Prospective Plan, PPI).<sup>95</sup> President Machel toured

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<sup>95</sup> Designed in light of the Soviet development plans, the elaboration of PPI was animated by the prospect of Zimbabwe's independence, in which Mozambique was heavily involved. Frelimo was confident that with Zimbabwe's independence, the Rhodesian-backed MNR/Renamo insurgency would come to an end, and economic relations with Zimbabwe would lead to greater prosperity for both countries. Frelimo believed the 1980s would be a decade of rapid development. See AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Linhas Fundamentais do Plano Prospectivo Indicativo para 1981-1990. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1981. For more details on PPI, see Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, org. *Moçambique: Perspectivas Económicas*. Maputo: UEM/FFE, 1994; A. Pitcher, *Transforming*

several regions with potential for agriculture in Niassa. The outcome of this work was the elaboration of the Program for the Development of Niassa (*Programa de Desenvolvimento do Niassa*, also known as *Programa dos 400,000 Hectares*), which was included in the PPI.<sup>96</sup> In giving amnesty to detainees in Chiputo and Unango, President Machel expected them to participate in the development program by transforming their former detention camps into lucrative agrarian farms and building towns where their families would join them.<sup>97</sup> Back in Maputo and with the reports on SNASP and APIE at hand, President Machel held a mass rally on March 18, 1980, in which he “declared war on the enemy within” and called for an *Ofensiva Política e Organizacional* (hereafter *Ofensiva*) to root out all forms of corruption, unlawfulness, and bureaucratic dysfunction within the party-state ranks.<sup>98</sup>

A populist, exhortatory campaign, the *Ofensiva* is a classic example of the “dilemma” between charismatic authority and bureaucratization. Like Mao Zedong during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Samora Machel turned against the bureaucracy of his own government.<sup>99</sup> But different from Mao, Machel did not stay in the comforts of his presidential quarters. For two consecutive years until 1982, he carried out the campaign himself, going to government institutions and state enterprises unannounced and ordering the detention of “reckless” employees and remonstrating incompetent managers.<sup>100</sup> In President Machel’s thinking, if the state bureaucracy could not solve the problems of the “people”, it was down to him to make things happen. This meant turning publicly against the bureaucracy to operate what he called an “internal purification” (*purificação interna*).<sup>101</sup> Although the president targeted all sorts of institutions, including schools

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*Mozambique*, p. 77 (Note that Pitcher confused the PPI for *Ofensiva*). On the relationship between PPI and *Ofensiva*, see S. LeFanu, *S is for Samora*, p. 179-184.

<sup>96</sup> AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Linhas Fundamentais do Plano Prospectivo Indicativo para 1981-1990. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1981, p. 17. The program included Cabo Delgado as well.

<sup>97</sup> “A batalha contra o subdesenvolvimento produzirá heróis do trabalho”, *Tempo*, Número Especial Dedicado à Viagem Presidencial à Província do Niassa, 26 Dezembro 1979, p. 51.

<sup>98</sup> Samora Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, in Barry Munslow, ed. *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary. Selected Speeches and Writings*. London: Zed Books, 1985, pp. 86-103.

<sup>99</sup> On Mao’s campaigns against bureaucratization, see J. Lewis, *Leadership in Communist China*; Lili Wu, “The Dilemma of Charismatic Authority: Mao’s Cultural Revolution in China”, PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010. On the role of campaigns in the Chinese revolution, see Charles Cell, *Revolution at Work: Mobilization Campaigns in China*. New York: Academic Press, 1977.

<sup>100</sup> “A Ofensiva: O que é? Da Campanha à Metodologia Permanente para o Combate ao Subdesenvolvimento”, *A Voz da Revolução*, 71, Agosto 1980, pp. 15-21; “Legalidade e visitas presidenciais pontos altos da vida do país”, *Notícias*, 19 Dez. 1981.

<sup>101</sup> “A Ofensiva Política e Organizacional faz Parte da Nossa Maneira de Viver”, *Notícias*, 28 Julho 1980; “Em tribunal as pessoas detidas durante a Ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 514, 17 Ago. 1980.

and hospitals, the most important sectors that he sought to purify and which had profound implications in the party's reformist program was the security branch (MINT, SNASP, and the Army), the justice system and urban planning.<sup>102</sup> Framed as a *battle* to restore legality (*legalidade*), the president's unannounced visits to SNASP and to the headquarters of the army and of the police corps resulted in hundreds of officers arrested for corruption, negligence, and abuse of power – all of which were labeled as acts of the enemy within (*inimigo interno*) seeking to undermine the revolution.<sup>103</sup> By 1982, 400 agents were purged from SNASP alone, and many were sentenced to reeducation.<sup>104</sup> The Ministry of Justice was instructed to speed trials, and it was determined that no one should be sent to reeducation without a formal sentence passed by a judge.<sup>105</sup>

If the *Ofensiva* was meant to solve the contradictions of the reeducation program and create the appropriate conditions for the successful implementation of the PPI, its outcome was disastrous. The *Ofensiva* not only reinforced the salvationist ideology of the party leadership (as it placed greater power in the hands of the president), it also bolstered the repressive hand of the state with more draconian and spectacular forms of punishment, especially when all socio-economic policies failed to produce positive results. The most notable example of the party's reinforced salvationism during *Ofensiva* is the vigorous discourse of the *inimigo interno*. In the same way that the new man was key to Frelimo's socialist project, the discourse of the enemy had always been at the center of the party's ideology. In 1977 the government published two pamphlets, one outlining the attributes of the new man<sup>106</sup> and the other describing the maneuvers of the ubiquitous enemy (Xiconhoca), with instructions on how to detect him.<sup>107</sup> But with the launching of *Ofensiva*, the discourse of the enemy became more robust and harsh pieces of legislation were introduced or

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<sup>102</sup> In chapter 3 I discuss in detail the particulars of the implications of the *Ofensiva* in the field of urban planning, which resulted in the implementation of *Operação Produção*.

<sup>103</sup> "O que é ilegal não é nosso!", *Notícias*, 6 Nov. 1981.

<sup>104</sup> "Ofensiva Política e Organizacional: 400 elementos expulsos em dois anos do Ministério da Segurança (SNASP)", *Tempo*, 20 Fev. 1982.

<sup>105</sup> "A Ofensiva da Legalidade nos Tribunais", *Justiça Popular*, 4 (Set-Dez 1981), pp.3-4; "Legalidade e Visitas Presidenciais, Pontos Altos da Vida do País: Discurso do Chefe de Estado na Abertura da 9a Sessão da AP", *Notícias*, 19 Dez. 1981; See also "Para o centro de reeducação só se vai depois de julgado e condenado", *Notícias*, 4 Janeiro 1985.

<sup>106</sup> Ministério da Educação e Cultura (MEC), *O Homem Novo*. Maputo: MEC, 1977. See also Sérgio Vieira, "O Homem Novo é um Processo", *Tempo*, 398, 5 Maio 1978.

<sup>107</sup> AGGPN/Conselho de Ministros. Análise da Situação Política e Social do País. Julho 1977; "Como Age o Inimigo? Análise Política da Situação Económica e Social do País em Comunicado do Conselho de Ministros", *Tempo*, 355, 24 Julho 1977, p.58-64. For further references to this document, see Peter Meyns, "Liberation Ideology and National Development Strategy in Mozambique", *Review of African Political Economy*, 22 (1981):42-64.

reinforced to define and punish certain crimes. For instance, in 1982 the government emended the 1979 *Law on Crimes against the People and the People's State* to include death sentence for economic crimes and in 1983 they re-introduced public floggings for black marketeering.<sup>108</sup> These draconian measures were introduced while the party's vitriolic condemnations of urban degeneracy were also soaring and tough measures to control social mobility within urban spaces were being put in place. The government introduced a series of documents (IDs, work cards and resident's cards) in order to identify the "working people", that is, those who had the right to live in urban areas and therefore were entitled to benefit from urban services (food rationing, housing, and others). The social misfits, the idle and the unemployed – who were thought to come in droves from the rural areas to increase crime, immorality and social disorder – had no right to urban citizenship and were to be rounded up and sent back to the countryside.<sup>109</sup>

President Machel's inaugural speech of the *Ofensiva* contain all the contradictions of Frelimo's salvationist discourse and the roadmap of the disastrous policies that ensued from *Ofensiva* in the following three years, all of which culminated with the implementation of *Operação Produção* in 1983. A significant aspect of the speech was the intensity with which President Machel condemned the decadence of Maputo residents. He described Maputo as the example of all that was wrong with Mozambique's urban society and where the work of social reform was needed more urgently. For him, the capital was a city of adulterers, of concubines and prostitutes; a city of idles and drunkards; of drug pushers and criminals; of culturally rootless and alienated youth. In all these moral shortcomings, the capital represented the "reality" of the entire country. As he stated in March 18, 1980:

When Frelimo took power, we found Lourenço Marques the model of all our country's cities: a city of patronage, orgies, bacchanalia, corruption, favors. It was the city where the Portuguese colonial soldier arrived and departed, bringing and leaving the seeds of vice, degradation, immorality, drunkenness, venereal disease and crime.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> João Carlos Trindade, "Rupturas e Continuidades nos Processos Políticos e Jurídicos", in Boaventura de Sousa Santos e João Carlos Trindade, orgs. *Conflito e Transformação Social: Uma Paisagem das Justiças em Moçambique*. Vol 1. Porto: Afrontamento, 2003, pp. 97-127. As I have argued elsewhere, while stemming from a catch-it-all discourse on internal security – which was unable to distinguish serious from petty threats to state security – these harsh laws resulted from the party's nervousness amid disappointing economic results and the increasing deterioration of the economy and the government's incapacity to provide the most basic services, including food rationing and others. B. Machava, "State Discourse", p. 604-6.

<sup>109</sup> S. Machel, "We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within", p. 94.

<sup>110</sup> S. Machel, "We are Declaring War on the Enemy Within", p. 88.



Fig. 8. President Machel addressing Maputo residents in the launching of *Ofensiva*. March 18, 1980. Photo by Carlos Calado, Courtesy: CDFP.

Two years later, in June 22, 1982, in the concluding speech of the *Ofensiva*, the president reassembled the residents of Maputo to remind them once again what their city was when Frelimo took power, and the arduous work that still laid ahead to transform the capital into a liberated zone.<sup>111</sup>

Many of us have forgotten what Lourenço Marques was. Lourenço Marques was the center for the commercialization of women; center of the most degrading prostitution. Lourenço Marques was the city of prostitutes. (...) To have a venereal disease was a source of pride in Lourenço Marques. One characteristic of the men and women of the cities was that who had venereal diseases 20 times was considered a champion. (...) Lourenço Marques was the capital of murder, of theft, of moral degradation. (...) All this was Lourenço Marques. All this was a reality throughout the country.<sup>112</sup>

Although his speech was turned towards the past, the president insisted that the legacy of colonialism and the deep wounds that it left on the social fabric were still very much present and needed immediate redress. The initial campaigns had not done the job, as the social pathologies created by colonialism continued to harm the society and in so doing were hindering the advance of the revolution. As he told the mass of enthusiastic listeners:

The degradation of customs, alcoholism, drugs, prostitution, concubinage, the instability of the family, bribe, material and moral corruption, they tear apart the moral and social fabric; they

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<sup>111</sup> “Consolidar Maputo como zona libertada”, *Notícias*, 24 Junho 1982.

<sup>112</sup> “Rompamos Definitivamente com a Burguesia para Consolidar o Poder Popular. Documento do Presidente Samora Machel no Comício de 22 de Junho em Maputo”, *Tempo*, 8 Ago. 1982, p. 36.

disintegrate the society and open the way to alien and bourgeois mentality. These are forms of cultural, social, and ideological subversion.<sup>113</sup>

This was not just political rhetoric. Inflated and distorted as it was, this was a genuine concern that consumed the energy of Frelimo's government<sup>114</sup> and led the party to dictate some of the most violent policies of the socialist era in Mozambique. The criminalization of unemployment and other aspects of social life, which were the underlining motivation behind *Operação Produção*, ensued from the reinvigorated salvationism of the party during the *Ofensiva* spree. Ignoring Teodato Hunguana's technical cautioning on the dangers of curtailing the individual rights and liberties that the constitution conferred to all citizens, the salvationists had no regard for the rule of law if the law was an impediment to their reformist agenda. If, in looking at the mass of people living in the capital city, Hunguana saw citizens with individual rights under the umbrella of the constitution, President Machel and company saw social filth that needed to be sifted. Only the pure, the virtuous people deserved to live in the city. The "dangerous mixtures", the carriers of *males sociais* had to be filtered from society, isolated in labor camps and purified. If the *Ofensiva* seemed to have relaxed the reeducation pipeline and reduced the intensity of the cleanup campaigns, it was simply the calm before the storm. As we shall see in the next chapter, *Operação Produção* not only revived the arbitrariness of the earlier cleanup campaigns, it bolstered them to unprecedented levels. The number of victims of *Operação Produção* were ten times more than the victims of all previous campaigns combined. If conditions in labor camps were already harsh in northern Mozambique, the arrival of thousands of urbanites at once during the height of the economic crisis deteriorated life conditions very dramatically.

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<sup>113</sup> "Rompamos definitivamente com a Burguesia", p. 45.

<sup>114</sup> Early reports by provincial governors and party organizations reinforced the president's alarming assumptions about the decadence of urban society. In these reports, governors highlighted prostitution, alcoholism, idleness and vagrancy, dance balls and night parties as the most alarming urban problems in their provinces. In the rationale that they put in the reports, these problems were responsible for other related social ills, namely the uprooting and alienation of the youth, the proliferation of adultery and divorce, and the dissolution of families. Assessments of the moral failings of local communities and how to tackle them filled lengthy reports on "social issues" in the early years of independence. In a 1978 report, the governor of Maputo province, José Moiane, informed the President that in the urban District of Matola "alcoholism, banditry, rape, divorce, and lobolo abound." See AGGPM/OMM, 1<sup>a</sup> Reunião da Comissão Coordenadora Nacional. Plano de Trabalho para o 1<sup>o</sup> Semestre. Manica, 13 de Outubro de 1977, p. 8-11; AGGPM/Relatório do Secretariado Provincial a apresentar à 1<sup>a</sup> Conferência Provincial da OMM. Maputo, 21 de Novembro de 1977, p. 3; AGGPM/ Síntese do Relatório do Primeiro Semestre de 1978 do Governador da Província de Maputo à Sua Excelência o Presidente da Frelimo e Presidente da República Popular de Moçambique. Maputo, 31 de Julho de 1978, p. 13; and AGGPM/1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunitários/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 Fevereiro 1979, p. 3.

### Chapter 3

## “These moral deserters must be reeducated”: Ofensiva, Operação Produção, and the Criminalization of Unemployment, 1982-1988

*The delegates to the Congress have stressed how the disorderly influx into the cities increases vagrancy, crime, and prostitution. They said that the existence of those who do not work harms the lives of workers. We will control the influx [of rural migrants] into the city. Only those who have work, who have waged work, are entitled to residence. This means that work is the criterion of residence. The marginals, the unemployed, the vagrants should be sent to the countryside, to production.*

Samora Machel, May 21, 1983<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

This chapter explores the context and the administrative mechanisms of the implementation of Frelimo’s last and largest cleanup campaign, the 1983 *Operação Produção* or operation production. Since Frelimo was confronted with the arbitrariness of the cleanup campaigns and the gap between the idea of rehabilitation and the harsh reality of reeducation camps, the party moved from one palliative solution (for example, to move some camps to better locations) to another, without effecting real change. Not even the war with Renamo, which was being led by an escapee from Sacudzo reeducation camp, convinced the party leadership to evaluate the counterproductive effect of the reeducation program. After the failed attempt to pass legislation on the camps in 1976, the austere conditions of the camps worsened for lack of appropriate assistance. When President Machel finally took the decision to make changes in the reeducation program in 1979 – animated by the prospect of the ten-year-development plan (PPI) – the solution that he came up with was even more draconian. After returning from Niassa, where he released hundreds of detainees and instructed them to stay and transform their former detention camps into villages, President Machel began the *Ofensiva Política e Organizacional*. Apart from condemning the moral decay of the capital city in the mass rally of March 18, 1980, President Machel also announced that the capital city would be transformed into a “liberated area” and a massive cleanup operation would be launched to fix all problems once and for all, from immorality, unemployment, to the chronic

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<sup>1</sup> MHN – Partido Frelimo. *Defender a Pátria, Eliminar a Fome: Tarefa de Todos os Moçambicanos*. Collecção 4º Congresso. Maputo, 1983.

shortages in consumer goods.<sup>2</sup> Vagrants, prostitutes, and the unemployed would all be “flushed out” and relocated in the countryside to produce food and help in the economic reconstruction of the country. Although the president did not mention that the reeducation camps would be shut down, the new policy consisted of transforming some camps into farms, where the anti-socials to be scooped from all the country’s cities would be relocated.

Unlike the previous campaigns, which were constantly interrupted after a few weeks, *Operação Produção* ran uninterrupted for a year between June 1983 and May 1984, and intermittently until May 1988. Although the exact number of people rounded up and expelled from the cities remains unknown, higher estimates place them at around 100,000. Half of the victims were expelled from Maputo alone.<sup>3</sup> Most of the victims were sent to the northern provinces of Niassa, Cabo Delgado, and Nampula – which had not been affected by the civil war as of 1983. If President Machel carried out the *Ofensiva* partially to address the arbitrariness of previous campaigns and fix the dilemma of the reeducation program, *Operação Produção* rolled back all the little gains that the *battle for legality* had rendered to the reformist program. Although the Ministry of Justice was charged with preventing arbitrariness and injustice during the campaign, unruliness and gross violations of the most basic civil rights characterized the entire process. In those reeducation camps transformed into village farms after the presidential visits to Niassa and Cabo Delgado, particularly Unango and M’sawize in Niassa, life conditions deteriorated to unprecedented levels as the villages received thousands of people without any appropriate conditions to accommodate and feed them (see chapter 6).

While scholars have described *Operação Produção* as a reflection of Frelimo’s bureaucratic pathology<sup>4</sup> and a spontaneous decision of the party’s Fourth Congress,<sup>5</sup> in this chapter I demonstrate that the campaign ensued from the *Ofensiva* and was in the making for three years before the congress.<sup>6</sup> If the campaign was indeed characterized by Frelimo’s bureaucratic pathology, its implementation was the last effort of the party’s salvationist urge to effect social

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<sup>2</sup> S. Machel, “We are Declaring War on the Enemy Within.”

<sup>3</sup> See J. Tartter, “Government and Politics”, p. 201; H. Howe, “National Security”, p. 277; O. R. Thomaz, “Escravos sem dono”, p. 191; and C. Quembo, *Poder do Poder*.

<sup>4</sup> B. Hegero, *Moçambique*, p. 220-1; A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hall and T. young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> The campaign was meant to start and end in 1980, before the implementation of PPI. It was delayed for three years, as the party leadership decided that it should be announced as one of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress, which in turn was initially scheduled for 1982 but took place in 1983.



reform in Mozambique's urban areas. This chapter describes the administrative work that the party put into service in preparation for the campaign. Beginning in 1979, party-state officials conducted surveys in Maputo, they initiated the reorganization of the cities' neighborhoods, and they introduced identification documents (in addition to the ordinary ID, residents had to carry a work card and a residential card). However, this work of preparation was not aimed at a concrete planning of the campaign. Its main objective was to facilitate the identification of wayward members of society who were not entitled to urban citizenship. The professional rank-and-file who carried out most of this work were largely ignorant about the ultimate goal of the tasks that the party leadership charged them with. Even high-ranking members of the government, including provincial governors and ministers had no concrete idea that the various programs being implemented as part of the *Ofensiva* in urban areas – in Maputo in particular – would lead to such massive cleanup campaign.<sup>7</sup>

The period leading to *Operação Produção* was the most repressive and incongruous of all of the socialist experiment, as Frelimo leaders insisted in trying to reconcile incompatible aspirations. On the one hand, they craved to deliver a new social order, which included the cleansing of social ills as well as the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens. On the other, they wanted to uphold the rule of law, which stemmed from the pressures to fix the arbitrariness of the reeducation program as well as from the need to reform the justice system. The combination of these conflicting and irreconcilable aspirations produced a period of bizarre and spectacular forms of punishment that rendered the Mozambican state both modern and archaic at the same time. Although, compared to previous years, fewer people were sent to reeducation camps since the beginning of the *Ofensiva*, the party introduced draconian measures to combat internal enemies and to address the problems of shortages. This was the period of expedited public mass trials, of public floggings, and public executions by firing squad. Renamo rebels were the main subjects of execution, but a few black marketeers were also shot in front of cheering crowds. Demonstrating a sense of righteousness that only a messianic ideology can sustain, the Military Revolutionary Tribunal issued detailed communiqués about the executed, including their

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<sup>7</sup> Although President Machel announced the campaign in 1980, few people seem to have thought that it would be more than the usual cleanup operations which continued to take place from time to time. In fact, the police launched several small operations against vagrancy and black marketeering following the *Ofensiva* speech. *Operação Produção* came as surprise for many people, including high-ranking government officials.

photographs and short biographies, which the press printed regularly. The salvationists ignored the cautious observations that Teodato Hungana made during the discussion of the proposal of law on reeducation, in which he urged the legislator not to criminalize unemployment. They also ignored his warnings about the danger of violating the constitution and the international laws that the country ratified related to forced labor. *Operação Produção* was based on the criminalization of unemployment and it consisted of subjecting citizens to forced labor. As President Machel put it during the address to the parliament on the occasion of the launching of PPI in 1981: the unemployed were idle and parasitic, they were “moral deserters” of work who needed to be reeducated.<sup>8</sup> Because the party leadership could not implement the campaign under ordinary legal proceedings, they issued a special decree, which halted the Law and imposed a state of siege.<sup>9</sup> If the campaign is an example of Frelimo’s bureaucratic pathology, as scholars have rightly pointed out, it was also the epitome of the party’s salvationist view of politics and governmentality.

### **Structural Legacies of Colonialism and The Criminalization of Unemployment**

Frelimo inherited a very fragile economy from the Portuguese colonial regime. Yet, filled with confidence – such was the power of their salvationist ideology – the revolutionaries were unable to consider any material impediments to their ambitious reformist agenda. Apart from the global economic depression following the 1973 oil crisis, and the security challenges from white minority regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia (which were unhappy with a black-led government in their doorsteps), Frelimo inherited a state in total disarray and they faced gigantic challenges. The distorted economy – built to serve the white settler community and largely dependent on South Africa and Rhodesia – needed to be reoriented to provide for twelve million people, more than 90

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<sup>8</sup> “Esses preguiçosos, esses desertores morais devem ser reeducandos aqui. São produto nacional. São também excrescências da nossa revolução. Os preguiçosos são, em suma, parasitas.”, AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Discurso de Abertura e de Encerramento da 8a Sessão. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, Outubro 1981, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> As H.G. Adler wrote several decades ago, “It was decisive for the evolution of the concentration camp that the struggle against supposed enemies was impossible by ordinary procedure even if exercised by a judicial apparatus pledged to the regime – impossible in a formal sense and because of the great number of persons affected. They could not be tried for any objective offense by a jurisdiction unconcerned with the discovery of truth, even though the procedure itself was based on morally untenable legislation. Therefore, common jurisdiction had to be replaced by decreed secret proceedings (...) on the occasion of the reputed ‘purges’, (...) without any pretense to legal proceedings” H.G. Adler, “Ideas Toward a Sociology of the Concentration Camp”, p. 521.

percent of whom were illiterate and dispersed in rural areas throughout the extensive territory.<sup>10</sup> The departure of white settlers deprived the country of its trained human resources in all sectors, from public services to private enterprises.<sup>11</sup> The thirty medical doctors who remained in the country to take care of the health needs of twelve million people is one of the examples of the challenges that Frelimo faced.<sup>12</sup> The situation in other sectors (education, civil administration, and business management) was not encouraging either.



*Fig. 9. Partial view of Maputo. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias*

Although the economic and social chaos that characterized the transition to independence was felt throughout the country, its most visible signs were to be seen in urban areas, particularly

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<sup>10</sup> See Luís de Brito, “Dependência Colonial e Integração Regional”, *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 1 (1980): 23-32; and Marc Wuyts, “Economia política do colonialismo em Moçambique”, *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 1 (1980): 9-22.

<sup>11</sup> In the early 1960s, Mozambique’s settler community was as large as Rhodesia’s, about 250,000. By early 1970s many settlers left the colony as the liberation struggle advanced southward. Most left the country “voluntarily” after the Lusaka agreement and the violent events that unfolded in Lourenço Marques in September and October 1974.

By 1975, less than 10,000 settlers remained in the country, and the numbers continued to thin in the following years. See A. Rita-Ferreira, “Moçambique post-25 de Abril”; and B. Machava, “Galo Amanheceu em Lourenço Marques.”

<sup>12</sup> Carol Barker, “Bringing Health Care to the People”, in J. Saul, *A Difficult Road*, p. 323. See also M. Hall and T. young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 57.

in the capital city.<sup>13</sup> In the unplanned suburban areas or *caniço* (reed) – where Africans were allowed to dwell cheek by jowl in poorly built houses of reed and corrugated iron – those who were quick enough moved into the city of cement, triumphantly occupying empty houses abandoned by the Portuguese.<sup>14</sup> Given the racial and segregationist policies of Portuguese colonial rule, the massive takeover of houses in the city of cement was perhaps the most concrete and symbolic aspect of independence. The “africanization” of Mozambique’s urban spaces was ‘consolidated’ with the nationalization of housing in July 1976. As President Machel proclaimed triumphantly in 1980, “the cement cities, for the first time in our history, took on a Mozambican face.”<sup>15</sup> However, the euphoria of independence was tempered by the harsh reality of transition. The exodus of settlers created a profound crisis of unemployment, food shortages, and the breakdown of the entire chain of urban services. In 1974, hotels and domestic services employed about 300,000 Africans.<sup>16</sup> Most of these jobs disappeared “as the proprietors of hotels, bars, and restaurants and the employers of domestic servants left the country.”<sup>17</sup> In the countryside, the situation was far worse. The settler exodus disrupted the agrarian economy, which was entirely dependent on *cantineiros* (white and Asian rural traders). With nowhere to trade their yields, peasants had little incentive to produce for the market.<sup>18</sup> The end of colonial rule also meant that peasants were now freer to seek better job prospects in towns. The flood of rural migrants in towns had been in sharp rise since the early 1960s due to the economic growth registered in the last decade of neo-liberal colonial development. But the influx of rural migrants into the cities accelerated during the transition to- and in the early years of independence. For example, the number of residents in Lourenço Marques rose from about 400,000 in 1973 to 755,300 in 1978.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to the developed world where urbanization was accompanied by- and in most cases was the product of industrialization, in Mozambique (and in the global south in general) this rapid

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<sup>13</sup> D. Wield, “Mozambique: Late colonialism and early problems of transition”, p. 86.

<sup>14</sup> See D. Morton, *Age of Concrete*.

<sup>15</sup> S. Machel, “We are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p. 90.

<sup>16</sup> D. Wield, “Mozambique: Late colonialism”, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Barry Pinsky, “Territorial dilemmas: Changing urban life”, in J. Saul, ed. *A Difficult Road*, p. 284.

<sup>18</sup> Bridget O’Laughlin, “A Questão agrária em Moçambique”, *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 3 (1981): 9-32; Marc Wuyts, *Camponeses e Economia Rural em Moçambique*. Maputo: INLD, 1981; Helena Dolny, “The Challenge of Agriculture”, in J. Saul, ed. *A Difficult Road*, pp. 211-252; Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, 1994. “Problemas estruturais do desenvolvimento Agrário.”

<sup>19</sup> AGGPM/CCR/DNE. 1o Recenseamento Geral da População de 1980. Projecções Demográficas. Volume 10; AGGPM/RPM-CCR/DNE. 1o Recenseamento Geral da População de 1980. Informação pública, 1983, p. 6.

urbanization occurred without industrialization.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the rapid urbanization of Mozambique was accompanied by deindustrialization. Between 1973 and 1978, the industrial complex in Lourenço Marques suffered a 56 percent reduction, from 481 industries and factories to 211.<sup>21</sup> This crisis of transition and the increased pressure on urban areas exacerbated the shortages of consumer goods and the rate of unemployment.

The biggest blow to the economy came from the two largest employer sectors: transports and migrant labor. A considerable proportion of the population of southern Mozambique depended directly on the income of migrant workers.<sup>22</sup> Between 80,000 and 110,000 mine workers were recruited annually to South Africa since the early days of the twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> In a deliberate act of destabilization, but also a shifting trend in labor recruitment in the mining industry in South Africa since the late 1960s, the apartheid regime reduced the number of Mozambican miners by 70 percent. In 1977 only 37,000 miners were recruited. South Africa also reduced the volume of transit goods from Mozambican ports by 60 percent.<sup>24</sup> The solidarity with the liberation of Zimbabwe – as Frelimo implemented the UN sanctions against Rhodesia and barred the minority regime from using Mozambican ports – cost Mozambique a crucial source of revenues and thousands of jobs (particularly in the second city of Beira). All these combined factors exacerbated the crisis that affected Mozambique's major cities, and with it came a vast array of social challenges, from urban overcrowding, unemployment, to youth delinquency.

Frelimo leaders analyzed these structural challenges in emotive and judgmental terms.<sup>25</sup> Although they were aware of the structural factors that led to urban unemployment, they held on to a very simplistic analysis of the situation, and sought to tackle the problem in the most simplistic

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<sup>20</sup> As Peter Gutkind pointed out in the forward to Hillary Mitchell's study of urbanization in Lourenço Marques, urbanization in Mozambique "was primarily a function of pressure on the rural areas to produce raw materials" and it was "stimulated by an escape from rural poverty" rather than industrialization. See Peter Gutkind, "Forward", in Hillary Flegg Mitchell, *Aspects of Urbanization and Age Structure in Lourenço Marques (Maputo), 1957*. Lusaka: The Institute for African Studies, 1975, p. viii.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Clara Mendes, *Maputo antes da Independência: Geografia de uma Cidade Colonial*. Lisboa: Memórias do Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1985, p. 468-69; David Wield, "Some characteristics of the Mozambican economy particularly relating to industrialization", CEA (mimeo), 1977.

<sup>22</sup> As Ruth First put it, "there is no family in the southern part of Mozambique – which was the principal recruiting zone – that has not sent a father and most likely a son to the mines", Ruth First, *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983, p. 2. For the history of migrant labor from southern Mozambique to South Africa, see D. Hedges, "O Sul e o Trabalho Migratório."

<sup>23</sup> D. Hedges, "O Sul e o Trabalho Migratório."

<sup>24</sup> R. First, *Black Gold*, p. 55-6. See also B. Egero, *Moçambique*, p. 91.

<sup>25</sup> M. Hall and T. young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 104.

way.<sup>26</sup> In their rationale, people were unemployed not because there was lack of work, but because they were lazy and enjoyed living in towns as parasites.<sup>27</sup> The rural migrants who moved into the cities seeking better life prospects were seen as idle people fleeing the hoe and seeking easy life and the worldly pleasures that the city had to offer. Their idleness was a breeding ground for crime, immorality, and social disorder. All these problems were a legacy of colonialism that needed the same prophylactic measure: to stop the influx of rural migration and to send people back to the countryside. In the same vein that President Machel condemned prostitutes and alcoholics, he called out for the sweeping of vagrants and unemployed rural immigrants who lived in perpetual idleness in urban areas, sucking on the blood of working people as parasites. “In Lourenço Marques there are many people without jobs”, he said in July 1975. “It is a duty for each Mozambican to work for the development of our system. It is a duty, it is an obligation.”<sup>28</sup> In 1981, he asserted that the idle “are a national product. They are the excrescence of our revolution. In sum, the idle are parasites.”<sup>29</sup>

Frelimo’s discourse on idleness recouped a century-old assumption that Africans were idle and keen on leading a parasitic lifestyle, which Portuguese colonial authorities and European missionaries alike propounded since the late nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> If what motivated the colonial regime’s discourse on African idleness was the need to exert absolute control and exploit African work force in the cheapest way, another layer of this discourse was the notion that Africans did

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<sup>26</sup> The section on “Work” in the party’s report to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress in February 1977 points out some of the underlying factors of urban unemployment, among them the “lack of supporting structures in the countryside” and the breakdown of the economy after the collapse of the colonial regime and the massive flight of white settlers. See FRELIMO. Relatório do Comité Central ao 3<sup>o</sup> Congresso. Documentos do 3<sup>o</sup> Congresso, Fevereiro 1977, p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> “República Popular de Moçambique: A 1a Ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 252, 3 Ago. 1975; “As fontes do sanguessuga”, *Tempo*, 1 January 1978, p. 20-25.

<sup>28</sup> “República Popular de Moçambique: A 1a Ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 252, 3 Ago. 1975

<sup>29</sup> AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Discurso de Abertura e de Encerramento da 8<sup>a</sup> Sessão. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1981, p. 28-9.

<sup>30</sup> From António Enes in the 1890s to José Bettencourt in the 1940s, Portuguese colonial authorities regarded Africans as inherently lazy. They created a heavy body of legislation to compel Africans to fulfill what they called a “moral obligation to work.” The first labor legislation in colonial Mozambique, dated 1899, established that all Africans aged between 14 and 60 had the “moral and legal” obligation to “obtain through work the means to improve their social condition.” Although the colonial labor legislation was continuously amended until 1961, the idea of the “moral obligation to work” continued to be the key pillar behind Portugal’s native labor policy of *indigenato*. Any African who did not fulfill that obligation was a lawbreaker and had to be punished with correctional labor as *xibalo* in public works or private enterprises. See Malyn Newitt, *História de Moçambique*. Lisboa: Europa-America, 2012, p. 341; and J. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*, p. 6.

not belong in urban areas.<sup>31</sup> As I discussed in chapter 1, African urban elites – keen on maximizing their chances of civil recognition under the Portuguese – appropriated these discourse as they sought to elevate their community to a respectable standing in the colonial society. Their newspapers were filled with exhortations for Africans to be industrious and earn their place in the city by conducting themselves properly. Frelimo leaders were bearers of this nativist political vision. Their campaigns against vagrancy were informed by these old anxieties about civility and urban order. In form and substance, they reproduced the very forms of social control and colonial violence that dominated much of the first half of the twentieth century in Mozambique. When the campaigns began in 1974, memories that “everyone walked in fear” in Lourenço Marques and other cities were still very much alive.<sup>32</sup>

Contrary to misguided perceptions of African idleness and parasitism, social scientists who surveyed the African urban population in colonial and early independent Mozambique documented the creative ways in which people navigated the narrow avenues in places like Lourenço Marques to make a living while contributing to the economic development of the country. In 1957, sociologist Hillary Mitchell conducted a survey of Lourenço Marques’ African residents. She observed the array of trades that people were engaged in and noted the indispensable role that such trades played for the social reproduction of Mozambique’s African townsmen.<sup>33</sup> Mitchell found that a considerable proportion of Lourenço Marques’ active working force was self-employed.

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<sup>31</sup> This was a widespread assumption in many settler colonies, where colonial authorities spend much of their energy devising strategies and policies to prevent Africans from settling and claiming a place in urban areas. If the South African Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 represent an extreme measure to prevent African urbanization, other settler colonies pursued similar policies. See William Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 126.

<sup>32</sup> See Jeanne Penvenne, “Here Everyone Walked with Fear: The Mozambican Labor System and the Workers of Lourenço Marques, 1945-1962”, in F. Cooper, ed. *Struggle for the City*, pp. 131-166. One of the ironies of this is that, as Frelimo was reproducing the forms of colonial violence, the party urged historians to document the humiliations of colonial oppression so that people would not “forget what happened.” The magazine *Não Vamos Esquecer o que Passou* was an attempt in this direction.

<sup>33</sup> H. F. Mitchell, *Aspects of Urbanization and Age Structure in Lourenço Marques (Maputo), 1957*. Mitchell was a member of teams of social researchers under the direction of Aidan Southall and Peter Gutkind (from the Institute of Social Research in Kampala and the Rhodes Livingstone Institute of Northern Rhodesia, respectively), who carried out surveys on African’s townsmen across Southern, Central and Eastern Africa in the late 1950 and early 1960s. The surveys – the first scholarly engagement with urban areas in Africa – were motivated by the rapid growth of urban centers in post-war Africa and the “alarming detribalization” of urban Africans. The common trope in these surveys was the belief that the city was inappropriate for Africans due to the cost of living (lack of housing, hunger, unemployment and low wages) and the ‘unfamiliarity and complexity of town life.’ See Aidan Southall and Peter Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making: Kampala and its Suburbs*. Kampala: EAISR, 1956; and J.A.K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Most of the domestic utensils and amenities that furnished African homes in the *caniço* were produced by local artisans and handymen. Skilled masons built the houses of reed and corrugated iron (and occasionally of cement). *Txova* or two-wheel cart pushers were the bloodline of town's life. They transported goods (building materials and consumer products) from one corner of the city to another. In 1968, anthropologist Rita-Ferreira confirmed Mitchell's findings. He argued that it was erroneous and unjust to "affirm that Africans (professionally qualified or not) were strictly dependent on activities created by Europeans and Asians, and that [without these activities] they would be incapable to elevate themselves from the level of subsistence of their ancestors." He insisted that the level of adaptation and creativity that Africans developed in urban areas was "undeniable" and "worth of attention."<sup>34</sup> After independence, studies of Maputo social life reconfirmed Mitchell's and Rita-Ferreira's observations. Scholars pointed out that, despite the high rates of official unemployment, most urban residents were engaged in a number of informal activities in a regimen of self-employment that were detrimental for the economy of the city.<sup>35</sup>

Frelimo leaders did not regard informal occupations as proper work. Stone masons, reed house builders, *txova* pushers, petty traders, handymen and artisans of all sorts found themselves in the degrading category of parasitic vagrants, of "moral deserters." The revolutionary leadership considered vagrants a fertile ground for the infiltration of Xiconhocas. In Frelimo's rationale, vagrants could easily be won by imperialist agents to destroy the socialist revolution from within, either by drinking, by committing criminal and immoral acts, by spreading rumors, or by making it hard for the party to fulfill its revolutionary projects by overcrowding the cities and refusing to work. As the Chief Justice of Maputo's People's Tribunal told reporters in September 1982, a vagrant is "the one who lives in the underworld, where there are conditions that transform him into a criminal." Vagrants, claimed the Judge, "constitute a potential threat to the revolution, for they can easily be engaged by the enemy."<sup>36</sup> The Judge's definition left ample room for all kinds of people to be regarded as vagrants. Any unemployed and undocumented urban resident, irrespective of his or her circumstance, was considered a vagrant and unworthy of living in the city. Like the "strolling human shops" and alcoholics, vagrants were to be rounded up and sent to reeducation

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<sup>34</sup> A. Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*, p. 366.

<sup>35</sup> See K. Nimpuno et al, *The Malhangalane Survey*.

<sup>36</sup> "Combate à marginalidade: Prostitutas serão enviadas para campos de reeducação – Juiz Presidente do Tribunal Popular Provincial de Maputo", *Notícias*, 10 Set. 1982.



camps. That these people's work was indispensable for urban life, especially in the *caniço* area where urban services were largely inexistent, was hardly taken into account. In socialist Mozambique, one had to have a waged labor and a signed work card to be considered fully employed and therefore worth of urban citizenship.

### **The *Ofensiva* and the Long Way to *Operação Produção***

Notwithstanding the party's rhetoric that framed *Operação Produção* as an economic policy to tackle hunger and boost food production, Frelimo launched the campaign to correct the shortcomings of the previous urban cleanup campaigns. Although the operation was announced as part of the resolutions of the Fourth congress in May 1983, the government had already decided to launch a massive cleanup campaign three years before. *Operação Produção* was conceived in 1980 during the *Ofensiva* spree and in preparation for the implementation of PPI. In launching the *Ofensiva* to purify and straighten the dysfunctional party-state apparatus, President Machel declared:

“Here today, 18 March 1980, we declare war on the enemy within. And we are going to flush him out by the end of this year. It will be a general clean-up. We are going to sweep him out.”<sup>37</sup>

Although the *Ofensiva* was an exercise for the purification of the party-state, President Machel's announcement to “flush” the enemy out was not directed at corrupt and reckless civil servants and workers in state enterprises only. He was calling on a massive campaign to clean the cities of everyone who did not have a waged work. The campaign was to take place in the capital city in 1980 and end in the same year. But the Politburo calculated that announcing the campaign as part of the resolutions of the congress would boost the party's popularity (since 1978 that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses had worn off). This was thought to be a delay of just a few months, since the congress was to take place in early 1982. The fact that the government was still busy finalizing the PPI, after which they had to prepare the congress meant that there was little time for a campaign in 1980. And, as it turned out, the government did not finish the PPI until 1981 and little time was left to prepare the Congress, which was delayed to April 1983.

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<sup>37</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.94.

### *Declaring war on the Enemy Within*

At the First National Meeting on Cities and Neighborhoods in February and March 1979, Minister Óscar Monteiro claimed that of the more than one million inhabitants in Maputo, only 350,000 people constituted an active working force in the city. This situation, he reasoned, “results in chronic unemployment, underemployment, banditry, prostitution, alcoholism, idleness, and other ills that we must combat.”<sup>38</sup> Minister Monteiro was quoting from a pilot survey on Maputo that a Party brigade prepared the previous month to serve as basis for discussions in the seminar. The party brigade had been constituted under direct orders from President Machel, as he was preparing to launch the *Ofensiva*.<sup>39</sup>

The party brigade took only a couple of weeks to carry out the survey. In their report, the brigade concluded that Maputo was the “bastion of the enemy” (*bastião do inimigo*) and the center of “the decadent values of bourgeois society.”<sup>40</sup> They noted with alarm that women were frequent guests in bars and informal brewing houses in the shantytowns. “This situation”, they wrote, “causes many social conflicts such as prostitution, corruption of minors, beatings, and divorce.”<sup>41</sup> They also concluded that Maputo residents were distributed in 60 *bairros*, of which only 17 were in the *cimento* area. They found out that the 43 *bairros* in the *caniço* area were the main destination for rural migrants, “who come to the city to aggravate crime, vagrancy, and disorganization in the rationing [of consumer goods] and transports.”<sup>42</sup> In the *bairros* adjacent to the “cement city”, such as Chamanculo and Mafalala, the report noted, people “live cheek by jowl along narrow, labyrinthine streets in unsanitary conditions.” According to the survey, unemployment was endemic, and most people led idle, parasitic lives. The wayward lifestyle of *caniço* residents, prayed the survey, was made worse by the anti-revolutionary activities of religious congregations,

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<sup>38</sup> AGGPM/1ª Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Discurso de abertura por sua Exa. o Ministro de Estado na Presidência. 27 Fevereiro 1979, p. 12-3.

<sup>39</sup> As I pointed out in chapter 3, the *Ofensiva* sought to tackle every single problem in the organization of the state and society. For that end, President Machel constituted several teams to conduct investigations and produce evidence about the problems that affected each sector. There were teams for reeducation camps; for the security services; for the state housing agency; for hospitals, and for the conditions of life in residential areas.

<sup>40</sup> AGGPM/1ª Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 Fevereiro 1979, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> AGGPM/1ª Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 Fevereiro 1979, p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> AGGPM/1ª Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 Fevereiro 1979.

particularly the Evangelical and Ethiopian churches. These congregations were said to “hold meetings and prayers at the same time that the *Grupos Dinamizadores* hold their meetings with the people”, thus demobilizing the masses from participating in revolutionary activities. Some congregations, such as the God’s Assembly, the Twelve Apostles, and the Zion performed their “loud masses” late at night, “which prevent the working people from getting enough rest.” The survey estimated that there were about 200 religious sects in the *caniço* area “with the sole objective of alienating the population, particularly the youth, and deterring them from” the main goals of the revolution. In the *cimento* area, by contrast, most residents were said to have occupied nationalized houses without honoring the payment of rent bills. For the surveyors, this was an indication that most people in the *cimento* were unemployed, thus occupying houses that should have been attributed to working people.<sup>43</sup>



Fig. 10. *Xiconhoca, the enemy*. Left: The cartoon figure and antithesis of the new man is portrayed as a drunkard and a parasite. Right: “I swear to be your Witness and always combat Frelimo.” Here *Xiconhoca* represents “fanatic “religious congregations (in this case Jehovah’s Witnesses) in a concerted effort to undermine the revolution. While others go to work, he prays. Source: *Frelimo. Xiconhoca, o Inimigo. Maputo: DTI, 1979.*<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> AGGPM/1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 February 1979. A *Tempo* report in December 1980 revealed that more than 11,000 tenants did not pay rent in Maputo, and many more occupied houses illegally. See “Maputo: Mais de 11 mil inquilinos não pagam renda de casa”, *Tempo*, 530, 7 Dezembro 1980.

<sup>44</sup> The cartoon figure of *Xiconhoca* was an iconography of moral decay. As William Mitchell argues, “images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status” (W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 9). *Xiconhoca* was an actor with a legendary status in the iconography of Mozambique’s socialism. He represents the contradictions of Frelimo’s modernist aspirations and puritan ethics. His easy-going and incredibly comic persona was both menacing and charming. For compelling yet different analysis of *Xiconhoca*, see H.

Having grown up in the same “labyrinthine” *bairros*, Frelimo leaders were very familiar with the life conditions of those areas. This hastily undertaken survey was not meant to reveal an objective social reality, but to confirm an ideological conviction. Party cadres went to the terrain to find substantiation for the perceptions outlined in party directives. Their findings almost never contradicted the “revolutionary truth” emanating from the leaders. Theirs was a work of bureaucratic bricolage that sought to produce amplified evidence to justify a political decision that had already been taken. And, more ironic, they concluded their investigations by suggesting the very same policies outlined in the speeches that elicited the survey. For example, they suggested that the *bairros* should be reorganized and transformed into communal neighborhoods with more intensive popular vigilance. They suggested that everyone in the *bairros* had to know the life of their neighbors and report any suspicious behavior to authorities. As minister Monteiro said in the opening address of the seminar, “the enemy infiltrates because we do not know each other.”<sup>45</sup> The unemployed were to be driven out of the city and sent back to the countryside to work the land in communal villages. Some were to be sent to the green belts (*Zonas Verdes*) near the city to produce vegetables for the city.<sup>46</sup> The 400 delegates of the seminar— including guests from the GDR and Vietnam – adopted all the proposed solutions as policies.<sup>47</sup> In his address to the delegates, who were supposed to spread the message and carry out the sweeping campaigns in their cities, minister Monteiro said: “everyone must have a job, everyone must work.”<sup>48</sup>

In the following year, with the proceedings of the seminar on cities in mind, President Machel held the memorable mass rally of March 18, 1980 in Maputo, in which he launched the

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Ossemame, “Xiconhoca – O Inimigo’ e o Processo de Criação do Homem Novo.” Dissertação de Licenciatura, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2003; Lars Buur, “Xiconhoca: Mozambique’s Ubiquitous post-Independence Traitor”, in S. Thiranagama and T. Kelly (eds), *Traitors: Suspicion, Intimacy, and the Ethics of State-Building*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, and Maria Paula Meneses, “Xiconhoca, o Inimigo: Narrativas de Violência sobre a Construção da Nação em Moçambique”, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 106 (2015): 9-52; J. Penvenne, *Women, Migration*, p. 30.

<sup>45</sup> AGGPM/1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Discurso de abertura por sua Exa. o Ministro de Estado na Presidência. 27 Fevereiro 1979.

<sup>46</sup> AGGPM/1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Síntese do trabalho realizado nos bairros do grande Maputo, 24 February 1979. A *Tempo* report in December 1980 revealed that that more than 11,000 tenants did not pay rent in Maputo, and many more occupied houses illegally. See “Maputo: Mais de 11 mil inquilinos não pagam renda de casa”, *Tempo*, 530, 7 Dezembro 1980.

<sup>47</sup> AGGPM/RPM. 1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais: Síntese da Resolução sobre a Organização da Direcção Estatal das Cidades. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1979

<sup>48</sup> AGGPM/1<sup>a</sup> Reunião Nacional das Cidades e Bairros Comunais/Discurso de abertura por sua Exa. o Ministro de Estado na Presidência. 27 Fevereiro 1979.

*Ofensiva* to purify the party-state organs of internal corruption and declared war on the enemy within.<sup>49</sup> The purification battle was to begin in the capital city, the den of prostitutes, idlers, vagrants and parasites. And, as he put it in his usual clinical vocabulary, the battle would be a bloody one. “Today we shall have a conversation which will be disagreeable”, he warned the audience as he began his speech. “When we have a jigger in our foot we must grab it and take it out”, he said, “but that hurts and draws blood too.” Throughout his long speech, the President drew from the pilot survey on Maputo, from the proceedings from the seminar on cities, as well as the alarming pamphlet *Como Age o Inimigo* (see chapter 2). After describing the precarious situation of Maputo at length, Machel announced a series of measures to purify the capital city and transform it into a liberated zone. The first task was to root out and destroy the internal enemies, who were believed to have infiltrated the party-state and residential areas. This task would be done through a massive sweeping campaign, which was meant to begin and end in that same year.

We are here solemnly declaring war on the enemy within. On 25 September 1964, we declared war on the foreign enemy – Portuguese colonialism. Here today, 18 March 1980, we declare war on the enemy within. **And we are going to flush him out by the end of this year. It will be a general clean-up.** We are going to sweep him out. (...) the enemy has positioned himself in front of the muzzles of our guns. Let us fire. This is a decisive battle. It is a battle in the class struggle. We will not share power with the enemy. Here there will be no complacency. There will be no accommodation or sentimentality. Those who tolerate, shield and accommodate are the enemy’s accomplices. They are our enemies. The revolution is irreversible. It is a steamroller, crushing every obstacle it meets as it opens and consolidates the broad road to socialism.<sup>50</sup> [My emphasis]

The second step was the sharpening of people’s vigilance in working places and residential areas, where the enemies were thought to have camped as lice and locusts. Residents were to know the lifestyle of their neighbors and detect misfits. Party brigades were to carry out a general survey of urban areas, going from house to house to register residents in order to map out who was worth of living in the city and benefit from the city’s services (rationing and housing).

The people must be vigilant. We have to know how many people live in each neighborhood, how many houses it has, how many shops and what their capacity is, how many people live in each house, and how many people in each household are employed. Only this way we can plan the right distribution of products to each area. First Maputo, Beira and Nampula, we shall launch a major campaign to survey the situation, and this will later be extended to other towns. We shall form people’s brigades in each neighborhood to go from house to house finding out who lives there and

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<sup>49</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.86-103

<sup>50</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.94.

register them. Each neighborhood must have a complete register of its residents. The campaign will also allow us to discover and neutralize criminals, vagrants, prostitutes and social misfits.<sup>51</sup>

This was the outline of what would later become operation production in 1983. Although the President presented the plan to sweep the cities of those who did not produce but ate, this was not necessarily an economic strategy, but a moral crusade. If one had waged work but led a disreputable life, he or she would be swept from the city.

The third and most important measure was to stop the rural to urban migration, and send the excess population back to the countryside or to the green belts to produce fresh vegetables. “In the city of Maputo here”, the President said, “only a minority of the population is working. The rest of the population is in queues, producing nothing.” The President asserted that the flood of peasants to the city was a deliberate act of internal enemies to undermine the revolution and create chaos. He claimed that urban citizens brought their relatives from the countryside on purpose as consequence of the wage increase of 1974. Before independence, he stated, working men in Lourenço Marques left their wives and children in the country because their salaries were meager.

They had a wage rise and went to bring their wife here to stay. They brought their children here. The children no longer go to school there, they came to study here. Not satisfied with wives and children, they went and fetched their brothers and brought them here. Still not satisfied, they fetched their mother – she is here in Maputo. Still not happy, they fetched brothers- and sisters-in-law to live here at the expense of one man alone. (...) We are going to stop this. Maputo is full. There is insufficient food. They were producing a whole series of things such as beans and fish. Now they produce nothing, they came here to stay. But you want to eat. (...) There are families of 20, where only one has a job. And they are adults. They eat a lot.<sup>52</sup>

President Machel was drawing on his personal experience. Before fleeing to join Frelimo in 1963, he worked as a nurse in the main hospital in Lourenço Marques and lived in a small house in Mafalala, while his wife and four children were in the countryside in the island of Inhaca across the Maputo bay. The surveys that he ordered did not make the claim that people had brought their relatives in droves because of wage increases in 1974. And they did not indicate any family with twenty members living in Maputo. The inflation of numbers and overblown statistics was a mode of governance in independent Mozambique. And so did personal and subjective perceptions of social reality.

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<sup>51</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.99.

<sup>52</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.101-2.

The President enumerated three groups of people to be targeted in the sweeping campaign. The first group were the criminals already in detention in penitentiaries and reeducation camps. Those in penitentiaries were to be sent to labor camps in the green belts for five to six years under military guard, until they produced enough to “compensate the people for what they stole.” The second group was the lazy and unproductive civil servants, and the negligent, absentee factory workers (also called “underemployed” workers). These underemployed workers were said to be sucking on the national bank’s money for salaries that they did not sweat for. “The bank’s money is the people’s money”, Machel gushed, “it cannot be used to pay the useless, the idle, the drunkards, the absentees, the negligent, the undisciplined and wastrels.” In three months, government ministers were to “clean up their respective ministries” and ensure that their ministries had a “sound structure.” These unproductive workers were also to be sent to green belts to produce food. The third and largest group was the anti-socials and unemployed. These were to go to labor camps in northern Mozambique (Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Nampula) to be integrated in the already existent state farms or to open new farms to produce food for the nation.<sup>53</sup>

In this speech, president Machel was reemphasizing the motto of socialism that he announced back in 1975 when he declared national independence: “to each according to his labor, to all according to their needs.”<sup>54</sup> She who did not labor had no place under the sun in socialist Mozambique. As the supreme leader sentenced, “only those who work have the right to eat in the new society that we are building. Anyone who does not produce has no right to a wage. We cannot allow the parasites to go on sucking our blood.”<sup>55</sup>

### *Turning Words Into Action I: Surveys and Numbers*

The President’s speech was printed in every newsreel and in Party bulletins. The “masses” were exhorted to carry out a profound study of the speech in order to participate in the *Ofensiva*. Party cadres were urged to transform the president’s words into actionable policies. And that is exactly what the twenty members of the Council of Ministers did in April 1980. A month after the speech, the Council of Ministers drafted a document with 10 resolutions and 50 tasks to rid Maputo and

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<sup>53</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.903.

<sup>54</sup> “República de Moçambique: A primeira ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 252, 3 Ago. 1975.

<sup>55</sup> S. Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within”, p.903.

other cities of vagrants and internal enemies.<sup>56</sup> The tasks were to be carried out by rank-and-file officers or *Directores Nacionais*. The overall plan was confidential, and those charged with implementing it were only informed of the sections of the document related to the implementation of a particular task.<sup>57</sup> While the overall plan was publicly announced, the particulars of its implementation were top secret. As we shall see, this created enormous problems in the implementation of the plan not only because those charged with carrying out the program had no idea of the bigger project, but also because colleagues did not share information among each other because the instructions came with a note alerting for confidentiality.

The resolution number three and number five of the Council of Ministers' action plan are of particular interest. Resolution three proposed the creation of a department for the green belts around Maputo (*Gabinete das Zonas Verdes*, GZV). The GZV was to replace the less vigorous Commission of Green Belts created in 1979 after the seminar on cities, after which it set the first *zona verde* in the Infulene valey.<sup>58</sup> Yet, the GZV retained its predecessor's objectives: to coordinate the "use of the available working force of the unemployed and vagrant in the city" to produce and supply the capital with fresh vegetables. As per task 18.1, each ministry was to appoint one of its officers to integrate the cabinet by April 23, and the unit was to begin work by May 1. As soon as it was formed, the GZV designated new green belts to send the unemployed: Jafar, Moamba, Boane, and Namaacha.<sup>59</sup>

Resolution number five defined the tasks for the reorganization of the capital city. The task number 29 determined that the capital had to be elevated to the category of Province, given its "special characteristics." Task 31 called for the rearrangement of the neighborhoods to transform them into *bairros comunais* (communal neighborhoods). Each *bairro* could not have more than 2,500 families (about 12,500 people). The densest neighborhoods were subdivided in smaller ones.

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<sup>56</sup> AGGPM/Decisão n°. 1/CM/Confidencial/Plano de tarefas e prazos para a implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros e Aparelho de Estado da decisão de lançar a Guerra ao inimigo interno. Maputo, 19 Abril 1980.

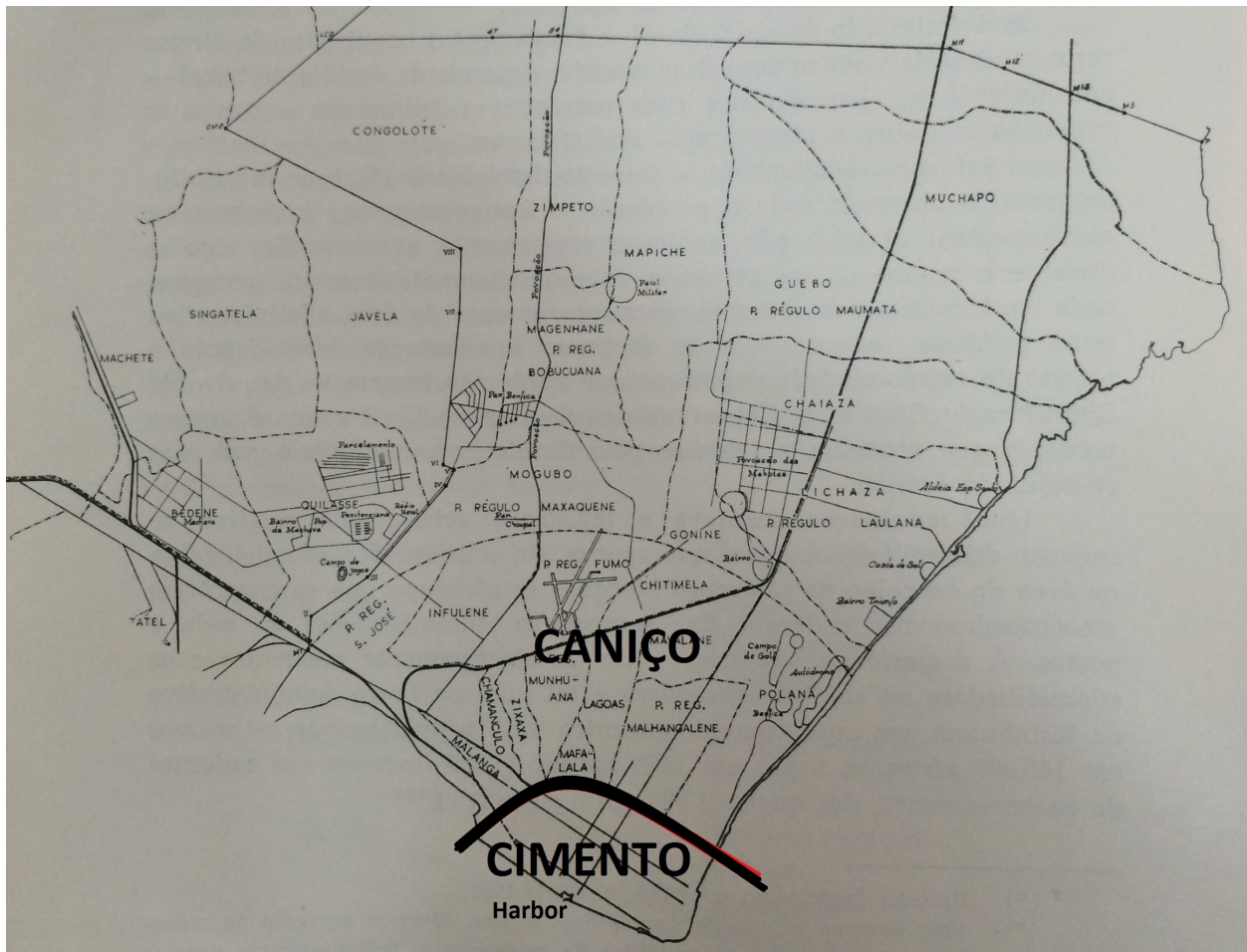
<sup>57</sup> "O Conselho de Ministros chama a atenção para o facto de que este Documento, no seu conjunto, é CONFIDENCIAL. Os Directores Nacionais e outros quadros apenas deverão ter conhecimento das partes de que necessitam para a implementação das tarefas." AGGPM/ Criação do Gabinete para o Levantamento da Situação dos Bairros da Cidade de Maputo.Tarefa 32. Maputo, 2 Maio 1980. As Joseph Hanlon commented in 1984, secrecy was a working method among Frelimo's top administrators and policy makers. J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: Revolution under Fire*, p. 194

<sup>58</sup> AGGPM/Comissão das Zonas Verdes. Maputo, Fevereiro 1980.

<sup>59</sup> AGGPM/Decisão n°. 1/CM/Confidencial/Plano de tarefas e prazos para a implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros e Aparelho de Estado da decisão de lançar a Guerra ao inimigo interno. Maputo, 19 Abril 1980.



Thus, Bairro Central (in the cement area), with 60,000 residents, was subdivided in three *bairros* (Central A, B and C); Maxaquene, the most populous in the *caniço* with 56,000 residents, was subdivided in three (Maxaquene A, B and C); Chamanculo, with 50,000 people, was subdivided in four (A, B, C, and D); Inhagoia and Polana Caniço, both with about 30,000 inhabitants, were divided in two (A and B).<sup>60</sup>



Map 2. Map of Lourenço Marques/Maputo before the reorganization of the neighborhoods. In: A.R. Ferreira, 1968.

In this new organization, each *bairro's* block (*quarteirão*) had to have 50 families (about 250 people). The *quarteirão* was to be supervised by a chief, *chefe de quarteirão*. A chief of 10 households (*chefe de 10 casas*) and a number of militia men were to help the *chefe de quarteirão*

<sup>60</sup> AGGPM/Implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros da decisão de lançar a guerra ao inimigo interno/Cumprimento da Tarefa 31. Maputo, 9 Maio 1980.

run the block. Above them was the neighborhood secretary (*secretário do bairro*). The secretary also chaired the neighborhood's *Grupo Dinamizador*, which included members of OMM, OJM (the youth organization), and locally elected judges. This rearrangement was meant to improve people's vigilance, making it easy for local authorities to detect the unemployed and vagrants.<sup>61</sup>

These local authorities were at the very bottom of the party-state's pyramidal hierarchy. Yet, as we shall see, they wielded enormous power and often defined the shape and course of the cleanup campaigns. They knew the residents of their *bairros* and paid close attention about which families participated in the collective life of the neighborhood and which did not. Families that failed to attend weekly meetings on Saturdays or Sundays or did not join in the early-morning sweeping of the sandy streets to keep the neighborhoods clean were often in the black list or looked with suspicion.<sup>62</sup> Most of the people sent to reeducation camps and the thousands scooped from urban areas during *Operação Produção* were arrested, convicted, and expelled by these local authorities.

The task 32 of the fifth resolution created a cabinet team to carry out a more refined survey in Maputo. The Council of Ministers' document stressed that the survey "aims at a correct reorganization of the city, the occupation of houses and rationing, the detection of the unemployed, vagrants, bandits, etc., in order to send them to green belts."<sup>63</sup> This was not a survey to help the government better understand the problems of Maputo, but an instrument to identify the targets of the incoming sweeping campaign. The survey was to be due by April 30, 1980, which means that even this "refined" one was to be concluded in a few weeks. However, the *Gabinete para o Levantamento da Situação dos Bairros da Cidade de Maputo* (GLSBCM or *Gabinete*) was only established in May, and it did not begin the work until June. According to its founding ordinance, the *Gabinete's* temporary mandate was the "reorganization of Maputo, to detect the unemployed, the vagrant, and send them to *zonas verdes*."<sup>64</sup> Headed by António Simbine (a sibling of the first-lady), the *Gabinete* included the director of APIE, members of the newly created city council of

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<sup>61</sup> AGGPM/Implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros da decisão de lançar a guerra ao inimigo interno/Cumprimento da Tarefa 31. Maputo, 9 Maio 1980

<sup>62</sup> Interview: Azarias Tivane, Maputo, 13 Jan. 2015.

<sup>63</sup> AGGPM/Decisão nº. 1/CM/Confidencial/Plano de tarefas e prazos para a implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros e Aparelho de Estado da decisão de lançar a Guerra ao inimigo interno. Maputo, 19 Abril 1980, p. 13. "Este levantamento destina-se a uma correcta organização da Cidade, da ocupação de casas e do abastecimento, detecção de desempregados, marginais, bandidos, etc., com vista à sua canalização para as Zonas Verdes."

<sup>64</sup> AGGPM/Implementação pelo Conselho de Ministros da decisão de lançar a guerra ao inimigo interno/Cumprimento da Tarefa 32. Maputo, 2 Maio 1980.

Maputo, Party cadres, and academics from University Eduardo Mondlane's Center for African Studies (CEA).<sup>65</sup>

The survey sheet asked for the name of the *bairro*; the number of the block and the house (flat and street for *cimento* residents); and the identity of the head of the household (his ID, place of work, work card, and the contract of the house). It also collected information regarding the number of people in each household; the size of the house in relation to the number of occupants; the age, degree of kinship and professional occupation of the head of the household's dependents; the location and number of the *Loja do Povo* or people's store from which the household received the monthly rations; and the status of the house (if it was owned or rented, and if rented, the status of rent payment. It also inquired on the hygienic appearance and conservation of the house).<sup>66</sup> This was a detailed inquiry to identify who should stay in the city and who should be banished.

The survey team seem to have fallen way behind schedule. They might have been integrated in the team that coordinated the general population census taken in August 1-15, 1980. Nevertheless, in January 1982 the party published an alarming document in which the difficulties of the country were highlighted. The party consented that the economic situation of Mozambique was desperate. According to the government statistics, the level of consumption had sharply increased, especially in major towns, while the offer remained almost stagnant and in some cases had decreased.<sup>67</sup> The following table illustrates the quantity of goods that Mozambique needed to supply its hungry and fast growing population and what the country could afford. It compares with the levels reached in 1973, the reference year of all economic measures given that 1973 was the year in which Mozambique reached its highest level of economic growth.

*Table 1. Quantity of Consumer Goods necessary for Mozambique, 1982*

<i>Product</i>	<i>Quantity of Consumption in Tons</i>		<i>Quantity Needed</i>	<i>Times more</i>
	<b>1973</b>	<b>1980</b>		
Wheat Flour	85,000	87,500	1,100,000	13
Corn Flour	59,000	40,000	588,000	15
Rice	50,000	98,000	588,000	6
Meet (beef, pork, poultry)	15,200	19,500	441,000	23
Fish	15,700	40,500	441,000	11

<sup>65</sup> AGGPM/ Criação do Gabinete para o Levantamento da Situação dos Bairros da Cidade de Maputo. Tarefa 32. Maputo, 2 Maio 1980.

<sup>66</sup> AGGPM/GLSBCM – Reunião sobre o desenvolvimento dos trabalhos do Gabinete, Maputo, 2 Junho 1980.

<sup>67</sup> AGGPM/Partido Frelimo, *A Situação Actual no Nosso País: O que Herdámos, a Realidade que Vivemos, o Nosso Futuro*. 30 Janeiro 1982.

Cooking oil	19,600	18,000	147,000	8
Soap	20,000	16,000	147,000	9
Butter	1,430	1,500	36,750	24,5
Sugar	116,000	128,000	294,000	2

Source: Adapted from AGGPM/Partido Frelimo, *A Situação Actual No Nosso País*, 1982, p. 7-8.

These numbers are very indicative of the critical economic situation of Mozambique by 1982. Yet, the document continued to lay blame on the deliberate actions of internal enemies for the economic difficulties, aside from the structural legacies of colonialism.<sup>68</sup> In the same year, the National Commission of Planning conducted another national survey on “Income and Expenditure of the Population” in August.<sup>69</sup> Whether these surveys were coordinated or not it is hard to know. What is evident is that they all presented different findings, yet they drew the same conclusions and suggested the same solutions. For example, the Planning survey, which was marked “confidential”, seem to have been professionally conducted and its findings were closer to objective reality. The table on employment is particularly interesting:

*Table 2. Distribution of the Population above 12 years of age according to occupation*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
Total in %	100,0	100,0	100,0
Workers	77,0	56,8	80,1
Unemployed	2,0	4,1	1,7
Students	14,4	21,9	13,2
Housewives	4,6	13,7	2,6
Others	2,6	3,5	2,4

Source: AGGPM/CNP, 1982, p. 3

Clearly, the alarming assumptions of unemployment in urban areas could not be supported by this survey. The survey was based on interviews with family members in every province and city in the county. The surveyors interviewed a total of 29,991 people. When asked about their occupations, interviewees told surveyors which occupations they had, formal or informal, and the information was professionally included in the data. And this is reflected in the table above. The

<sup>68</sup> AGGPM/Partido Frelimo, *A Situação Actual no Nosso País: O que Herdámos, a Realidade que Vivemos, o Nosso Futuro*. 30 Janeiro 1982. This document is also an example of the character of the socialist state in Mozambique. Contrary to its post-socialist progeny, the socialist state was very open and transparent. The decisions may not have been rational, but they were publicly announced and an effort to justify them with numbers was often made (even if those numbers were hardly reliable).

<sup>69</sup> AGGPM/CNP/ Confidencial/Inquérito Sobre Receitas e Despesas da População Total do País. Agosto 1982.

category “workers” in the table does not distinguish formal and informal workers, but anyone who had a trade to sustain his or her household. The survey also indicated that the average number of people in each household was 5.6 in the cities and 4.9 in the countryside. This was very different from the 20 people that President Machel thought lived in most households in Maputo.

These surveys and the numbers they present should be taken with caution. But they indicate two important things. One is that government officers took President Machel’s exhortations very seriously and employed the bureaucratic procedures of governance to substantiate the policies that the supreme leader of the revolution announced in mass rallies. The second is that ideological and professional preoccupations often collided in the ways in which the surveys and statistics were produced. While some were hastily undertaken to confirm a predefined assumption with little regard to adequate procedures of data collection, others were methodically conducted. It seems that while the National Commission of Planning, with a team of well-trained officers in economics, was more inclined to produce professional data, party brigades under the pressure of the President were not constrained with methods and accuracy, and produced reports in a few weeks. As to which reports got more attention from the party’s Politburo is hard to tell. But judging from the political decisions taken in 1983, the Planning survey did little to influence the party. When the thousands of delegates gathered in Maputo for the Fourth Congress in March 1983, they “all agreed” that the cities were overcrowded with idle rural immigrants who made it difficult for the working people to have enough food, housing, and all other benefits of urban citizenship. The time had come for the sweeping campaign announced in March 18, 1980 to finally be implemented.

### *Turning Words Into Action 2: The State of Documentation*

One of the first policies resulting from the *Ofensiva* and the tasks set up by the Council of Ministers was the installation of a state of documentation. The government claimed that production in the countryside had reduced and consumption in the cities had increased. The solution was to stop people from coming to the cities.<sup>70</sup> A work card had been introduced in 1977 for civil servants and in 1978 it was extended for all workers. According to Law 2/78, of March 30, in addition to

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<sup>70</sup> MHN – “Controlemos o Crescimento das Nossas Cidades: Comunicado do Secretariado do Comité Central do Partido Frelimo”, *Notícias*, 14 Junho 1982.

facilitating the control of tax payment, the objective of the card was to allow the government to “eliminate unemployment which is caused by the attraction that big cities exert over the youth.” The card was also meant to help the government reward those who “produce wealth or render useful services to society”, by restricting the access to rationed consumer goods only to people possessing a working card.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to work cards, workers were instructed to always carry their ID with them. The possession of an ID had always been mandatory. The Ministry of Labor was the only entity that could issue a work card. Workers had to fill a form stamped by their employers and send it to the ministry in Maputo or to its delegations in the provinces. The card had to be renewed every two years, and be marked every three months. Anyone with a recognized form of waged labor was entitled to have a working card. Self-employed workers had to get their stamped forms from the *Grupos Dinamizadores* in their residential areas.<sup>72</sup> Since the government did not outline which activities constituted self-employment, this gave GDs immense discretionary powers. It was up to the GD to decide if a particular kind of occupation constituted work or not. Self-employed workers had their lives in the hands of GDs.

However, until 1981 the process of producing work cards had been very slow. The Ministry of Labor faced many problems. Due to chronic shortages, bureaucratic equipment was scarce. Paper, ink, and photographs were difficult to find. The centralization of the entire process in Maputo where all cards were produced made the situation even more complicated and only few workers had cards. As part of the tasks of the Council of Ministers to implement the *Ofensiva*, the Ministry of Labor decided to give districts authority to issue the cards. By December 1981, a total of 150,585 cards had been issued. There was still a long way to go to document every worker, but the government was determined to “know exactly the number of the country’s active working force.”<sup>73</sup> In the following year, the Ministry of Labor announced that from 1982 onwards it would be mandatory to possess a work card. The message was clear: only those with a work card could be allowed to purchase consumer goods in the people’s shops and benefit from all other services in the cities.

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<sup>71</sup> “Que é cartão de trabalho?”, *Tempo*, 394, 23 Abril 1978, p. 40-3.

<sup>72</sup> “Que é cartão de trabalho?”, *Tempo*, 394, 23 Abril 1978, p. 40-3.

<sup>73</sup> “Cartão de trabalho obrigatório em 1982”, *Notícias*, 23 Dez. 1981.

In June 1982, the Party's central committee announced another move to control the influx of rural migrants into the cities. A residential card was to be issued for every urban resident with a recognized waged work. The card was to be introduced in Maputo first, and then expanded to all other cities. This became the major marker of urban citizenship for the years to come. Citizens coming to cities on visit were to be issued a "temporary document."<sup>74</sup> While Frelimo leaders talked passionately about dismantling the colonial state apparatus (*escangalhar*), the government was reintroducing the very same tools of social control that made the Portuguese colonial regime infamous.<sup>75</sup> But the socialist government was even more aggressive in taking drastic measures to control the mobility of people. To have access to urban services, from housing, health, transport, to rationing, as well as to circulate in the cities, urban residents had to carry with them three documents: an ID, a work card, and a residential card.<sup>76</sup>

As I elaborate in more detail in the next chapter, urban residents did not object to this draconian move. Quite the opposite, residents in Maputo approved of the residential card. People interviewed on the streets of Maputo by *Notícias* reporters claimed that the card would reduce vagrancy and alleviate the pressure on the scarce urban services.<sup>77</sup> Angelina Balata, from Chamanculo, said that "with this measure introduced by the party, it will be possible to reduce

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<sup>74</sup> MHN – "Controlemos o Crescimento das Nossas Cidades: Comunicado do Secretariado do Comité Central do Partido Frelimo", *Notícias*, 14 Junho 1982; "Vai ser criado cartão de residente: Comunicado do Secretariado do CC do Partido", *Notícias*, 14 Junho 1982.

<sup>75</sup> In colonial Mozambique, African natives (*indígenas*) could only circulate and fix residency in the *caniço* area if they had a verifiable, full-time job. In 1914 the colonial government introduced the *caderneta indígena* or transit pass for the natives. Any *indígena* without a pass in a city was an offender, a vagrant, and could be fined for one to three months of hard labor. Besides a transit pass, in 1919 Africans above 14 years old were required to carry a *bilhete de identidade* or identity card. These documents were not only required in the city, but also for moving from one administrative locale to another. In 1922, Africans had three days to register upon arriving in Lourenço Marques and they had only fifteen days to "take care of their business", after which they had to leave. In 1926, any African willing to change residence had to request an authorization from the local administration, and a proper statement had to be passed as to where the resident was coming from and where he was going, and for what reasons. Failure to do so was punished with "fines and correctional incarceration." Throughout the first half of the twentieth-century, massive arrests of undocumented Africans in the cities and their subsequent punishment with "corrective labor" and *palmatória* or public flogging were a frequent occurrence in colonial Mozambique, often under the pretext of combating vagrancy and compelling Africans to fulfil their "moral obligation to work." See A. Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*, p. 154; J. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*; David Hedges, *História de Moçambique, Volume 2*, chapters 2, 3 and 4; V. Zamparoni, "Entre Naros e Mulungos." Similar developments took place in other colonial cities across South, East and Central Africa. See, for example, Andrew Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanization, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam*. Oxford: James Currey, 2005.

<sup>76</sup> MHN – Joseph Hanlon, "Maputo imposes pass laws to halt rural influx", *The Guardian*, 15 June 1982.

<sup>77</sup> See MHN – "Opinião pública: Cartão de residente disciplinará a cidade", *Notícias*, 18 Junho 1982; "Opinião pública: Cartão de residente vai estabilizar a cidade", *Notícias*, 19 Junho 1982; "Opinião pública: Cartão de residente instrument necessário", *Notícias*, 21 Junho 1982.

vagrancy and crime in the capital.” She insisted that “the control of people coming from rural areas will also be positive. There are many people who come from the countryside to the city without a plan, and those people end up becoming vagrants, stealing whatever they can.” Gomes Domingos believed that the card would tighten “the control of infiltrated agents in our midst”, particularly of those “coming from the countryside with no activity.” For Ernesto Govene, a resident in Malanga, the card would “help resolve the problem of rationing. The flux of people from the countryside without any objective is a serious problem”, he said.<sup>78</sup> These views would have devastating consequences for those who were unable to get their documentation papers during cleanup campaign, as exercises of self-policing and denunciation tended to gain momentum during police round ups.

As soon as the Party’s Central Committee issued the communiqué announcing the mandatory requirement for citizens to carry the new documents, security authorities did not wait even a day to launch round ups in search for undocumented residents. In June 14, the police arrested 1,000 people in Maputo “for questioning.” According to Hanlon’s report from the *Guardian*, “50 were wanted by the police and another 200 were charged as vagrants.”<sup>79</sup> The Police claimed that the round ups had reduced crime in 30 percent in Maputo.<sup>80</sup> The fabrication of impressive numbers was the privileged mode of governance in socialist Mozambique.

The immediate consequence of this craze for documentation was the increase of applications for cards. As local newspapers reported, the “avalanche” of people seeking IDs, work and residential cards was too much for registration agencies to handle. The *Arquivo de Identificação* in Maputo had 250 and 300 new requests every day.<sup>81</sup> In fact, throughout the country, the Ministry of Labor and the registration agencies under the Ministry of Justice were not able to meet the extraordinary demand for identification documents. In Maputo, only 110,000 residents had been granted resident cards by August 1982. The situation was so out of control that the director of the registration services had to “clarify” who had the right to a resident’s card in newspapers.<sup>82</sup> Yet, this did not deter the police from carrying out round ups. Some raids were

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<sup>78</sup> “Opinião pública: Cartão de residente armada de defesa”, *Notícias*, 23 Junho 1982.

<sup>79</sup> MHN – Joseph Hanlon, “Maputo imposes pass laws to halt rural influx”, *The Guardian*, 15 June 1982.

<sup>80</sup> MHN – “Operações Selectivas: Dezenas de anti-sociais detidos em Maputo”, *Notícias*, 31 Maio 1982.

<sup>81</sup> MHN – “O Bem que vem por mal: Avalanche de pedidos de Bilhetes de Identidade. Operação da PPM na origem”, *Notícias*, 11 Junho 1982.

<sup>82</sup> MHN – “Quem tem direito ao cartão de residente: Direcção de Identificação Civil esclarece”, *Notícias*, 14 Ago. 1982; “Cartão de Residente: Serviços de Identificação esclarecem dúvidas”, *Notícias*, 28 Ago. 1982.



carried out in front of registration agencies, which were “flooded” by people desperate to get documents. Foreign citizens did not escape the raids. The government did not stop the process either. New deadlines were set up for each neighborhood to register residents and attribute cards. GDs were given three weeks to get the job done.<sup>83</sup>

To boost the new draconian measures to control de influx of rural migrants, President Machel held another mass rally in Maputo on June 22, 1982. He urged urban residents to “break away with the bourgeoisie”, to transform Maputo into a liberated area and “consolidate people’s power.” The President was repeating the same issues that he raised in March 1980. It was as if time had not passed, and the problems continued stagnant, despite the inflated numbers by the police claiming that crime had been reduced in 30 percent. President Machel announced new rules for circulation in towns. In addition to mandatory cards, a curfew was to be imposed in the capital city, and ordinary people were to be “armed” to protect the city against the onslaught of bandits. In fact, the announcement was also related to the increased activities of Renamo guerrillas, who were now active in Maputo province. But the guns were to be directed to prostitutes, adulterers, the undisciplined and lazy as well.<sup>84</sup> Again, the President’s words were the very law, and the law was enforced immediately. The police raids were extended to residential areas and house to house searches for undocumented residents were carried out. In August 1982, the mayor of Maputo, General Hama Thai, announced that the new measures were indeed reducing crime. Fabulous numbers were at the tip of his tongue. Victory was certain.<sup>85</sup>

### *Turning Words Into Action 3: The State of Theatrical Justice and Spectacular Punishment*

The government reinforced the measures to control de influx of rural migrants with the reintroduction of the most infamous tool of colonial brutality: the *chamboco* or flogging. When he launched the *Ofensiva* in 1980, President Machel condemned the use of flogging as one of the gross violations of the “benevolent” character of the socialist revolution in Mozambique. In 1983 his mood had changed completely. “Violence is necessary in the exercise of power”, he said in a

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<sup>83</sup> MHN – “Cartão de residente em mais bairros”, *Notícias*, 6 Ago. 1982.

<sup>84</sup> “Rompamos definitivamente com a burguesia para consolidar o poder popular: Documento do Presidente Samora Machel no comício de 22 de Junho em Maputo”, *Tempo*, 8 Agosto 1982.

<sup>85</sup> MHN – “Na Cidade de Maputo: Anunciado patrulhamento nos prédios residenciais”, *Notícias*, 2 Ago. 1982; “Quatro bairros de Maputo: Cadastrados e vadios nas mãos da polícia”, *Notícias*, 5 Ago. 1982.

mass rally in Chibuto (Gaza province) in February 1983. His memory did not betray him, for he knew that *chamboco* was a hated form of colonial brutality. Yet, he gave praises to the Portuguese for knowing how to use power to discipline people. “The Portuguese knew how to use power”, he told his listeners, who cheered in amusement. Or was it delirium? “We have to use our power to punish with severity”, he determined.<sup>86</sup>

The reintroduction of flogging followed a new attempt to combat smuggling and black marketeering, but it was also used for all kinds of offenses. The police conducted several round ups to detain people who subverted the state-controlled laws of the market and sold goods above official prices. The new law (5/83) had instructions on how to flog offenders. Courts could condemn offenders for up to 90 *chicotadas*. However, no more than 30 lashes could be administered at once. At least eight days had to pass until a new round of lashes were to be inflicted.<sup>87</sup> Flogging was to be administered in public. It was not merely a form of punishment, it sought to teach the public by humiliating and shaming the offender. The first victim was a man named Raul Cumbe, who was condemned for selling fifteen small cakes at the price of 75 Meticaís each, fifteen more above the official price.<sup>88</sup>

The police rounded up hundreds of informal vendors. Because now, in the period of *Ofensiva*, only the judges could pronounce sentences, the hundreds of *candingueiros* (black marketeers) rounded up were concentrated in the market and judges dressed in appropriate regalia were brought to hold mass trials in the marketplace under the heating sun.<sup>89</sup> Some *candingueiros* were dressed in shaming gowns made of sacks and clown-looking hats, and plates with defamatory inscriptions hanging from their necks: “I am a *candingueiro*, Xiconhoca!”<sup>90</sup> Pronounced guilty, the offenders were lied down and flogged, after which they were either set free or sent to reeducation camps or to the green belts.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> “Povo é constructor da paz”, *Tempo*, 27 Fev. 1983, p. 14-23.

<sup>87</sup> “Lei sobre penas mais severas contra os inimigos da Revolução”, *Notícias*, 2 Abril 1983; See also AJN – Amnistia Internacional. “O Uso da Chicotada na República Popular de Moçambique.” Londres. Fevereiro de 1984.

<sup>88</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 246.

<sup>89</sup> “Candongueiros julgados em público”, *Notícias*, 11 Dez. 1981; “Candonga: Julgados 219 pessoas”, *Notícias*, 20 Jan. 1981.

<sup>90</sup> “Especuladores apresentados no Mercado do Xipamanine”, *Notícias*, 21 Jan. 1981.

<sup>91</sup> “Candonga: Reeducação para 81 candongueiros”, *Notícias*, 19 Dez. 1981.



*Fig. 11. An offender is publicly flogged before the crowd. Scenes like these were more frequent in reeducation camps. Credit: Público Magazine.*

These trials were invariably expedited. Judges were put under pressure to deliver “people’s justice” in a very short time. But the number of wrongdoers that they had to process was so high that due procedure was an impossibility. The Ministry of Justice admitted this. In 1983, as part of its contribution in the implementation of the resolutions of the Fourth congress, magistrates from the Ministry of Justice decided to speed the trials in order to relieve the “congested” prisons, especially the Central Prison in Maputo.<sup>92</sup> The People’s Tribunal of Maputo Province decided to hold trial sessions on Saturdays, with the goal (*meta*) of holding ten trials in each session. The idea was to “allow a rapid sending of the defendants to Reeducation Centers and Production units in order to relieve the prisons of congestion.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> “O Plano Suplementar em Apoio ao IV Congresso no Sector da Justiça”, *Justiça Popular*, 7 (1983), p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> “O Plano Suplementar em Apoio ao IV Congresso no Sector da Justiça”, *Justiça Popular*, 7 (1983), p. 4.

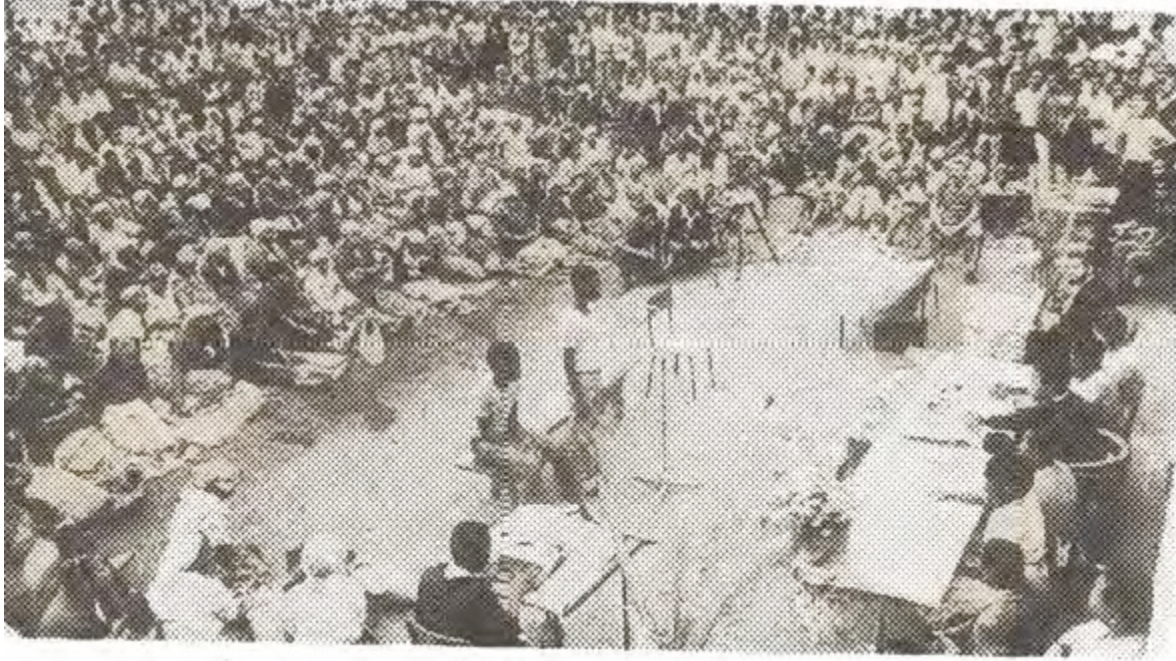


Fig. 12. A trial of black marketeers in a people's tribunal. Source: *Justica Popular*, 6, 1982.

The Revolutionary Military Tribunal (TMR) – which was established in 1979 to deal exclusively with political crimes (particularly related to armed banditry) – was now called to step in and process civilian cases. As the war on smuggling and black marketeering was taking a new phase, the government gave TMR full powers to try “economic sabotage.” The *Law for Crimes against the Security of the People and the People’s State* was amended to include death penalty for smuggling. 1982 and 1983 were the busiest years for the TMR. The number of cases of death sentence were astounding. Most were published in newspapers, with detailed information about each offender, including their respective photographs.<sup>94</sup> Socialist Mozambique was a state of transparent, spectacular, and in some cases theatrical violence. Some executions by firing squad were carried out in public with exhilarating cheers from the watching crowds. One such public execution took place near the dunghill of Bairro Hulene in Maputo in April 1983. Most of the people executed were Renamo rebels. But one man named Gulam Nabi was executed for “smuggling prawns and appliances.” He had been condemned by the court in 1982 and was already

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<sup>94</sup> “TMR: Contra-revolucionários condenados à morte”, *Tempo*, 27 Junho 1982; “Candongueiros e bandidos condenados à morte”, *Tempo*, 10 Abril 1983.

serving his sentence in prison. But, for his case, the new law was applied retroactively, and he was brought out to set an example.<sup>95</sup>

Newspapers hailed the execution as “people’s justice.”<sup>96</sup> In fact, public floggings and executions were also very popular policies, welcomed by the public with cheers. Even marches in support of the new draconian measures were held in Maputo, with hundreds of enthusiastic participants.<sup>97</sup> As Joseph Hanlon commented in 1984, “the new measures met general approval. The extended death penalty is popular, just as the reintroduction of hanging in Britain would be.”<sup>98</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, the public support of the party’s draconian policies shaped the ways in which the campaigns were carried out in the neighborhoods, as neighbors turned against each other in a wave of denunciations.

### **A Permanent State of Siege: The Two Stages of Operação Produção**

Although *Operação Produção* was in the making for several years, the government had never elaborated any concrete plan on how to carry it out. The administrative work conducted in the cities – the surveys and identification documents – were to facilitate the identification of the “moral deserters”, not necessarily to plan the details of the campaign itself. In fact, when the party leadership finally took the decision to implement it, only the thirteen members of the party’s politburo knew about what was to come. The two members of the politburo who also held positions as provincial governors, Marcelino dos Santos (Sofala) and Mário Machungo (Zambézia), knowing what was to come, delayed the beginning of the campaign in their provinces for at least two months to give their rank-and-file officers enough time to prepare for the campaign.<sup>99</sup> Those who did not have the same privilege were surprised with the arrival of thousands of banished urbanites, and were unable to integrate them in their provinces properly.

*Operação Produção* imposed a state of exception in which the most basic of civil liberties – the right to mobility, the right to choose one’s place of residency, and above all, the right to

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<sup>95</sup> “TMR: Candongueiro e bandidos condenados à morte”, *Tempo*, 10 Abril 1983, p. 5-6.

<sup>96</sup> “Justiça Popular pune exemplarmente: Fuzilados seis bandidos no Hulene”, *Tempo*, 17 Abril 1983, p. 8-9.

<sup>97</sup> MHN – “Manifestação em apoio à Lei da Chicotada”, *Notícias*, 7 Abril 1983.

<sup>98</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 244.

<sup>99</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 250.

citizenship in one's own nation – were suspended.<sup>100</sup> As soon as the president announced the campaign, the government began to act. Citizens and the very government had little time to prepare for the operation: they only had three weeks. The government elaborated the directive to guide the operation on June 15, and the document was published in newspapers on June 20. Ironically, the directive indicated June 20 as the beginning of the campaign, which means that the general public was notified of the operation on the same day that the campaign began.<sup>101</sup>

In practical terms, the directive suspended all other laws and became the mother law of the country. It contained ten articles, each detailing who, when, and how the campaign would be carried out. The number of government institutions involved in the operation indicate the priority of the operation for Frelimo. Eleven ministries and four state departments were designated to constitute the *Comando Operativo Central* or Central Operative Commando (COC). This was the special commission tasked with the coordination of the campaign, under the leadership of minister of the interior, Armando Guebuza. The constitutive members of the COC included the ministries of the Interior; Defense; Security; Justice; Finance; Ports and Railways; Agriculture; Commerce; Industry and Energy; Information; the National Commission of Planning; the state departments for Labor; for Civil Aviation; for Road Transportation; and the Nacional Council of Production.<sup>102</sup>

Each province established its own *Comando Operativo Provincial* (Provincial Operative Commando, COP), headed by the provincial governor and involving local representatives of the same government institutions that constituted the COC. City mayors were also members of COPs. Following the common hierarchical structure, below the COPs came the District Operative Commandos (COD), headed by the respective district administrator. The COPs and CODs worked directly with *Grupos Dinamizadores* in residential and working places.

Residents had to produce three documents to prove their right to live in the city, namely a residency card, a work card, and an ID or passport. The directive determined that people who failed to produce any of the three documents were to be “detained immediately” and taken to *Centros de Verificação* or verification centers (VCs), where teams of verifiers would assess the situation of detainees and determine their fate. The verification teams were to be comprised of at least one professional attorney, a locally elected judge, members of the local GDs, and a police officer. After

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<sup>100</sup> G. Agamben, *State of Exception*.

<sup>101</sup> “Directiva ministerial sobre evacuação das cidades”, *Notícias*, 20 Junho 1983.

<sup>102</sup> “Directiva ministerial sobre evacuação das cidades”, *Notícias*, 20 Junho 1983.

“verification”, people were to be sent to *Centros de Evacuação* or evacuation centers, where transport would be waiting to take them out of the city. New admissions or hiring for the public sector or factories in urban areas were “temporarily suspended”, and authorization for “exceptional hiring” were to be requested to operative commandos. Anyone entering a urban area had to carry a *Guia de Marcha* or marching order/pass with a note on the objectives and duration of the visit, as well as the exact location of temporary residency. The *guia* had to be presented to local authorities directly connected with the Ministry of the Interior within 48 hours so that authorization to visit the city was granted. As the directive determined, “unauthorized presence leads to immediate detention and evacuation to a destination of the convenience of the authorities.”<sup>103</sup>

Following the directive by letter, the operation was carried out in two stages: a fifteen-day “voluntary phase”, during which the “unproductive” were to subscribe voluntarily and choose where they wanted to be relocated; and a coercive phase for the recalcitrant. The “voluntary phase” began in June 20, and volunteers had to register with their local GDs and receive a *guia de marcha* for their chosen destination. The time between the two phases was astonishingly short. The fact that the government gave people only two weeks to register to leave the cities – a very short time – is indicative of the true intentions of the campaign. At any moment did Frelimo authorities contemplate the campaign to be a pacific process. *Operação Produção* was conceived as a violent measure and it was expected to be violent. After all, President Machel had announced in the memorable speech in 1980 that a definitive and bloody struggle would be waged in Mozambique’s urban areas to root out the parasites once and for all. In a secret directive distributed to COPs, the COC instructed authorities to include health personnel in the verification centers “for first aid.”<sup>104</sup> The fact that the Ministry of Health was not included in the list of members of the COC in the directive published in newspapers is more revealing in this regard.

While few people chose to leave the city during the voluntary phase, the majority flocked to the registration offices in a desperate attempt to get the required documents. Most people did not go to the registration to get new documents, but to collect documents they had requested for several months and sometimes for years. Since registrations offices across the country had never had the logistical capacity to satisfy the high demand for documentation, many people were

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<sup>103</sup> “Directiva ministerial sobre evacuação das cidades”, *Notícias*, 20 Junho 1983.

<sup>104</sup> AGGPN/MINT, Gabinete do Ministro – Reunião do Comando Central Operativo com os Representantes dos Comandos Provinciais. 7 Julho 1983.

undocumented when the coercive phase began on July 5, including those with formal waged employment. The directive did not indicate an ending date for the coercive phase. *Operação Produção* was set to go on “permanently” until all the “unproductive” were scooped from the cities.<sup>105</sup>



Fig. 13. A police officer knocking on a residential home during *Operação Produção*. Maputo, July 1983. Most round ups took place late at night to find residents unguarded. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

In the early hours of June 5, the first sweeping brigades were deployed in the capital city. Teams of local GDs, police corps, army soldiers, and militias “combed” streets and neighborhoods in Maputo, demanding residents to show the three required documents. The COC instructed the brigades to target specific locations with high concentration of people, namely the lines in front of bakeries (“*bichas das pastelarias*”), in registration agencies (“*bichas das secções de Identificação*”), and others.<sup>106</sup> In just a few days, thousands of people were arrested and concentrated in verification centers. The COC installed 38 verification centers around the city.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> MHN – “Na cidade de Maputo, ‘Operação Produção’ acção permanente – decide Comando Operativo respectivo”, *Notícias*, 23 Set. 1983

<sup>106</sup> AGGPN/MINT, Gabinete do Ministro – Reunião do Comando Central Operativo com os Representantes dos Comandos Provinciais. Maputo, 7 Julho 1983.

<sup>107</sup> “Operação Produção: Primeiros Voluntários Avançam, Iniciada fase Compulsiva”, *Tempo*, 10 Julho 1983, p. 13.



Unsurprisingly, things did not go as expected. In the first weeks and months, most people were taken directly to evacuation centers, without passing through verification. And verification teams only assessed the cases of those who required or demanded a much closer observation of their papers. The process was similar to the expedited trials during the selective campaigns, but the number of cases was astronomical and the time required to determine the fate of people was tremendously short.

The time to process cases was often determined by the availability of transportation to evacuate the people. With everyone working around the clock, there was little time for due process. As soon as trucks or buses arrived in the evacuation center, evacuees had to be quickly loaded. Although the Ministry of Justice dispatched special mobile teams of professional attorneys to go from place to place to attend to the most sensitive cases, the entire operation was drenched with injustices and gross violations of human rights from the moment of arrest to the final destination of relocation.

#### *Verification Teams and the Evacuation of the Unproductive in Maputo*

In no other event was Frelimo's "bureaucratic pathology" more evident than during *Operação Produção*.<sup>108</sup> The devastating consequences of lack of preparation for the campaign soon began to emerge. In the new organization of Maputo, the city had a total of 96 neighborhoods. Given that the COC was only able to set up 38 verification centers, not all neighborhoods had access to the verification centers and *bairros* were not provided with means of transportation. This does not mean that no detention and evacuation of people happened. It happened without verification of victims' papers. For example, in Bairro Luís Cabral, "there was no triage of cases of unemployment and prostitution", said one Albino Massangai, a member of the verification brigade, in a roundtable organized by the Ministry of Justice in 1984 to evaluate the process.<sup>109</sup>

But even in those neighborhoods with verification centers nearby, in the first weeks the police simply found it easier to take detainees directly to evacuation posts. Alberto Zandamela recalled: "In Matola-Gare where I worked as chief justice, there were many cases where the police

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<sup>108</sup> A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 121.

<sup>109</sup> Gita Honwana, "Operação Produção. Actuação dos Tribunais: Consolidação da Justiça Popular", *Justiça Popular*, 8,9 (Janeiro-Junho, 1984), p. 6.

expelled peasants as unproductive without bringing them to the tribunal. When we received the complaints and concluded that they were innocent, the people were already in Niassa or other centers of production in the country.”<sup>110</sup> As Zandamela admitted, Matola-Gare is a rural area that happened to be near the capital city, and most residents were peasants. “That area had one particularity that maybe we did not pay attention at the beginning of the operation”, he said, “people work in the country in their family *machambas*, they collect firewood and make charcoal. These people never had work cards because they did not work in a company and had no employer.” And he concluded in perplexity, “So, is the peasant an unproductive?” Indeed, only a policy driven by emotional and judgmental decisions could have blinded people to such an obvious fact. Although the COC issued a second directive explaining who should be expelled, in the beginning of the campaign the police was following President Machel’s call to clean the cities of everyone without a work card. As Zandamela noted, “the police considered unemployed anyone without a work card and sent them to Niassa.”<sup>111</sup>

Verification centers were not safe havens either. First, the centers had no conditions to accommodate people. Detainees came in by the thousands, and the verification teams could not process all the cases. Consequently, people stayed for weeks in the centers without food, water, and no hygienic facilities. This had not been in the calculations of the COC. As journalist Joseph Hanlon observed, “evacuation and verification centers were set up with no assessment of needs and the Maputo city council was called in to dig latrines only when the shit began to pile up.”<sup>112</sup> Reports from various CODs in Maputo indicated the lack of support from the COC. They complained about the lack of food and blankets for detainees before evacuation; the lack of means of transportation to speed the evacuation; and the critically unsanitary conditions in the centers.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 248.

<sup>113</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – 1º Seminário do Comando Provincial Operativo. Documento Final. Constatações havidas aquando da apresentação e discussão dos relatórios dos distritos sobre o trabalho desenvolvido no âmbito da Operação Produção. Maputo, 17 Set. 1983.



Fig. 14. A Verification team at work in Maputo, July 1983. Note the submissive pose of the detainees as they await for the verdict. Here the team is processing 11 cases at once. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

The consequences of lack of preparation for the operation did not affect detainees only. Members of verification teams were also working under very difficult conditions. Some worked straight “for 48 hours without food and a deficient logistical support.”<sup>114</sup> As one judge named Salomão Langa recalled, “in the first days we worked with many difficulties, without food and without rest because the round ups were constant and we had to give vent to the cases.”<sup>115</sup> And vent to the cases they did give. Despite the Ministry of Justice’s claim that their role in the campaign was a “great success” and that “legality and justice were duly served”,<sup>116</sup> it is hard to believe that hungry and sleepy judges conducted fair verifications, especially when they had to process hundreds of cases every day. In fact, as Isabel Tiago consented, “the quantity of people brought by the police to the verification centers was excessive” (*quantidade desmedida*). She

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<sup>114</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> MHN – “Na ‘Operação Produção’ estão garantidos os direitos do cidadão”, *Notícias*, 8 Julho 1983; G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 10.

recalled: “for those cases in which the situation of unemployment of the accused was confirmed by the *responsáveis* of the *bairro*, the triage team send them directly to evacuation centers from where they were sent to production units.”<sup>117</sup>

As I noted above, *responsáveis* of neighborhoods had tremendous power during the campaign. Although attorneys dominated the legal procedures, it was often the members of local GDs who called the shots. Under the state of exception imposed by the campaign’s directive, GDs and local People’s Tribunals were granted new powers. According to the Law of Judicial Organization, which was approved in 1978 with the creation of the new judicial system based on “people’s justice”, local tribunals (*tribunais de base*) in neighborhoods and villages could not impose sentences of deprivation of liberty. In other words, they could not sentence people to serve time in prison or reeducation camps. Only district and provincial tribunals had that prerogative. However, during *Operação Produção*, the directive of the COC gave local tribunals the power to sentence people for up to three years in “production centers.”<sup>118</sup> As we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, local authorities used this power to pursue agendas of their own.

One of the first problems that verification teams had to deal with was the exact notion about who should be evacuated. Reports from all the districts to Maputo’s COP indicated that “there is lack of clarity in the definition of concepts of prostitute, vagrant, vagabond, unemployed, and domestic servant.”<sup>119</sup> The situation was so out of control that the COC decided to send brigades to right the wrongs of local commands in charge of dispatching the victims to labor camps. The Provincial People’s Tribunal in Maputo established an “Operation Room” where all the information about the operation were analyzed, especially the most sensitive cases. However, the workings of Frelimo’s bureaucracy complicated the process even more. Most members of the verification brigades in the districts were not aware of the operation’s directive not because the document did not reach their CODs, but because team leaders kept it to themselves and the “mistakes” continued. The reason for this is quite simple. Most of the directives issued from the central government were marked “SECRET” in red ink. The new directive was also marked SECRET. In receiving the document, team leaders assumed that it was for their own and

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<sup>117</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 4. See also Asse Gundersen, “Popular Justice in Mozambique: State Law and Folk Law”, *Social & Legal Studies*, 1 (1992): 257-282.

<sup>119</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – 1º Seminário do Comando Privilégio Operativo. Intervenção. Namaacha, 9 Set. 1983.

“secretive” consumption and did not share it with their subordinates. This fact was discovered by a mobile supervisory brigade in various districts of Maputo province three months into the campaign.<sup>120</sup>

To address the issue, governor José Moiane organized a seminar on September 8 and 9, 1983, to evaluate the entire campaign in Maputo.<sup>121</sup> Each COD presented a summary report on the operation and their main difficulties. They all pointed the “lack of clarity” (*falta de clareza*) on who to target and the lack of support from the COP and the COC.<sup>122</sup> The seminar drew some recommendations for the COC, suggesting that more work had to be done in clarifying the concepts of prostitution, vagrancy, unemployment, including “domestic servant” and “workmanship” (*empregado doméstico e artesanato*), as many charcoal makers, house maids, and housewives were being evacuated as “unproductive.”<sup>123</sup> With airplanes loaded with “unproductive” evacuees leaving the airport in Maputo every day, for tens of thousands of people the findings and recommendations of the seminar came a little too late. Many were already in Niassa and Cabo Delgado.

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<sup>120</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – Proposta de Agenda para a Realização do Seminário da “Operação Produção” na Província de Maputo, Setembro 1983.

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<sup>122</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – 1º Seminário do Comando Privincial Operativo. Intervenção. Namaacha, 9 Set. 1983.

<sup>123</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – 1º Seminário do Comando Privincial Operativo. Documento Final. Constatações havidas aquando da apresentação e discussão dos relatórios dos distritos sobre o trabalho desenvolvido no âmbito da Operação Produção. Maputo, 17 Set. 1983.



*Fig. 15. Evacuees leaving the city during the “voluntary” phase of Operação Produção. Those who left during this stage could take their belongings. 1983. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*



*Fig. 16. “Voluntary” evacuees about to board the plane to Niassa. Maputo, July 6, 1983. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

Nevertheless, the COC organized mobile teams of attorneys from the Ministry of Justice, and sent them to oversee trials of “sensitive” cases in verification and evacuation centers across the city. The COC also composed a document clarifying the definition of the key concepts of the campaign: prostitution, vagrant, vagabond (*marginal*) and unemployed.<sup>124</sup> As Gita Honwana wrote in the report on the participation of the Ministry of Justice in the operation, cases of accusation of prostitution were the most difficult to solve. Attorneys in the “Operation Room” spent hours discussing the concept to find solution to the cases that came in droves to their table. No consensual definition was found, despite the fact that the COC issued a new directive clarifying the concepts. As Honwana noted, most of the accusations of prostitution were related to “subjective individual sentiments by *chefes do quarteirão* or the women in the OMM.” Accusations of prostitution, she consented, “sometimes masked acts of retaliation for old scores in the bairro.” And in the verification centers judges took different interpretations, “conflating single mothers, housewives, and minor and grown daughters living with their parents with prostitutes.”<sup>125</sup>

Despite the intensity of state surveillance during the campaign, urban residents did not wait passively to be evacuated. People devised ways to subvert the operation and escape evacuation. Several cases of false documents and forged signatures were registered in verification centers.<sup>126</sup> As Melchior Manuel, a member of the COC affirmed, “there was a substantial increase in crimes of falsification of documents.”<sup>127</sup> Friends helped each other, lending or borrowing documents.<sup>128</sup> Even members of the GDs tried to rescue close friends and relatives by issuing false documents.<sup>129</sup> Bribery of authorities were frequent, especially in cases that involved illegal occupations of apartments or unpaid rent (which were also in the list of the campaign).<sup>130</sup> Some people sought the protection of soldiers, much to the dissatisfaction of local GDs. Albino Massangai recalled with bitterness the number of soldiers or *comandantes* in his *bairro* who “consorted” with women he and his colleagues thought were prostitutes. “They ‘nationalized’ all single women during Operação Produção”, he said. He claimed that because his bairro (Luis Cabral) was near the train

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<sup>124</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/CPO de Maputo – Proposta de Agenda para a Realização do Seminário da “Operação Produção” na Província de Maputo, Setembro 1983.

<sup>125</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 9.

<sup>126</sup> MHN – “Fasificadores de documentos querem outros documentos”, *Notícias*, 6 Julho 1983.

<sup>127</sup> G. Honwana, “Operação Produção”, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> MHN – “Operação Produção: Queria salvar o amigo e passou-lhe Cartão de Trabalho”, *Notícias*, 1983.

<sup>129</sup> MHN – “Responsável de bairro acusado de desvirtuar ‘Operação Produção’”, *Notícias*, 29 Julho 1983.

<sup>130</sup> MHN – “Na ‘Operação Produção’: Tentativas de suborno neutralizados nas Mahotas e Bairro Central”, *Notícias*, 21 Julho 1983; “Por ocupação ilegal, representantes de Ministérios no ‘banco dos réus’”, *Notícias*, 27 Ago. 1983.

terminal where a large contingent of military forces were stationed, most women in his neighborhood were soldiers' "lovers" (*amantes*). When he led his GD to round up the women and sent them away the soldiers demanded their "lovers" back. "I was threatened by one of these elements with a pistol", he said, "I was threatened for doing justice, for obeying the laws."<sup>131</sup> But most people seem to have lived the city on their own and found refuge in rural areas near, and returned as soon as the aggressive phase of the campaign ended.

### *Destination*

Unlike the previous campaigns, most of the victims of *Operação Produção* were not sent to reeducation camps, but to remote rural villages and state farms across the country. By this time the reeducation camp complex had been significantly reduced due to the war with Renamo and also as a result of the *Ofensiva*. Nampula, Cabo Delgado, and Niassa were now the only provinces with reeducation camps in operation precisely because they had not been widely affected by the war. Because of this reason, the three northern provinces were the main destination of the so-called "unproductive." But there was also another factor for shipping the urban undesirables to the north. In 1981, as part of the ambitious PPI, the government initiated agricultural projects for the Lurio and Lugenda river valleys which traverses the three provinces. In the sparsely inhabited and extremely impoverished province of Niassa – which the government was keen on populating – the project was called *Programa de Desenvolvimento do Niassa*, aka *Projecto dos 400 Mil Hectares* (Niassa Development Program or 400 Thousand Hectares Project).<sup>132</sup> It included projects in Unango, M'sawize, Matama, and other locations with suitable land for farming. In Cabo Delgado the project was developed in N'guri and Nangololo (a sisal plantation).<sup>133</sup> In giving amnesty to reeducatees in 1979 and 1981, President Machel had in mind the integration of the ex-detainees in these projects. And that is what happened for most people (see chapter 7). On paper, the urban "unproductive" were to join the ex-detainees in the noble task of producing food for the capital city and for the nation.<sup>134</sup> But as I demonstrate in chapter 7, in the labor camps of northern

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<sup>131</sup> G. Honwana, "Operação Produção", p. 6.

<sup>132</sup> AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Linhas Fundamentais do Plano Prospectivo Indicativo para 1981-1990. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1981, p. 17; "Programa do Niassa: Definidos Projectos para o Distrito-Piloto de Mavago", *Tempo*, 508, 6 Julho 1980.

<sup>133</sup> MHN – "Em N'guri e Nangololo: População acaricia e apoia evacuados", *Tempo*, 667, 24 Julho 1983.

<sup>134</sup> "Famílias de ex-reeducandos chegaram ao Niassa", *Tempo*, 515, 24 Ago. 1983.



Mozambique *Operação Produção* made an already unbearable situation even worse. Attracting Renamo and bringing the war to the north was one of the dreadful consequences of the campaign.

As soon as the first groups of “voluntary unproductive” arrived in Niassa, their families in Maputo and Beira were mobilized to join them. Although the government stated that the relatives of the “unproductive” were not obliged to follow their kin, the local authorities tasked with mobilizing them to do so often used coercive means to get them out. By early 1984, more than 400 families (approximately 1,600 people) had arrived in Niassa. Generally these were the women and children of expelled men.<sup>135</sup> The government was building on the same procedure for the relatives of amnestied reeducatees in 1979 and 1981 (see chapter 7 and Conclusion).

At the present stage of the research it is impossible to quantify how much the campaign cost the state. But this was obviously not a cheap operation. While some evacuees were transported by car, most were flown in civilian and military planes. As Hanlon noted, “the national airlines (LAM) was closed down for a week and the planes commandeered, without notice, stranding people all over the country.”<sup>136</sup> Clearly it was more important to rid the cities of anti-socials than keeping the commercial lines operational. The campaign was a national priority and by far the most important government activity in 1983 and early 1984. Rather than boosting productivity and end hunger, the operation aggravated the economic crisis and Mozambique hit rock-bottom as one of the world’s most poor countries.<sup>137</sup> A note from the Minister of Transports to the governor of Maputo in 1985 indicated that the air company was facing “huge limitations due to fuel shortages, which is having serious consequences to the national economy.”<sup>138</sup> But as I elaborate in chapter 7, the economic and social implications of the campaign were devastating in the provinces where most evacuees were taken to. In the extremely impoverished Niassa, the price was too high, both for the expelled urbanites and for the hosting rural communities. It was not by mere chance that, of all places where the victims of *Operação Produção* were relocated, President Joaquim Chissano chose Niassa to declare the campaign officially over on May 7, 1988.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> MHN – “Operação Produção. Familiares dos evacuados juntam-se aos seus parentes: Mais de 400 famílias já abandonaram a cidade”, *Notícias*, 1 Março 1984.

<sup>136</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 248.

<sup>137</sup> See David Hoile, *Mozambique: A Nation in Crisis*. London: Claridge Press, 1989.

<sup>138</sup> AGGPM/Ministério dos Portos, Caminhos de Ferro e Marinha Mercante, à Sua Excia Governador de Maputo, 9 Setembro 1985.

<sup>139</sup> Joaquim Chissano – who had acted as Foreign Minister since 1975 – was appointed President immediately after the tragic plane crash that killed Samora Machel in October 19, 1986. I discuss the context of the end of the campaign in chapter 7.

## Conclusion

The independence of Mozambique and the liberating discourse of Frelimo entailed new forms of oppression and the suppression of civil liberties. If the right to live in a city was a permanent struggle during the colonial period, after independence, urban citizenship was a difficult right to claim. According to the new government, the right to live in a city was only reserved for those with an officially recognized, full-time waged work. Irrespective of one's circumstances, not being formally employed was a moral failure, an intentional unwillingness to work, and a desire to lead an idle, vagabond life. This simplistic view of a structural socio-economic situation led to poor and ineffective economic policies. The revolutionaries believed that all problems of urbanism could simply be addressed by stopping the influx of rural migrants to the cities and by rounding up people and sending them back to the countryside. This quick-tempered solution was not based on objective socio-economic considerations, but by the sole drive to deliver social order and create a new society.

*Operação Produção* marked a high point in Frelimo's moral crusade to effect social change in independent Mozambique. Although the specific context in which the campaign was conceived is important for understanding the intricate machinations that led Frelimo to spend so many resources, time, and cause so much suffering – a task well undertaken by my colleague Carlos Quembo<sup>140</sup> – *Operação Produção* was part of a larger mode of governance driven by a messianic view of politics and a moralistic understanding of social and economic structures. What set *Operação Produção* apart from the previous cleanup campaigns was the duration of the process and the number of victims, not the motives behind it. The work that the party-state put in preparation for the campaign since 1980 was not geared towards a careful planning of the operation. The government conducted surveys and produced statistics not necessarily to gain objective knowledge about the urban social structures as they were, but to back up a century-old assumption that urban residents were decadent and needed reformation.

However, this assumption was not exclusive to Frelimo leaders. Many urban citizens shared the idea that cities needed order and the campaigns were a good solution. As in previous campaigns, when *Operação Produção* was launched, urban citizens did not simply try to avoid

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<sup>140</sup> C. Quembo, *Poder do Poder*.

evacuation or stand by in indifference. While some may have opposed the campaign, many supported it and participated with enthusiasm. As Joseph Hanlon commented in 1984, “when Samora Machel announced the new policy in Maputo, the Mozambicans around me cheered spontaneously and loudly.”<sup>141</sup> *Operação Produção*, like all other campaigns before it, including draconian measures such as public floggings, were very popular and welcomed with alacrity. Most urban citizens shared Frelimo’s conviction that the solution to the problems of urban disorder (broadly conceived) was to force the marginal and unemployed – whose condition was framed as a moral failure – back to the rural areas where they came from. Laying blame on rural migrants for the chronic shortages and other urban problems allowed Frelimo to rally the support of the “masses” in cleaning up the cities. But, as I argue in the next chapter, this was not a mere top-down process. Frelimo’s anti-urban discourse galvanized old arguments about civility among urban citizens and gave them a new momentum. In the end, the campaigns became a platform in which personal and mundane struggles took place. These were often intimate struggles which not only fell out of the ideological drive of the ruling party, they also shaped the reformist program beyond the party’s control.

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<sup>141</sup> J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 246.

## Chapter 4

### Intimate Policing: Civic Order, Vigilante Citizenship, and the Politics of Denunciation in Socialist Mozambique

*Power may control the public address system, but crowds also have a voice, generally a murmur, at times a roar.*

John Lonsdale<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

Scholarly representations of Frelimo's urban cleanup campaigns – scant as they are – project a portrait in which the party-state appears as the commanding force in a solo act of modernizing society and making the nation.<sup>2</sup> As Margaret Hall and Tom Young argued, “the effectiveness of the state relied increasingly on a top-down coercion which placed a high premium on the state's capacity to reach out and mold society.”<sup>3</sup> What this portrait neglects are the forces from below without which the heavy hand of the state could have not reached the society it sought to mold. The socialist experiment in Mozambique was not a dance of one, but of multiple players.<sup>4</sup> Frelimo's coercive capacity rested on the social forces at play in the nitty-gritty complexities of everyday life, which were often on the brim of political ideology.

The fall of the Berlin Wall has radically transformed the historical understanding of the mechanics of authoritarian regimes. At least in Europe, the end of the cold war led to the opening of classified documents that revealed the ways in which the pillars of autocratic regimes – the secret police – operated. Along with the flood of memoirs and testimonials by those who lived the years of terror, this new archival material has illuminated the main source of information that lent state surveillance a totalitarian reach. Yet, the totalitarianism of European autocratic regimes was more of a tendency or desire (largely projected through ostensive propaganda), and a perception by the general public (and somewhat reified by political thinkers and social critics).<sup>5</sup> In reality,

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<sup>1</sup> John Lonsdale, “Moral and Political Argument in Kenya”, in Bruce Berman, D. Eyoh, and W. Kymlicka, eds. *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey, 2004, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 79-81; D. Robinson, “Curse on the Land”; A. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution*, p. 57; C. Quembo, *Poder do Poder*.

<sup>3</sup> M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> One of the examples is Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

state surveillance in authoritarian regimes in modern Europe depended on the very people it sought to control. Denunciation by ordinary people, historians came to realize, was the main source of information that allowed the Nazi Gestapo, the East German Stasi, or the Soviet KGB to exert control over millions of people.<sup>6</sup> These regimes relied on the “willing help” of ordinary people and the pervasive practices of self-policing. These denunciatory practices, historians have demonstrated, were not motivated by any “political or ideological conviction” but by the most mundane forces of ordinary, everyday life. From Europe, Asia, to Latin America, much of the work of state surveillance that allowed the regimes to carry out the purges was carried out by ordinary people seeking to pursue agendas of their own.<sup>7</sup>

In socialist Mozambique the situation was not totally different. Although the bulk of the classified material produced during the revolutionary years has not been made available for public consultation, the few archives that I have uncovered in the dusty basements of Maputo and Niassa’s provincial administrations, combined with news reports and letters to newspaper editors that I collected from *Notícias* and *Tempo*, give a relatively similar picture. Frelimo’s ambitious efforts to transform the moral outlook of urban society by banishing those who did not fit into the new norms could not have achieved the scale nor produced the violent contradictions that they did if not for the active and enthusiastic participation of ordinary people.

This chapter explores two sites of public participation in the cleanup campaigns against urban indecency which kept the pipeline of reeducation and labor camps running. The first site was the newspapers where heated debates about civic order and moral comportment took place among urban citizens. Here I examine the ways in which ordinary people participated enthusiastically in the cleanup campaigns by condemning the wayward lifestyle of their compatriots and by urging authorities to drive them out of urban areas. I demonstrate that the active participation of ordinary citizens in the purging campaigns grew out of older, long established struggles over morality and citizenship among urban residents in Mozambique. Frelimo’s socialist

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<sup>6</sup> See Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990; David Crew, ed. *Nazism and German Society*. New York: Routledge, 1994; D. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*; S. Fitzpatrick and R. Gellately, eds. *Accusatory Practices*; W. Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy*.

<sup>7</sup> Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, “Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance”, in David Crew, ed. *Nazism and German Society*. New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 166; M. Duntton, *Policing Chinese Politics*; Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

rhetoric and the campaigns provided a new vocabulary, a new rhetorical ammunition, and a platform for the realization of older longings for civic order.

The second site of public participation under examination in this chapter was made possible by the first one: the intimate practices of self-policing and denunciation among urban citizens. Here I demonstrate that ordinary people were not bystanders in Frelimo's efforts to detain and banish unwanted urbanites to the countryside and to reeducation camps. They were not victims or passive recipients of Frelimo's directives either. Local party agents, workers, and ordinary urban residents employed their skills, their personal ambitions, and their own understanding of morality to engage, recast, and ultimately shape Frelimo's socialist project.

In the capital city of Maputo and the second city of Beira, for example, people seized niches of opportunity within the broader debate over urban morality in order to settle personal affairs, to get rid of embarrassing family members or competitors for local social capital, and to secure profitable access to housing and other scarce resources through denunciations of wrongdoing or suspicions of "enemy actions." These denunciatory practices often took a very intimate dimension, as the people who denounced each other often had personal relations or shared acquaintances.<sup>8</sup> For example, workers and students sent their rival colleagues to reeducation for allegedly being careless, undisciplined, or 'tribal.' Jealous neighbors got rid of their local competitors – either for property or for the heart of a beautiful woman – by denouncing them as counter-revolutionaries or black marketeers. Angry fathers and husbands had their 'unruly' daughters and 'unfaithful' wives sent to reeducation. Unhappy wives got rid of their husbands by denouncing them as alcoholics or polygamists. Frelimo's moral crusade widened the field of debate over the meaning of citizenship; it galvanized old arguments about who was worthy of urban residency; and it ultimately gave ordinary people an opportunity to settle personal and often mundane disputes. In denouncing their neighbors, co-workers, and relatives as prostitutes, vagrants, or *Xiconhocas*, ordinary citizens were not simply fulfilling Frelimo's socialist goals. Rather, they were animated by their own sense of morality, citizenship, and self-interest.

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<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of intimacy and denunciatory practices elsewhere, see T. Kelly and S. Thiranagama. "Introduction: Specters of Treason", p. 11.

## **Urban Citizens and the Discursive Infrastructure of Cleanup Campaigns: Newspapers as an Arena of Moral Argument**

In 1977, a young university student named Samuel Nguja (a native of Nampula) found himself living in the quarters of the newly established *Centro 8 de Março* in Maputo.<sup>9</sup> Walking around the acacia-lined streets of the capital city, Nguja saw the dating habits of his fellow young countrymen and found them inappropriate. He thought they conflicted with the revolutionary ethics of socialist Mozambique. Incensed by the “decadent vices” of the youth, on December 18, he wrote a letter to the editor of *Tempo*, then the most widely read news magazine in the country. He entitled his article “*Problemas da Juventude: Namoro 1*” (Problems of the youth: dating 1).<sup>10</sup> His article added to an ongoing debate in the magazine about youth and dating initiated by one Paulo Monteiro. Reproducing the ready-made socialist vocabulary of the ruling party, young Nguja denounced the dating culture of Mozambique’s youth. He claimed that the youth had to contribute to the construction of socialism by riding themselves of the old and decadent habits, chief among them hugging and kissing in public. He postulated that the rise of the New Man depended on this purification process. “For me”, he wrote, “hugging in the streets is scandalous and shameful. It’s not right. It’s wrong because it’s a Western culture that we need to eliminate.” He went on to say that dating in public “harms our revolution.”

A month later, on January 1, 1978, a clerk named Alfredo Simango contributed a passionate letter to the same magazine. Simango framed his letter as a follow-up to Nguja’s. His article was entitled “*Um africano verdadeiro não beija nem abraça na rua*” (A true African does not kiss or hug in the street).<sup>11</sup> Like Nguja, Simango was wound up about the youth’s licentious behavior in public urban spaces. He argued that dating, hugging, and kissing in public was not part of African culture. He furiously called upon the youth to abandon what he believed was a foreign habit. “Going around arm in arm”, he wrote, “is not correct. For a true African, kissing in the street is something shameful. To walk in arms or to embrace in the street is not love in our society, it’s

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<sup>9</sup> The *Centro 8 de Março* was a student boarding house created by Frelimo in 1977 for selected students who were being trained in specific areas determined by the party to rapidly tackle the shortage of cadres to run the government.

<sup>10</sup> AHM/Samuel Nguja, “Problemas da Juventude: Namoro (1)”, *Tempo*, 376, 18 Dez. 1977.

<sup>11</sup> AHM/Alfredo Simango, “Problemas da Juventude 1: Um Africano verdadeiro não beija nem abraça na rua”, *Tempo*, 378, 1 Janeiro 1978, p. 3. There were a dozen follow-up letters in this debate up to 1979.

an imported love.” He went on to claim that for a father or mother to see her daughter or son kissing or hugging in the street “is shocking.” He suggested that in the same way that violent movies were prohibited for people below eighteen years old, romantic movies should also be restricted for the young. “Dating among our youth”, he asserted, “should be linked to the interests of the masses of workers and peasants.”

Simango was articulating an idealized view of “Africanness” that Frelimo leaders espoused: a static, dull, and largely emotionless African whose sole drive is to serve the masses. The editor of the magazine commented, as he often did, to say that “the love of the youth should be free of false romanticism and become a connection between two free and equal beings.” Although the editor raised questions regarding Simango’s categories of “true Africans” and the confusing link between the youth’s “shameful acts” and the “interests of the masses of workers and peasants”, his modernist and moderate comments were completely ignored by readers. For the Mozambican police, who read the articles of *Tempo* and other newspapers and journals in the same way that they processed party-state directives, Simango’s piece was a call for action. As soon as Simango’s article was published, the police arrested couples walking in harms in Maputo and other cities. The results showed up in the following numbers of the same magazine.

Three months later, an angry young man named Cumbane wrote to *Tempo*’s editor to report on his detention in February 1978.<sup>12</sup> The police agents who detained him and his girlfriend found them holding hands in front of a coffee shop in Matola – a township located a few miles from Maputo. The young couple were on their way to the movies. The agents on patrol did not bother look at the IDs that Cumbane readily handed them. They simply said: “don’t you know that here in the People’s Republic of Mozambique it is forbidden to walk in arms?” Bewildered – for the couple had never heard of such law – they nervously apologized. But it was to no avail. They were taken into detention to a police station where “many other people were detained for not carrying IDs and for hugging on the street.” The hugging offenders were ordered to form a line and handed a text published in the letters-to-the-editor section of *Tempo* on January 1, 1978. It was none other than Alfredo Simango’s piece condemning hugging and kissing in public spaces. After reading the article, the couples were inquired on their marital status. “If you were single”, wrote Cumbane, “they wanted to know if the man was known by his girlfriends’ family.” After the

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<sup>12</sup> AHM/Cumbane, “Preso por abraçar a namorada na rua”, *Tempo*, 389, 19 Março 1978.



inquiry, the commander of the police station addressed the detainees. “He told us that indeed it’s prohibited to walk in arms on the street because it’s a shameful act, ... a colonial vestige.” The detainees were finally released near midnight, after several hours of lectures on proper moral comportment and exhortations to let go of decadent foreign habits that were contrary to the revolutionary ethics of socialist Mozambique.

Cumbane and his girlfriend were lucky to have been set free after spending hours in police custody. Several other couples were not as fortunate and ended up in reeducation camps for committing the same offense. In his reply to Cumbane’s letter, the editor of *Tempo* condemned the detention of people for hugging on the street since there was no law prohibiting such acts. But he pointed out that such “incidents” were becoming increasingly common in all major cities across the country. As I demonstrate in chapter 6, the archival record of Niassa’s reeducation camps is permeated with cases of detainees arrested for public displays of affection. This crime was often listed as “liberalism” and “moral corruption.”<sup>13</sup>

Incendiary letters such as the ones written by Nguja and Simango reflect widespread anxieties of ordinary citizens about appropriate moral behavior and conflicting notions of modernity. These letters populated Mozambique’s newspapers and inspired action throughout the socialist experiment. They demonstrate the extent to which ordinary people were invested in sanctioning the behavior of their fellow compatriots. During cleanup campaigns, these moral sanctions predisposed people to get rid of people they perceived as unworthy of urban citizenship. However, the passionate and largely puritan commentaries that they carried were hardly new. Although people like Nguja and Simango found inspiration in speeches by Frelimo authorities who denounced the profligate lifestyle of Mozambique’s urban society, their critique of public displays of affection and other immoralities stem from conservative views about civility that date back to the colonial era (see Chapter 1).

Although most debates were naturally held during pastime, religious services, and familiar and friendly gatherings, in this chapter I privilege the print record. This is not because of any aversion to “ex post facto oral accounts” – as Jonathon Glassman once put it – but because the thoughts of historical actors in their own written words provide a more accurate picture of their

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<sup>13</sup> “Indivíduos corruptos apresentados à população”, *Notícias*, 18 Maio 1978.

thinking at the time.<sup>14</sup> Students of African print cultures have demonstrated that in colonial and postcolonial Africa, newspapers were not simple vehicles of public information, but instruments of political mobilization, moral exhortation, and public debate.<sup>15</sup> As Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter recently noted, newspaper editors and journalists put their vocation at the service of projects of moral reform.<sup>16</sup> They sought, above all, to create civil societies. The modes of addressing their readership did not differ from the forms of convocations in vogue in Christian missionary papers – the forerunners of African print cultures. Like missionaries, African newspapermen sought to build new moral communities.<sup>17</sup> Their readers did not lag behind in this endeavor. Readers saw newspapers as forwarding the noble agenda of uplifting their societies. Therefore, newspapers were interactive spaces in which editors were constantly in conversation with readers, and readers were in permanent dialogue among each other. The space of the newspaper was conceived as a space of exchange among concerned members of the moral community as they battled for the enlightenment of their folk.

Despite the high levels of illiteracy in Mozambique – estimated at 90 percent at the time of independence – literate and non-literate people were enthusiastic participants in news-making. They were diligent readers and whenever the opportunity appeared, they engaged with editors and journalists by writing letters and news commentaries. Readers were not passive recipients of news. They influenced the editorial character of newspapers, by pushing editors toward certain directions or urging them to focus on particular themes in detriment to others. They saw newspapers as an extension of the public sphere where aspects of daily life could be argued, contested, and mitigated. Such conversations were not confined to one newsreel or a particular location. As Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter put it, “texts had afterlives.”<sup>18</sup> As we shall see in the next two sections, the debates that newspaper texts elicited travelled along different newspapers, across time and space. A piece from one newspaper, say *Notícias da Beira*, could be debated in *Tempo* or *Notícias* of Lourenço Marques/Maputo. People like Nguja and Simango built archives of newspaper articles,

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<sup>14</sup> Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011, p. xi.

<sup>15</sup> See Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell, eds. *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter, “Print Cultures in Colonial Africa”, in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell, eds. *African Print Cultures*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yoruba Popular Life in Theatre*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 300.

<sup>18</sup> D Peterson and E. Hunter, “Print Cultures in Colonial Africa”, p. 7.

from which they could draw insights and points to argue for or against in their own letters to editors. Their writings prompted action and informed the urban cleanup campaigns against the so-called anti-socials.

*From Exhortation to Action: Morality and Urban Citizenship in Late Colonial Mozambique*

As I demonstrated in chapter 1, debates about appropriate behavior in urban spaces in Mozambique emerged along with the expansion of modern colonial cities and they dominated the public sphere throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, unlike the previous decades (1920s-50s), in which debates were restricted to moral exhortations for people to better their manners, during the booming years of the 1960s – the last decade of colonial rule – people were no longer content at simply exhorting others to change their behavior. They were now calling colonial authorities to act upon the wicked and immoral, to round them up and send them away to the countryside, and force them to work the land.

In this section, I look at the contributors of the *Voz Africana* (African voice), a Beira-based newspaper dedicated to African matters founded in 1961/2. Because during this period colonial authorities put considerable pressure on the mouthpiece of the African urban elite of Lourenço Marques, *O Brado Africano* – as it was identified as being the mouthpiece of the nationalists – the *Voz Africana* is the only source for the written expression of the voices of African readers. José Capela compiled and published some of their letters in *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo* (1971), which seem to have been written between 1962 and 1970.<sup>19</sup> The authors of the letter were less educated men, which is notable in the invariably broken Portuguese of the letters. Most lived in or near the second-largest city of Beira in central Mozambique.<sup>20</sup>

Frelimo's anti-colonial war and Portugal's incisive counter-insurgency characterized the 1960s. At the same time, it was during that decade that Mozambique experienced rapid economic growth. This economic boom widened the pool of opportunities for Africans seeking jobs in the

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<sup>19</sup> José Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Porto: Afrontamento, 1974. José Capela (original name, Martins), was the founder and editor of *A Voz Africana*, an author of many books on the history of colonial Mozambique.

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, José Capela did not provide the actual dates of publication of individual letters.

cities.<sup>21</sup> The African population of Lourenço Marques tripled from 123,000 in 1960 to 360,000 in 1970.<sup>22</sup> In Beira, the numbers went from 43,000 to around 70,000 inhabitants in the same period.<sup>23</sup> The emerging industrial and service sectors could not absorb the growing working force, and suburban infrastructures were stretched to the point of implosion. These changes came with new forms of juvenile delinquency, the so-called *mabandido*, and the rise of crime in the cities' peripheries.<sup>24</sup> This relatively new phenomenon pushed urban residents to engage in a more vigorous condemnation of vagrancy, often lumping together the unemployed with hooligans and prostitutes. This is what the contributors to *A Voz Africana* wrote copiously to complain about.

J.M. Jongué, a twenty-four-year-old resident of Beira, wrote to the editor of *A Voz Africana* to complain about the people “from my African race” who left the village to earn money in the city, but ended up spending the money drinking wine in bars. He claimed that most people ended up losing their jobs due to drinking, and highlighted the number of vagabonds and criminals who disturbed public order. “Do you know where the bandits who assault people at night come from?” he asked his fellow readers. “They are those people who have no means to earn a living nor to return to the countryside”, he responded.<sup>25</sup> Many people shared Jongué's sentiments that the growing number of unemployed young men in Beira and other cities was not a structurally economic problem, but the result of moral wickedness and the profligate lifestyle of their fellow countrymen.

The presence of independent women in the urban milieu became the object of even more acute scrutiny during this time. Like elsewhere in East Africa, independent women aroused the most disconcerting feelings among urban men. Not merely because some women had to engage in prostitution, which many men found troubling, but because their very presence in a space that had long been assumed to be a male space challenged the patriarchal foundations of nativist politics and the moral order that African men sought to build. Women posed a great challenge to a moral community that men conceived as the exclusive prerogative whereas they thought that women should be confined to the private, domestic sphere. The domestic sphere was the “natural” domain

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<sup>21</sup> On the economic boom in late colonial Mozambique, see Marc Wuyts, “Economia Política do Colonialismo em Moçambique”, *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 1 (1980): 9-22.

<sup>22</sup> AHM – Areosa Pena, “O Bairro do Caniço Muda de Face”, *Tempo*, 33-2, 2 Maio 1971.

<sup>23</sup> Ilídio Amaral, “Beira: Cidade e Porto do Índico”, *Finisterra*, 6,7 (1969), p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> On urban “banditry” and youth delinquency in late colonial Mozambique, see Calane da Silva e Kok Nam, “Mabandido: O Mal do Cololianismo”, *Tempo*, 212, 20 Out. 1974; and C. da Silva, *Xicandarinha*.

<sup>25</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 48-9.

of women where they were to behave as docile wives, caring mothers, and obedient daughters.<sup>26</sup> A resident of Beira, J.A. Pascoal, articulated this male anxiety over independent women in the most ominous way. He wrote to *A Voz Africana* to criticize colonial authorities for allowing divorced women from his home of Vilanculos in Inhambane province to move to the cities to settle as independent workers. He protested that, with the prospect of earning money in the city and paying back the *lobolo*, such lax control of the *caderneta* or transit pass by colonial authorities was encouraging women to divorce their husbands and leave the village for the city. “Where are they going with the *caderneta* issued by the authorities”, he asked, “if all women only deserve to be housewives? Why is the administration allowing divorced women to go to any city if she can have a second husband?” Pascoal warned the authorities that if the situation continued unchanged, “in two years there will be no married man in Mozambique.”<sup>27</sup>

Pascoal’s overblown concerns that divorced and independent urban women were a threat to public order speaks to the masculine anxieties of most urban residents. It is not surprising that, after independence, people like Pascoal welcomed Frelimo’s vitriolic condemnations of independent urban women with alacrity. As we shall see in the section on denunciations, clerks in independent Mozambique saw the wave of applications for divorce by women as a counter-revolutionary behavior, a bourgeois culture that threatened the very revolution.

Many readers of *A Voz Africana* shared Pascoal’s concerns that independent women engaged in prostitution and promoted the decay of the social fabric, dragging men to perdition and with them the entire “race.” Gabriel Cantadelo, another Beira resident, wrote to report a shameful situation he witnessed in a bar. “I saw a man in the bar”, he wrote, “with two women who have come to spoil this city.”<sup>28</sup> Another resident, Tudo Augusto Tougunena (36 years old), was even more incensed by the presence of “loose” women in Beira. He blamed them for the rise of vagabond and criminal men in the city. “What led me to write this letter of major importance”, he began, “has to do with the African women called *Putas*. Look at our city, it is full of vagrants and

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<sup>26</sup> For a compelling examination of the foundations of male anxiety over independent urban women, see, for example, Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Feminism and Political Theory*. Sanford: Stanford University Press, 1989; Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992; Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, eds. “Wicked” Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa. Portsmouth: Heinemann., 2001; and D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*.

<sup>27</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 47-8.

<sup>28</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 53.

bandits because of these whores who deceive men [sic].”<sup>29</sup> Like most of his moralist compatriots, Tougunena believed that prostitutes in Beira came from southern Mozambique, particularly Inhambane. “Most of these women *Putas* who spoil our city come from the south”, he postulated. Tougunena urged the authorities to expel all “whores” from the city and send them back to their rural villages.

Like the more sophisticated mission-educated southerners (chapter 1), for Beira residents the city was a place to prove to the “white colonials” that Africans were capable of assimilating the European civilization and thus worthy of full citizenship. They saw the dissolute behavior of their fellow city dwellers as a hindrance to the civilizational evolution of the entire African population and a retardation of their recognition as Portuguese. One Augusto Mutezeio who wrote a short angry letter to *A Voz Africana* from Vila Pery (Chimoio) lamented the rising number of single mothers in the city. He argued that “this is why our civilization never advances.”<sup>30</sup> In the same line, António Armando, for whom unmarried women aged between 18 and 22 could be nothing else but “whores”, claimed that “the blame for this is because there are no civilized people [sic].”<sup>31</sup>

As we will see in the following section, these voices became more aggressive after independence. If colonial authorities seemed lenient and deaf to their pleas – absorbed by the never-ending counter-insurgency as they were – the postcolonial government would revamp these moralist surges by making the project of building a new moral order its main priority. In taking the issue of urban decadence very seriously, Frelimo provided an even more permissible platform for moralist and aggressive arguments like these. Yet, under Frelimo’s regime, the readers of *Tempo*, *Notícias*, *Notícias da Beira* and other papers of major circulation were no longer confined to writing letters. They were ready to take action and clean their cities of unworthy city dwellers. Many of their victims ended up in reeducation camps. As historian Derek Peterson has put it, “the prospect of independence [in East Africa] made the work of moral reform more urgent. New freedoms entailed new prisoners.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 53-4.

<sup>30</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> J. Capela, *Moçambique Pelo Seu Povo*, p. 57.

<sup>32</sup> D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p. 283.

## *Civic Order and Urban Citizenship in Early Independent Mozambique*

As soon as newspapers and the radio broadcast President Machel's speech on September 20, 1974 on the tasks of the transitional government, in which he condemned prostitution and other social ills, young men were galvanized into action. A new event took place in Mozambique. Suddenly, gangs of young men went into the streets of Lourenço Marques and harassed women in miniskirts, forcing them to wear the "respectful" and "traditional *capulana*."<sup>33</sup> Despite reporters' protestations that these gangs were "criminal ruffians" and that Frelimo gave no such orders, the assault of women in revealing clothes continued.<sup>34</sup> A month later, *Notícias* reported about another mob that nearly killed a "young black girl" for wearing a miniskirt. The girl was molested at midday in front of the Vasco da Gama market in downtown Lourenço Marques (the same market where Mr. Hubele lost his daughters in the 1930s, see chapter 1). No one in the crowded market came to the aid of the victim. Instead, a few female vendors joined the aggressors while a crowd of about a hundred formed a circle to "appreciate the spectacle." The girl was saved from certain death by a courageous truck-driver. An environment of fear began to grip the city, especially in the *caniço* where the gangs were most active. As the reporter observed,

In the last three days, no woman – elderly or young – has been able to walk the suburban streets in a dress or wearing a skirt, even below the knees, without covering her body from the waist down with a *capulana*. They cannot go out in public wearing pants either.<sup>35</sup>

For the first time, Mozambique's ordinary citizens (male and female) were taking the matter of urban decency and the "shameful" behavior of urban women into their own hands. As much as they bemoaned the licentious manners of independent women – real and imaginary – their anxieties had never propelled them to take such drastic actions before, unlike their contemporaries in East Africa.<sup>36</sup> It is unclear whether they were aware that their neighbors in Tanzania had had a similar struggle against the miniskirt only a few years before and that in Uganda the struggle was

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<sup>33</sup> AHM – "Não é a FRELIMO que obriga o uso da capulana", *Notícias*, 11 Set. 1974.

<sup>34</sup> AHM – "Como age a reacção: Ataques a mulheres e roubos", *Tempo*, 212, 20 Out. 1974.

<sup>35</sup> AHM – "Jovem de mini-saia agredida por desordeiros", *Notícias*, 25 Out. 1974.

<sup>36</sup> In this aspect, Mozambique is distinct from other East African countries, where from the 1930s onwards ethnic associations took into their hands the task of eliminating prostitution and other social ills by menacing independent women. Compared to the relatively tolerant British rule, the more repressive character of Portuguese colonial administration might have prevented such events from occurring. For East Africa's ethnic associations and violence against independent women, see D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*; A. Ivaska, *Cultured States*.

still going on.<sup>37</sup> Certainly, Frelimo leaders were aware of such events beyond Mozambique, however, neither Samora Machel nor any Frelimo official gave direct orders for people to attack women in miniskirts. Nevertheless, the party's leadership vehement condemnation of this "immoral" dress and the calls for a vigorous struggle against prostitution and other "immoralities" in the cities were enough to incite people to act. Although the party was quick in reclaiming the prerogative to conduct the cleanup campaigns against anti-socials – as the task was exclusively entrusted to security forces – the die had already been cast. The debates that animated the readers' pages of *Tempo* and *Notícias* in the following months and years after independence are indicative of the level of engagement with which prominent and obscure citizens welcomed Frelimo's calls for a new moral order.

That the first debate about civic order in independent Mozambique revolved around urban women's dressing styles and prostitution is not surprising. The debaters saw the miniskirt as a trademark of prostitution and licentiousness, as a device that women used to deceive men. For Mozambique's urban residents, in the revealing size of the miniskirt rested the shame of an entire nation.

No one made this point more bluntly than the famed poet laureate and journalist José Craveirinha. In a commentary article published in *Notícias da Beira* on September 25, 1974 (five days after the first mob attack on short-skirted women in the capital city), Craveirinha came in support of the "ban on minis."<sup>38</sup> In the article, the poet commended the "revolutionary" attitude of the capital's youth. He asserted that the ban on miniskirts and their "replacement with the traditional *capulana*" was a welcome and necessary policy. He claimed that in the *city of cement* "the mini is an irreverent fashion", while in the *caniço* it "corresponds to a degraded condition of women." For him, any woman wearing a miniskirt in the *caniço* was not adhering to a saucy fashion, but was a prostitute.<sup>39</sup> In Craveirinha's thinking, the mini was humiliating for men in the suburbs because it reminded them of the frustration of seeing their daughters and sisters selling their bodies to white men. Prostitution and the "inviting" short dresses that women wore were thus

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<sup>37</sup> A. Ivaska, *Cultured States*. My colleague Doreen Kembabazi is currently writing on the campaigns to ban miniskirts in Uganda in the 1970s.

<sup>38</sup> AHM – José Craveirinha, "Povo contra mini-saia nos subúrbios", *Notícias da Beira*, 25 Set. 1974.

<sup>39</sup> "A utilização da mini-saia não era – como ainda não é – uma simples adesão a uma moda de vestuário. E como se poderá facilmente comprovar nos próprios locais, toda e qualquer mulher que nos subúrbios se exhibe com a exígua peça de roupa com o nome de mini-saia, vive da prostituição." AHM – José Craveirinha, "Povo contra mini-saia nos subúrbios", *Notícias da Beira*, 25 Set. 1974.



reminders of the humiliations of colonialism. The ban on the mini was, in the poet's words, the beginning of the "total decolonization of the Mozambican family."<sup>40</sup>

Craveirinha's puritan assumptions did not go unchallenged. One Bernardes Silva was appalled after reading the article and wrote an open letter in response. His letter was not published in *Notícias da Beira* (where Craveirinha had his piece), but in *Notícias* of Lourenço Marques.<sup>41</sup> Silva was dismayed at the fact that an intellectual of Craveirinha's stature could hold such "ancient" and conservative views. A "progressive" white settler who was committed to staying in Mozambique after independence, Silva believed the incoming ruling party was genuinely democratic and liberal.<sup>42</sup> He found the aggression of women for wearing miniskirts a gross violation of Frelimo's political line and condemned the ban on miniskirts as an "assault on individual liberties." While confessing to be an admirer of the poet, Silva did not shy away from expressing his outrage. "*Ora bolas Senhor José Craveirinha!* – for heaven's sake Mr. José Craveirinha", he wrote, "who can accept that the abolition of miniskirts in the suburbs can eliminate (or even reduce) the practice of prostitution?" And he continued: "I cannot accept that all those young girls in the suburbs who frequent high school or even college, and who have adhered to the fashion due to their contact with the 'city of cement' [are] prostitutes." He insisted that the assault on women was not a "revolutionary" and "emancipatory" attitude, but an act of male chauvinism, a "manifestation of male power over females" and the "rekindle of the dominant forces of master-man" to subjugate women. As such, he concluded, the acts of the anti-mini gangs were "contrary to Frelimo's ideals."<sup>43</sup>

A combative writer, Craveirinha replied quickly. Because he was replying at *Notícias* of Lourenço Marques and wanted all readers to be on the same page, he decided to reproduce his first article along with the new one.<sup>44</sup> Craveirinha considered the newspaper a *banja* – the "traditional" meeting place where African communities in Mozambique gather to discuss important matters. Because the debate was taking place in the *banja*, where the entire nation was following attentively, the eminent poet warned his counterpart to refrain from using "inappropriate"

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<sup>40</sup> AHM – José Craveirinha, "Povo contra mini-saia nos subúrbios", *Notícias da Beira*, 25 Set. 1974.

<sup>41</sup> AHM – Bernardes Silva, "Ainda as mini-saias: Carta aberta ao Sr. José Craveirinha", *Notícias*, 13 Out. 1974

<sup>42</sup> This was a general sentiment among progressive settlers who supported Frelimo, in great part because Frelimo marketed itself as a liberal and democratic movement. Most would leave the country once the liberation party was fully established. See B. Machava, "O Galo Amanheceu"

<sup>43</sup> AHM – Bernardes Silva, "Ainda as mini-saias: Carta aberta ao Sr. José Craveirinha", *Notícias*, 13 Out. 1974

<sup>44</sup> AHM – "Mini-saia réplica: José Craveirinha responde ao Sr. Bernardes Silva", *Notícias*, 5 Nov. 1974

exclamations such as “*ora bolas!*” He insisted that the ban on miniskirts and the struggle against prostitution aimed “uniquely to the moralization of customs” in Mozambique. “In the name of what democracy or progress”, asked the poet, “can one deny the People the right to put an end to a clear sign of one of the greatest alienations: Prostitution?” He poignantly stressed that:

The miniskirt (or trousers tightly pressed to the body) was in the suburbs a clear identification of the prostitute. It was the sign of degradation of women in the city of reed. Prostitution, miniskirts, and excessively tight trousers are synonymous with ‘ill life.’ They are the crust of the wound. They are the semaphore of a social cancer. And it is through these semaphores that one can identify the ‘trade’ of the whore. They are the ‘tools’ of the prostitute because this particular kind of clothing is the ‘uniform’ of the marginal girls who swarm in bars and brothels. They are the exposition of the ‘merchandise’ to a potential client.

The conflation of a modern dressing style and prostitution is an old and far too common phenomenon in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> But in independent Mozambique, for the first time, it would have dreadful consequences. The writings of people like Craveirinha played an important role in the ensuing cleanup campaigns. As the most prominent literary figure in Mozambique and a respected senior journalist, Craveirinha was following in the footsteps of the hero of his generation, João Albasini. Like Albasini, Craveirinha was wrestling with the contradictions of his ample persona. On the one hand, he celebrated the bohemian nightlife populated by independent and highly modern women in Lourenço Marques’ red-light district. Some of the female characters that feature in his breathtaking poetry were based on women he interacted with in the brothels and bars of *Rua Araújo* in the 1950s and 60s.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, he was committed to the moral project that had always been central to the nativist politics of Mozambique’s African elites (see Chapter 1). One might be tempted to say that Craveirinha saw an opportunity to align himself with Frelimo revolutionaries at a time when “correct” political alignments and allegiances were critical for the safety of one’s future career. But that would be a hasty and misleading assumption. Like most of his peers, Craveirinha believed in the need to clean up people’s lives in order to build a new society. Some of his well-known colleagues and many obscure people weighed in in the debate (often moving from one newspaper

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<sup>45</sup> See A. Wipper, “African Women, Fashion, and Scapegoating”; Barbara Cooper, “The Politics of Difference and Women’s Associations in Niger: Of ‘Prostitutes’, the Public, and Politics”, *Signs*, 20, 4 (1995):851-882.

<sup>46</sup> In his response to Bernardes Silva, Craveirinha confessed that he had no personal aversion to miniskirts and what they stood for. He wrote: “*P.S. – Autoconfissão: Pessoalmente não sou alérgico às obvias sugestões da mini-saia. J.C.*”

to another). Although a few joined Bernardes Silva in condemning the attacks on women based on their appearance, the overwhelming majority reinforced Craveirinha's position.<sup>47</sup> This debate foreshadowed the sweeping campaign against prostitution that took place in Lourenço Marques and other cities in the first months of independence.

The most impactful contribution in this debate was an article written by *Tempo* journalist Albino Magaia, with illustrations by Craveirinha's old *compagnon d'armes*, the famous photojournalist Ricardo Rangel. Like Craveirinha, Magaia and Rangel began their journalistic careers working for *O Brado Africano*, the pioneering mouthpiece of Mozambique's nativist reformers. The authors claimed that half of the capital city's female residents – in their estimation 75,000 women – were prostitutes. As they put it, “rooted in many vices, the prostitute is a terrible barrier for the advancement of the revolution.” They concluded that “it is not with sermons in the church or with morality at home that prostitution ends. It only ends with the integration of women in the production process.”<sup>48</sup> As I pointed out in chapter 3, the transitional government used the staggering figures from this article to justify the launching of *Operação Limpeza*.<sup>49</sup>

But moralist contributions to newspapers were not the exclusive prerogative of eminent citizens like Craveirinha and Magaia. Obscure citizens, some with clear difficulties for writing in Portuguese, did not lag behind in the debate. One António Sambo was so disappointed when the campaign against prostitution was interrupted in October 1975 that he felt the urge to call out the authorities to never rest until every brothel was closed and all prostitutes arrested. He suggested that the campaign should continue and target prostitution and alcoholism simultaneously because the “two evils are like twins.” He claimed that “it's no use fighting one but leaving the other

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<sup>47</sup> For example, Journalist Fernando Lima articulated an open critic of the cleanup campaigns targeting prostitutes. He criticized distorted conceptions of prostitution – skirts, extravagant makeup, and women having drinks with men in bars – and claimed that prostitution had deeper roots than the visible signs on the red light district of Lourenço Marques. However, Lima did not challenge Frelimo's idea that social misfits should be transformed into the new men or new women. For him, vagrants and prostitutes were products of the decadent capitalist bourgeois society. Yet, he disagreed that the reeducation model in practice was the right way to achieve such transformation (Fernando Lima, “Como encarar a prostituição”, *Notícias*, 13 Ago. 1976.) In our interview, Lima told me that he was sacked from the newspaper for writing this and other papers with a critical tone. The Department of Ideological Work and Propaganda regarded his writing as a “disrespectful of the correct Party line.” Interview: Fernando Lima, Maputo, 24 Set. 2014

<sup>48</sup> AHM – Albino Magaia e Ricardo Rangel, “Prostituição: Tráfico sexual mata a fome”, *Tempo*, 211, 13 Outubro 1974.

<sup>49</sup> AJN – “Desferido golpe eficaz na prostituição e intermediários: Encerrados os cabarés da Major Araújo, mulheres desejam mudar de vida”, *Notícias*, 10 Jun. 1975; “Para onde foram as prostitutas?”, *Tempo*, 237, 31 Ago. 1975; MHN – *Daily News* [Dar-es-Salaam], 3 Nov. 1975.

because one day they will be together again.” He also insisted that the radio call-in show in which people gave their opinions about “these great evils that shame our nation” had to continue.<sup>50</sup> João Braga wrote to *Tempo* from Nampula to urge the women of his city to abandon the “shameful trade” and go back to the countryside to work their *machamba*. “With the sale of your bodies”, he charged, “you facilitate the infiltration of prevaricators, reactionary and enemy agents.” He ended his letter by asking Nampula authorities to “take severe actions” against licentious women, including married women who “take advantage of their husbands’ absence” to practice prostitution.<sup>51</sup>

Clearly, the lexicon of moral condemnation changed. Prostitutes were now framed as “enemies” or “agents” that facilitate the “infiltration” of the enemy to undermine the revolution. But the core of the message did not change from the pre-independence commentaries. Independence altered the regional and provincial character of Mozambique’s press and ushered in a national press coverage. Citizens from Beira felt entitled to weigh into arguments about the decadence of residents in Maputo or Nampula. Now, with a “liberated” mailing system, people could write to the papers of their preference from any corner of the country and engage in debates about subjects from other regions of the country other than their own. Editors could hardly keep up with the amount of letters that poured into their newspapers’ mailboxes. For example, *Tempo* received more than 3,000 letters in 1978, and only published 600.<sup>52</sup>

With the widening of the platform of debate, and the sharpening of “revolutionary vigilance”, contributors had to be cautious in the way they framed their stories. The level of scrutiny was more acute than ever before. It could take one line or a small detail for a contributor to be seen as an enemy of the revolution rather than a dutiful member of the revolutionary comradeship. When, in 1977, Abílio Hauaniaca denounced women who “seduced” men in front of the ABC cinema in Lichinga, Niassa, based on his personal experience, three readers from his hometown wrote to accuse him of being one of the promoters of prostitution. Abílio wrote to ask the authorities of Niassa to re-launch the operation *pente fino* (fine comb), which had resulted in the detention of “only ten” prostitutes for his disappointment. For him that yield was too low

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<sup>50</sup> António Sambo, “Dois irmãos gémeos – prostituição, alcoolismo – arruinam o nosso povo”, *Tempo*, 264, 26 Out. 1975.

<sup>51</sup> João Braga, “Abaixo a prostituição”, *Tempo*, 250, 20 Jul. 1975.

<sup>52</sup> “Ao Leitor”, *Tempo*, 7 Jan. 1979.

considering the number of prostitutes that continued to lure men in Lichinga. He mentioned a particular brothel where prostitutes worked and urged the police to go there to scoop the “whores.”<sup>53</sup> For his fellow city residents, José Welemo, Manuel Luís, and José da Silva, Abílio’s letter was evidence that he was an “agent of sexual corruption” himself.<sup>54</sup> How was it possible, they asked, that Abílio knew where the brothel was located and he did not inform the local *Grupo Dinamizador*? By failing to inform the GD about the location of the brothel, Abílio was defaulting on his “revolutionary duties.” They accused him of not being “an element of the People and against vigilance.” The fact that he claimed that only ten prostitutes were detained during *pente fino* instead of the “hundreds that were actually sent to reeducation camps” was further proof that Abílio was not attentive to the revolutionary process underway.<sup>55</sup>

Some readers joined forces to craft their letters together in order to condemn urban indecency. A group of three friends, Francisco Nhaduco, Paulo Chachine, and Diamantino Paulino, co-authored a letter to call for the ban of “immoral magazines” which “influence the youth in acquiring bad habits.”<sup>56</sup> In the same vein, Afonso Machungo lamented the youth’s lack of revolutionary fervor in his home city of Pemba. It saddened him that when the local cinemas projected films about cowboys, karate, and romance, the tickets evaporated quickly, whereas on days of films about the revolution the cinemas were empty even at promotional prices.<sup>57</sup> From the small town of Chókwe, in Gaza province, Guilherme Mavunde wrote to denounce a group of young men who owned “little houses for the practice of prostitution”, and called the authorities to “take action against this shameful situation.”<sup>58</sup>

In several speeches, president Machel prohibited dance balls and exhorted the youth to engage in revolutionary tasks to decolonize their minds. Contributors to newspapers found in the president’s call an opportunity to sharpen their gazes over neighbors in search of “persistent” signs of decadence and disobedience to party orders. Once infringers were found, contributors addressed them by full name, adding their home addresses and urging authorities to put an end to the violation

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<sup>53</sup> Abílio Hauaniaca, “Vender o corpo por cem escudos”, *Tempo*, 347, 29 Maio 1977.

<sup>54</sup> José Walemo, “Vender o corpo por cem escudos”, *Tempo*, 350, 19 Jun. 1977; Manuel Luís, “Prostituição: Crítica a uma crítica”, *Tempo*, 351, 26 Jun. 1977; José da Silva, “Vender o corpo por cem escudos”, *Tempo*, 354, 17 July 1977.

<sup>55</sup> Manuel Luís, “Prostituição: Crítica a uma crítica”, *Tempo*, 351, 26 Jun. 1977.

<sup>56</sup> Francisco Nhaduco, Paulo Chachine, and Diamantino Paulino, “Carta aberta aos distribuidores das revistas imorais em geral”, *Tempo*, 254, 17 Ago. 1975.

<sup>57</sup> Afonso Machungo “Problemas da juventude”, *Tempo*, 373, 27 Nov. 1977.

<sup>58</sup> Guilherme Mavunde, “Prostituição”, *Tempo*, 352, 3 July 1977.

and if need be take the infringer away. Carlos Agostinho do Rosário sent a letter to *Tempo* to report a dance ball organized by Senhor Jenito, a fellow resident at *bairro do Aeroporto* in Maputo. Addressing Jenito directly, do Rosário reminded him of President Machel's words in Cabo Delgado, where the supreme leader declared that "we do not want balls here in Mozambique." He urged Mr. Janito to discontinue his "western practices" which "hinder our revolution."<sup>59</sup> Another anonymous group of friends identified themselves as "old and young *continuadores* (pioneers)." They composed their letter in group and titled it: "we don't want balls and freak parties in our country." They called upon the government to issue a decree forbidding "these legacies of colonialism" which "dishonor our daughters" and "harm the revolution."<sup>60</sup> Gaspar Tomás also claimed that dances promoted prostitution because women were often allowed to enter without paying (he might well have attempted to enter a party and denied the privilege, hence his grievance).<sup>61</sup>

By no means were newspapers sites of consensus. For example, Nguja and Simango found many supporters in their condemnation of kissing and hugging on the streets, but their conservative views did not go unchallenged. Jacinto Manhassaia rebuked their assumptions and considered them "outdated" for there was no problem in couples holding hands or kissing in public. He urged the two men to concentrate on real problems, such as prostitution, alcoholism, early marriages and *lobolo*.<sup>62</sup> In any case, even when citizens disagreed on what problems were more urgent, the overwhelming majority of contributors regarded urban indecency to be a serious challenge for the reputation of the nation. During cleanup campaigns – especially when the economy began to decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s – contributors to newspapers became more vitriolic in their condemnation of urban immorality and joined the chorus that anyone who did not live according to the "revolutionary morality" had to be driven out of urban areas. In no other time were these voices more unanimous than during the campaigns against vagrancy, black marketeering, and unemployment in 1982 and 1983.

The persistent economic crisis and the incapacity of the state to provide urban services (housing, transportation, health, education, and more importantly, food rationing) led urban

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<sup>59</sup> Carlos Agostinho do Rosário, "Abaixo o baile", *Tempo*, 250, 20 Jul. 1975.

<sup>60</sup> "Não queremos bailes nem farras no nosso país", *Tempo*, 259, 21 Set. 1975

<sup>61</sup> Gaspar Tomás, "Abaixo o baile", *Tempo*, 256, 31 Ago. 1975.

<sup>62</sup> Jacinto Manhassaia, "Problemas da juventude", *Tempo*, 384, 12 Jan. 1978

residents to turn against each other in a fierce competition to secure access to scarce resources.<sup>63</sup> By 1979, as the euphoria of independence was waning down and shortages and long lines (*bichas*) became the order of the day, residents who felt entitled to claim urban citizenship, either because they were born in the city or because they had a formal wage employment embraced xenophobic ideas and endorsed vigorously the government's efforts to stop rural to urban migration and the purging campaigns. Not only did citizens call on the government to stop the influx of rural migrants into the cities and round up those who lived in the cities undeservingly, they also informed the police about the location of the "hiding dens" of *Xiconhocas*.

In several occasions during cleanup campaigns, newspaper editors dispatched reporters to collect the opinions of ordinary people in the streets of Maputo and Beira about an ongoing campaign. In June 1982, the police launched a selective campaign against vagrancy and black marketeering, scooping up hundreds of people who were sentenced to reeducation in expedited hearings.<sup>64</sup> Although reporters crafted questions to elicit a particular kind of response, the answers give us a clear idea of how prevalent xenophobic sentiments were among urban residents. Brief and selective as they are, these opinions are an important sociological survey. They often included photographs of the respondents, their age, professional occupation, and place of residence. Most interlocutors were people with formal wage work living in the suburban *bairros*, aged between late teens to 60s.

Asked to comment about the results of the campaign, citizens in Maputo claimed that the campaign had brought tranquility in the city and encouraged the police to continue to carry out the round ups until all vagrants were purged from the city. They exhorted everybody to be vigilant and help the authorities locate the "hiding dens" of the *marginais* who allegedly came from rural areas to commit crimes and disorder. "I think that the people who come from the countryside only come to increase criminality", said one Fernando Matola from bairro Mavalane. "They are the ones who invade houses and assassinate people." He suggested that "the government must round up all of them and send them to collective farms." Another interviewee, forty-four-year-old Joaquim

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<sup>63</sup> The government recognized this, and in 1982 *Notícias* published an extensive resolution by Frelimo's Central Committee on the economic difficulties in Mozambique. See "Temos ainda muitas dificuldades mas temos forma de as resolver: Partido FRELIMO faz balanço e perspectiva o future da situação socio-económica de Mozambique", *Notícias*, 1 Fevereiro 1982.

<sup>64</sup> "Empregos para vadios reeducados", *Notícias*, 17 Junho 1982; "Como se 'fabricam' os marginais", *Notícias*, 23 Junho 1982.

Nuvunga, a resident of Bairro Polana Caniço working at BP/Shell Mozambique, claimed that “most of the people who come from the countryside are responsible for crimes, because they live in precarious conditions.” He urged the GDs to control them. “The government has all the power to give them new tasks, or send them to a reeducation camp”, he said. Twenty-five-year-old Silvério Rachide from Matola also claimed that rural immigrants should be sent back to the countryside and given work in state farms, or “they can also be sent to reeducation camps, until they transform themselves.”<sup>65</sup>

Many people might have had no idea of what reeducations camps looked like. Reports about hunger and deaths in the camps were too limited to catch the attention of the general public. Generally, people accepted the sloganeering rhetoric of the government that anti-socials were being transformed into useful members of society in the camps. But people were sure about one thing: the camps were far away enough to absorb the urban undesirables so that those who deserved to live in the city could benefit from urban services. Although most people referenced crime as the major reason why security forces needed to continue to round up “vagrants”, the underlining motive for such prejudice against rural migrants were the growing lines in bakeries, bus-stops, hospitals, and the often empty stores. When the government introduced the residential card in June 1982 – in addition to the working card and ID – Maputo residents approved of the measure overwhelmingly.<sup>66</sup> People interviewed on the streets of Maputo by *Notícias* claimed that the card would reduce vagrancy and alleviate the pressure on the scarce urban services. Angelina Balata, from Chamanculo, said that “with this measure introduced by the party, it will be possible to reduce vagrancy and crime in the capital.” She claimed that “the control of people coming from rural areas will also be positive. There are many people who come from the countryside to the city without a plan, and those people end up becoming vagrants, stealing whatever they can.” Gomes Domingos believed that the card would tighten “the control of infiltrated agents in our midst”, particularly of those “coming from the countryside with no activity.” For Ernesto Govene, resident in Malanga, the card would “help resolve the problem of rationing. The flux of people from the countryside without any objective is a serious problem”, he said.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “População deve participar na limpeza de marginais”, *Notícias*, 11 Junho 1982

<sup>66</sup> “Vai ser criado cartão de residente: Comunicado do Secretariado do CC do Partido”, *Notícias*, 14 Jun. 1982.

<sup>67</sup> “Opinião pública: Cartão de residente arma da de defesa”, *Notícias*, 23 Jun. 1982



The point here is not that Mozambique's cities did not have criminals. The point is rather that perceptions of criminality were often overstated and based on a few cases, overshadowing underlying structural challenges. These hyper inflated perceptions – by the government and by the general public – informed the cleanup campaigns, which often targeted ambiguously defined subgroups. From the point of view of letter writers in cities like Maputo and Beira, the overwhelming majority of residents were rural immigrants. Such a catch-it-all purging category not only led to the banishment of people with informal occupations that guaranteed their sustenance and had detrimental consequences for the semi-modern economy of urban areas, it also gave citizens opportunities to denounce their personal enemies.

To sum up: with the end of colonial rule in 1974 and the coming of independence a year later, the moral conservative views that had been maturing since the beginning of the twentieth century gained momentum and were elevated to a higher level. With their highly charged exhortations for Mozambicans to better themselves as new social beings, the liberation revolutionaries were undoubtedly the engine behind this new phase of moral arguments, rhetorically and in action. But their project for a new social order – developed during the trying years of the liberation struggle (chapter 1) – found a fertile terrain in Mozambique's urban areas. Urban residents welcomed Frelimo's project with great enthusiasm. This was not because people were simply seduced by the socialist ideal and the prospects of a utopian "great harmony" in the future. But because the idea of reforming the moral outlook of Mozambique's society by eliminating urban social ills resonated with people's general sentiments about morality, appropriate behavior, and citizenship in urban spaces. They supported Frelimo's project and participated actively to carry it out often beyond the control of the party-state. Their letters to newspaper editors and political commentary galvanized readers to participate in the identification and denunciation of the morally wicked.

Unlike Tanzania, where TANU's anti-urban rhetoric and purging campaigns seem to have been largely endorsed by the urban "middle class" or "respectables",<sup>68</sup> in Mozambique Frelimo's project seem to have been embraced by people from all walks of life. The category of people seen as a hindrance to the civilizational advancement of the "African race" and the entitlement to civil rights during colonial rule – prostitutes, vagrants, alcoholics, and the urban unemployed in general

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<sup>68</sup> A. Burton, "The Haven of Peace Purged", p. 141.

– were now framed as enemies of the socialist revolution who had to be removed from the cities and sent to the countryside. Frelimo’s socialist rhetoric offered ordinary people new vocabularies to articulate old anxieties about public order, decency, and civility. These moralist arguments among ordinary urban residents informed the practices of self-policing, vigilantism, and denunciation that fed the reeducation pipeline in socialist Mozambique.

### **Vigilantism and Intimate Self-Policing in Urban Mozambique**

While condemnations of civic disorder and calls for authorities to take action in letters to newspaper editors and public commentaries illustrate the extent to which Frelimo’s reformist project found a fertile climate in independent Mozambique, it was in the everyday practices of vigilantism, self-policing, and denunciation that ordinary people participated actively in the urban cleanup campaigns. The network of informants that SNASP established throughout the country, the physical composition of Mozambique’s most crowded residential areas (where most victims of the round ups resided), and the willing participation of citizens in turning their neighbors, friends, colleagues, including relatives, all contributed to shaping the demography of reeducation and labor camps.

In independent Mozambique, denunciations took many forms. One was by writing letters to newspaper editors, either to denounce a particular individual or to complain about a situation related to public services (starting in the late 1970s, *Tempo* had a service dedicated to readers’ letters which were forwarded to respective departments in the government for investigation. In many cases, the denouncer’s letter was published along with the response from the responsible for the sector or department under attack).<sup>69</sup> Another form of denunciation was by sending letters with damaging information about others to political authorities (mayors, provincial governors and district administrators, ministers, including the president of the republic). But the most prevalent forms of denunciation were by speaking ill about others in private to secretaries of GDs or in public during GD meetings in residential and working places; and by providing information to local

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<sup>69</sup> This may well have been an influence of the Soviet Union, whose experts were distributed in several sectors of the government. For a similar service in the Soviet Union, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Signals from Bellow: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s”, in S. Fitzpatrick and R. Gellately, eds. *Accusatory Practices*, p. 89.

agents of the *Grupo de Vigilância Popular* (GVP, People's Vigilant Group), a network of intelligence gatherers and community policing created in 1978 by SNASP.

### *Vigilante Groups*

The *Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular* (SNASP, National People's Security Service) was created by decree-law 21/75 of October 11, 1975.<sup>70</sup> The agency was headed by Jacinto Veloso, a veteran of the liberation struggle who was given a cabinet rank as minister of security. According to Veloso, SNASP was modeled after the East German Stasi and the Soviet KGB, and its agents were trained by East German, Cuban and Soviet experts.<sup>71</sup> The agency responded directly to the president and had full powers to “order and undertake inquiries, conduct searches and arrests it judged convenient.” It also had full powers to “proceed to necessary requisitions, instruct processes and detain persons, determining their fate, namely to send them to competent police authorities, to tribunals or to reeducation camps.”<sup>72</sup> SNASP operated above the law and its decisions “were not subject to appeal.” Its powers to detain and condemn subjects were made retroactive to the period before September 1974, which means that it could persecute individuals for “crimes” or subversive acts committed before independence.<sup>73</sup> According to Veloso, the agency was a “very heavy machine with its own military personnel, jails, investigative agents, and many people in logistics and support, who often entered into clashes with the police and the army.”<sup>74</sup> The number of full-time SNASP officers was estimated at 1,500 as of 1984.<sup>75</sup> But the agency's strength laid in the network of non-paid voluntary informants and onlookers, the so-called *Grupos de Vigilância Popular*.

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<sup>70</sup> PRM. Boletim da República. 1 Série, Número 46. Decreto-Lei n° 21/75, de 11 de Outubro, 1975; “Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular (SNASP): Assegurar o processo revolucionário e consolidar a independência e unidade nacionais”, *Tempo*, 261, 20 Out. 1975, p. 8-9.

<sup>71</sup> In his memoir, Jacinto Veloso laments the influence of the Soviet Union and the GDR in the creation of SNASP. Jacinto Veloso, *Memórias em Voo Rasante*. 4 ed. Maputo: JV Editores, 2011, p. 108.

<sup>72</sup> PRM. Boletim da República. 1 Série, Número 46. Decreto-Lei n° 21/75, de 11 de Outubro, 1975. For a juridical interpretation of this decree, see João Carlos Trindade, “Rupturas e Continuidades nos Processos Políticos e Jurídicos”, in Boaventura de Sousa Santos e João Carlos Trindade, orgs. *Conflito e Transformação Social: Uma Paisagem das Justiças em Moçambique*. Vol 1. Porto: Afrontamento, 2003, p. 106; B. Machava, “State Discourse”, p. 601.

<sup>73</sup> H. Howe, “National Security”, in *Mozambique: A Country Study*, p.281.

<sup>74</sup> J. Veloso, *Memórias em Voo Rasante*, p. 108.

<sup>75</sup> H. Howe, “National Security”, p.281.

The GVPs were created in April 1978 to watch over saboteurs and lazy individuals, in what was designated a “struggle against economic sabotage” in state enterprises.<sup>76</sup> In just a few months, the GVPs were extended to every corner of society, including residential areas, schools, hospitals, and even churches.<sup>77</sup> Membership was voluntary. In July 1978, SNASP estimated that in Maputo province alone there were 456 GVPs with around 17,000 members.<sup>78</sup> In August 1979, during the Second Seminar on Popular Vigilance held in Maputo, SNASP announced proudly that in many factories more than twenty-three percent of workers had joined GVPs, and in some factories more than fifty-percent had volunteered.<sup>79</sup> One year later, the security agency claimed that 300,000 citizens were actively involved in GVPs across the country.<sup>80</sup> Although these statistics need to be treated with caution given the general tendency by government officials to inflate numbers for propaganda purposes or to impress the party leadership,<sup>81</sup> these figures are indicative of the level of participation of ordinary people in the efforts to police each other and provide information to SNASP about enemy actions.

Volunteers to GVPs were often the lowest ranking workers. In residential areas, only people with “free time to spend” joined the groups, as membership often entailed frequent weekly meetings, night shifts, attending calls for help in cases of emergency, chasing petty criminals and settling disputes between neighbors or relatives.<sup>82</sup> Like GDs, however, the GVPs were an attractive forum for people seeking respectability, power, and influence. As members of the lowest party-state apparatus, the GVPs, like their colleagues in the GDs and militias, had advantages in getting rationing cards. As widely reported in newspapers and fictionalized in Mozambique’s popular novels, sometimes these local party-state agents took leading positions as organizers of lines for shops, bakeries, or water fountains in the *bairros*, which allowed them to be the first in line or to put their acquaintances in the front.<sup>83</sup> In the context of chronic shortages, these little things often

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<sup>76</sup> “Implantada a criação dos Grupos de Vigilância”, *Tempo*, 404, 2 Jul. 1978.

<sup>77</sup> “Rezar... Sim, mas vigilantes”, *Tempo*, 23 Dez. 1984.

<sup>78</sup> “Grupos de Vigilância integram milhares de pessoas”, *Tempo*, 410, 13 Ago. 1978.

<sup>79</sup> “Colocar o inimigo na defensiva passiva”, *Tempo*, 460, 5 Ago. 1979.

<sup>80</sup> “5º Aniversário do SNASP: Impermeabilidade contra o inimigo”, *Tempo*, 19 Ago. 19 Out. 1980.

<sup>81</sup> B. Egero, *Moçambique*, p. 119.

<sup>82</sup> Interview: Azarias Tivana, Maxaquene, Maputo, 13 Jan. 2015.

<sup>83</sup> “5º Aniversário do SNASP: Grupos de Vigilância, a segurança do povo”, *Tempo*, 522, 12 Out. 1980. For a fictionalized depiction of these groups, see Mia Couto, “O Apocalipse privado do tio Geguê” in *Cada Homem é uma Raça*. 3 ed. Lisboa: Caminho, 1990, p. 33; and Suleiman Cassamo, “Teresa, tu vai mbunhar”, in *O Regresso do Morto*. Lisboa: Caminho, 1997.

determined which families got access to food and water and which had to sleep with empty bellies. At the same time, it was from these voluntary vigilantes that the state gathered its intelligence and kept a permanent eye on the enemies of the revolutionary morality.



Fig. 17. “Vigilance is the task of all the people.” March of vigilantes in Maputo on the 5th Anniversary of GVPs, October 10, 1982. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

Frelimo counted with the assistance of experts from the DGR and the Soviet Union to set up the GVPs. However, denunciatory practices – though not in this massive scale – were not new in Mozambique. The Portuguese secret police, PIDE, also relied on secret informants to detect anti-colonial activities during the liberation war.<sup>84</sup> However, unlike the Portuguese regime or the GDR, Frelimo’s government made no major secrets about the workings of its intelligence services and its network of informants.<sup>85</sup> Volunteers to the GVPs were handed forms to fill in front of their colleagues and neighbors. Some received a badge to wear.<sup>86</sup> Vigilantism was not a secret activity, but a very public undertaking. And instructions on how to collect intelligence and denounce

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<sup>84</sup> See Dalila Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS na Guerra Colonial, 1961-1974*. Lisboa: Terramar, 2004.

<sup>85</sup> In fact, the party had to soothe the public that the government was not reviving the infamous colonial secret police, but was creating a “revolutionary” and popular service. See “Grupos de Vigilância: As experiências do passado são uma fonte de inspiração”, *Tempo*, 414, 10 Set. 1978.

<sup>86</sup> “Grupos de Vigilância: Aprovados os documentos que traçam objectivos e programas”, *Tempo*, 421, 29 Out. 1978.

suspects were not given in private. The instructions were handed over in the open, published in newspapers, read in radio news hours, and discussed in public meetings.<sup>87</sup> Vigilantism was thus a very public and often intimate practice.

For instance, in January 1978, SNASP published an “appeal” to all citizens to double their vigilance against the infiltration of enemies. The agency instructed citizens to be more attentive in places of mass gathering, such as markets, bus stops, cinemas, restaurants, concert halls, etc. In residential areas, citizens were instructed to look out for “strange behavior” and report to authorities (the local GDs or the nearest police station). Special attention was to be had with “people who cause agitation, make exaggerated noise and other acts of insolence in public.”<sup>88</sup> Armed with the Council of Minister’s 1977 document *Como Age o Inimigo* (see chapter 2), SNASP officials held meetings with workers and residents to instruct them about how to detect the enemy.<sup>89</sup> Workers and residents were reminded that the enemy lived among them. “Vigilance must begin in your households and in places where you spend time”, said one SNASP official in a meeting with residents of bairro Chamanculo in Maputo in 1979. The enemies, he continued, “live among the people, eat with the people, and play with the people.”<sup>90</sup> Residents were instructed to reinforce their vigilance and pay close attention on the conduct of their neighbors and relatives, and inform authorities about any suspicious behavior.<sup>91</sup> The ambiguity of these instructions left ample room for independent interpretations of what a suspicious behavior could be or look like. As I argued elsewhere, Frelimo’s definitions of crime and enmity indiscriminately politicized social behavior.<sup>92</sup> Many members of the GVPs, including professional agents of SNASP, took advantage of this ambiguity to pursue personal interests.

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<sup>87</sup> “Vigilância Popular: Forças de Defesa e Segurança reúnem-se com as populações de Maputo”, *Tempo*, 477, 2 Dez. 1979.

<sup>88</sup> “SNASP: Apelo a todos os cidadãos”, *Tempo*, 378, 1 Jan. 1978.

<sup>89</sup> “Grupos de Vigilância: Estudar a actuação inimiga”, *Tempo*, 444, 15 Abr. 1979.

<sup>90</sup> “Intensificar a vigilância para a defesa das nossas conquistas”, *Tempo*, 446, 29 Abr. 1979.

<sup>91</sup> “Grupos de Vigilância reúnem-se em Maputo”, *Tempo*, 489, 24 Fev. 1980.

<sup>92</sup> B. Machava, “State Discourse.”



Fig. 18. A SNASP officer instructing the masses on vigilance. Headquarters of the GVPs. Maputo, April 1980. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

Although a certain level of scrutiny was conducted to select volunteers, the GVPs, like the militias or GDS, were often “infiltrated” by opportunists and in many cases petty criminals who used the badge to pursue agendas of their own.<sup>93</sup> The same is true for the professional ranks of paid SNASP agents.<sup>94</sup> The “infiltration” of “dishonest” people in the GVPs was so widespread that in 1980, during the *Ofensiva*, president Machel urged them to “purify their ranks.”<sup>95</sup> After a surprise visit to the headquarters of SNASP in February 1980, which was preceded by an investigation about corruption in the agency by a special team appointed by the president, Machel criticized the agency for rampant “illegalities” (*ilegalidades*) and abuses of power (*abuso de poder*). By the end of the *Ofensiva* in 1982, 400 agents were purged from SNASP. Many were condemned to reeducation.<sup>96</sup> As it turned out, no one was immune in the denunciation craze,

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<sup>93</sup> This was the inspiration for Mia Couto’s character Geguê in *Cada Homem é uma Raça*. See also “Milícias e Abusos”, *Tempo*, 26 Ago 1984.

<sup>94</sup> MHN – “Detidos dois cadastrados que se intitulavam do SNASP”, *Notícias*, 24 Abr. 1980.

<sup>95</sup> MHN – “Reforcemos a vigilância popular”, *Notícias*, 6 Fev. 1980

<sup>96</sup> “Ofensiva Política e Organizacional: 400 elementos expulsos em dois anos do Ministério da Segurança (SNASP)”, *Tempo*, 20 Fev. 1982.

including agents of the intelligence services. As SNASP chief and Minister of Security, Jacinto Veloso reported in 1982, the Cabinet for Discipline and Control of his ministry received “many letters including phone calls” from citizens denouncing agents of SNASP for “improper conduct” and “abuse of power.” Veloso asserted that, after investigations, his cabinet found out that most of the “information” about the corruption of his agents was “true.” Among several crimes, SNASP agents used their badges to dupe citizens for personal gain and to arrest and send to reeducation camps innocent people out of personal scores.<sup>97</sup>

Beto Tembe and his wife were victims of this kind of abuse of power.<sup>98</sup> Beto Tembe was sent to reeducation in 1976 by a SNASP agent who wanted to sleep with his wife. The agent, whom Beto named Inoque, accused his wife of being a prostitute. When Beto intervened, he was arrested as an “agent of sexual corruption” and the couple was taken to a police station. After a few weeks in police custody, Beto was shipped to Sacudzo reeducation camp in Sofala. When he finally returned home in 1978, no record of his case existed in the police station where he was initially kept. Beto’s wife died a few years later. Beto suspected that her death was related to the relationship that the SNASP agent forced her into. This was just one of the many ways in which party-state officials used their positions of power and the ambiguity of the party’s discourse on enemies to pursue their own agendas. But state officials were not the only people who took advantage of this ambiguity. The case of Domingos Bila illustrates the pervasiveness of individual manipulation of the state discourse on enemies.

In June 1978, Mr. Domingos Bila wrote a letter to “his excellency” the governor of Maputo province to “denounce Mr. Jossiane Guambe”, allegedly a former PIDE agent.<sup>99</sup> Like most letters addressed to political authorities, Mr. Bila’s followed the highly bureaucratic and formal norms of addressing the state introduced by the Portuguese colonial regime. He wrote in the official 25-line application sheet (*folha de requerimento de 25 linhas*) with appropriate seals glued to the paper and signed (filing the letter of denunciation might have cost him a good sum of money). The striking thing about this case is that Mr. Bila was not denouncing somebody he vaguely knew. The particulars of the putative PIDE agent that he compiled in his letter indicate the level of intimacy

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<sup>97</sup> MHN – “Resultados da Ofensiva no SNASP”, *Notícias*, 22 Fev. 1982; MHN – “Purificação de fileiras na Segurança”, *Notícias*, 22 Fev. 1982; MHN – “Purge of security forces”, *Africa*, 124, December 1981, p. 39.

<sup>98</sup> Interview: Beto Tembe, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015. Beto passed away few months after our interview.

<sup>99</sup> AGGPM/Administração do 2º Bairro, ao Gabinete do Governador Provincial. Confidencial. Maputo, 17 Junho 1978.



of his denunciation. His letter included the exact number of Guambe's identification document, his original place of birth, his past and "current" professional occupation, and the exact addresses of his past and "current" residency. It is as if Mr. Bila had a complete curriculum of the denounced on his table when he composed his letter. According to him, Guambe was a native of Jangamo in Inhambane province. His ID number was 382358. He first resided in Bairro Inhagóia, and was then living in block G of Bairro Benfíca. He was an itinerant seller of *mulala* (*euclea natalensis* – a black root used as a toothbrush). Mr. Bila also accused Guambe of selling "soruma - dangerous drugs for the people."

A true revolutionary citizen speaks in the language of revolutionaries. As Aminda Smith puts it, in socialist regimes, subjects learned to speak "to the state in its own language."<sup>100</sup> And Mr. Bila made sure that his letter was populated with the appropriate revolutionary vocabulary in fashion. He called his victim a "great speculator", to suggest that his trade in *mulala* was fraudulent. He also called him an "opportunist" and a "traitor of the interests of the people." The most serious accusation was that Guambe was a colleague of Chico Feio. And here is where he caught the attention of the authorities. Chico Feio was the infamous torturer of detainees under PIDE custody and renowned for his sadism. He symbolized the most heinous features of the enemy. The name of the cartoon figure *Xiconhoca* was coined after him.<sup>101</sup> Mr. Bila's reference of Chico Feio led authorities to assume that Guambe could *de facto* have been Chico's "colleague" not in the broader sense that both worked for PIDE, but that they were close friends (Chico Feio also lived in Bairro Inhagóia, where he suffered a brutal death at the hands of a mob as soon as the colonial regime fell).<sup>102</sup> Given the gravity of Mr. Bila's allegations, governor José Moiane dispatched two SNASP officers to investigate the case.<sup>103</sup>

Following the detailed information provided by Mr. Bila, the two officers located the residency of Guambe at Bairro Benfíca and interrogated him. In their report to the governor, the two investigators noted that the inquiry had not revealed "anything significant", but the "subject is hiding something" and investigations had to continue until evidence was found that Guambe was a "dangerous" *comprometido* whose place was a reeducation camp.<sup>104</sup> The fact that Mr. Bila

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<sup>100</sup> A. Smith, *Thought Reform*, p. 129.

<sup>101</sup> See M.P. Meneses, "Xiconhoca, o Inimigo."

<sup>102</sup> On Xico Feio, see, among many others, M. Mboa, *Memórias da Luta Clandestina*, p. 127.

<sup>103</sup> In every provincial administration there was a local SNASP department under the tutelage of the governor.

<sup>104</sup> AGGPM/Distrito de Maputo, Administração do 2o Bairro. Informação. Maputo, 6 Março 1978.

was himself a trader in *mulala* did not raise any suspicion about the real motives of his denunciation. It may well be that Guambe had been a PIDE agent and Mr. Bila was acting from a sense of duty in denouncing him. But other than the very detailed information about his victim's biography, his two-page long letter – handwritten in broken Portuguese – contained nothing objective about Guambe's activities as a PIDE agent. Instead, it had more on Guambe's speculative trade in *mulala*, which was also his own trade. That the two men knew each other very well is evident.

We do not have access to the archives of SNASP or the Ministry of the Interior yet – which were the main destinations of written denunciations – but it is not hard to imagine how letters like the one filled by Mr. Bila kept SNASP officers busy. We do not know the circumstances under which the interrogation of Guambe took place and the conclusion of the case. But the report to the governor by the two investigators indicates clearly that Mr. Bila's words were taken at face value. After all, his was the voice of the people, the source of revolutionary truth. The party leadership constantly recommended security officers to listen to the people.<sup>105</sup>

*The “lapse” of Comrade Francisco Macuvelo: A Compelling Case of Public Denunciation*

In late 1978, Frelimo issued an order for all the *comprometidos* to confess their past of collaboration with the Portuguese. Every *comprometido* was to produce a short biography detailing how he or she teamed up with the enemy. Together with a photograph, the biography was to be stuck on a designated wall in the confessor's place of work or residency.<sup>106</sup> At the same time, in every working unit and residential area, the *Grupos Dinamizadores* were to hold confession sessions in which the *comprometidos* were to come forth and reveal their past. The explanation Frelimo authorities gave for the confession exercise was that, by denouncing themselves, people would be free from blackmail from colleagues and other people who knew about their compromising past (Mr. Bila's letter was one of such cases). Frelimo authorities assured everyone that no consequence would come from the self-confessions.<sup>107</sup> However, since the meeting in

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<sup>105</sup> “Segurança: Do povo, para o povo, com o povo”, *Tempo*, 30 Maio 1982.

<sup>106</sup> “Afixar até dia 15 lista de elementos comprometidos: Comunicado do secretariado do CC da FRELIMO”, *Tempo*, 427, 10 Dez. 1978

<sup>107</sup> MHN – J. Ross, “Mozambican re-education camps raise rights questions”

Mocuba in November 1975, the party had called on the people to be vigilant against the *comprometidos* and that they should not be allowed to join the GDs or hold any position in the party-state structures.<sup>108</sup> Although the persecutions of the *comprometidos* had stopped by 1978, Frelimo did not change its policy regarding those who collaborated with the Portuguese. The assurance that no consequence would come from the self-confession campaign and the rogues' gallery was only partially true. The widely publicized case of Uria Simango and the show trial of Frelimo dissidents in Nachingwea in 1975 was still very fresh in people's minds.<sup>109</sup> Many confessors were sent to reeducation camps after revealing their dark pasts in these sessions. Those who did not go to a camp were either expelled from the government and the party or transferred to the provinces and placed in subaltern positions in state farms or remote district administrations.<sup>110</sup> Although most people seemed to have sensed that the party was not being honest and did not confess, many others came forth and poured out their confessions of guilt. Some people confessed out of fear that others would denounce them. Others seem to have believed in the liberating power of confession and thought that the party was being sincere.

In any case, the confession campaign – styled as a miniature of the Chinese rituals of public shaming endowed with a revivalist flair – gave ordinary people bountiful opportunities to pursue personal agendas and settle old conflicts with their rivals in places of employment. A report from a confession session of the *Grupo Dinamizador* of the administration of Maputo province gives us an inside view of how these sessions were conducted. Most importantly, they reveal the works of denunciation within a small community of colleagues who had been working together for over a decade before independence.

On October 21, 1978, the GD of the cabinet of the Governor of Maputo Province met to carry out the “denunciation of those who belonged to the puppet organizations”, namely the PIDE/DGS, OPVDC, ANP, GE, GEP, GUMO, and others. The GD comprised all members of the staff of the provincial administration, most of whom worked there since the mid 1960s. The session

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<sup>108</sup> “Recomendações de Mocuba na prática: infiltrações no partido denunciadas em Tete”, *Tempo*, 240, 4 Maio 1975; “República de Moçambique: A primeira ofensiva”, *Tempo*, 252, 3 Ago. 1975.

<sup>109</sup> On the Nachingwea show trial, see Benedito Machava, “Reeducation Camps and the Messianic Ethos of Mozambique’s Socialism: Preliminary Notes on a Work in Progress”, forthcoming.

<sup>110</sup> MHN – David Ottaway, “Chinese-Style Public Shaming: Subtle Mozambican Force Used on Ex-Collaborators”, *International Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1979.

was chaired by the secretary of the GD, *camarada* Paulino Langa.<sup>111</sup> Comrade Langa began by explicating the goals of the meeting, and asserted that the session was part of the revolutionary transformation underway in Mozambique, a process in which “all the people of Mozambique are called out to be truthful.” He told his colleagues that the meeting had to be conducted within the “spirit of criticism-unity-criticism.” The session was to be a clinical endeavor and was going to be a painful one. “We are going to scrape the crust of the wound to bleed so that the blood can circulate”, he said. As a proficient GD secretary aspiring to new heights in the party hierarchy, the iconic lexicon of president Machel was at the tip of his tongue. He then urged his colleagues to come forth and confess their collaboration with the “puppet organizations” and provide details on how they teamed up with the Portuguese against the liberation struggle. He also asked those who knew about the past of their colleagues to denounce them but in a very careful way to avoid the wrongful accusation of people who were not compromised people. He assured everyone that nobody would be detained for confessing, but not confessing could have grave consequences.

As soon as the secretary gave the word to the audience, one Salvador Bazima stood up and confessed. “I will tell you comrades, very sure of what I am saying”, he began, “I am one of the oldest Civil Administration officials and as such we all know, in a general way, Civil Administration officials consciously and unconsciously served colonialism. This is the truth.” Comrade Bazima went on to narrate in minute detail how he joined the OPVDC in 1968 and then the ANP. He concluded by saying that, as a compromised one, he accepted the transformation that Frelimo required of all cadres and he welcomed his integration for the reconstruction of the country.

After Bazima’s narrative, secretary Langa congratulated him for being honest and urged others in the room to follow his example. When nobody seemed inclined to speak, comrade Torres Nhamitambo stood up and said that their colleague Francisco Macuvele had told him in private that there were many *comprometidos* in the administration, among them secretary Langa himself (who had allegedly been a PIDE agent). Comrade Katumbianga also stood up and corroborated Nhamitambo’s point that Macuvele had denounced secretary Langa and two other members of the GD, Rodolfo Nogueira and Sansão Tamele.

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<sup>111</sup> AGGPM/Acta da Reunião do Grupo Dinamizador do Governo da Província do Maputo. Agenda: Denúncia dos que pertenceram às organizações fantoches (PIDE/DGS, OPVDC, GE, GEP, GUMO, etc.), 21 Outubro 1978.



Fig. 19. Meeting of the GD of Maputo's Municipal Road Services (SMV). Maputo, July 1978. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

Here is where the session lost its initial serenity and revealed the entangled nature of work relationships in revolutionary Mozambique, and the nature of the politics of denunciation. The accusations of secretary Langa caused murmurs inside the room, and Francisco Bechardas and Torres Nhamitambo had to take the reins of the meeting from Langa, who seemed agitated. Bechardas called on comrade Macuvele to speak up and say in public what he had said in private. Macuvele stood up and, in broken Portuguese, narrated how secretary Langa was connected with the Portuguese secret police. He claimed that Langa was often visited by a *mulungu*, a white man, in the administration building. Macuvele claimed that he knew that the *mulungu* worked for PIDE because he used to take administrative paperwork from the colonial administrator of Lourenço Marques to the headquarters of the secret police. He had asked Langa what business he had with “that” *mulungu*, and Langa had told him that he had a chore to fix “stuff in the *mulungu*’s house.” (In fact, it was common for African clerks to supplement their meager salaries with other informal jobs as carpenters, plumbers, etc.<sup>112</sup>) Macuvele claimed that Langa had orchestrated a coup against

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<sup>112</sup> See A. Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*.

the previous secretary of the GD, who was sacked (and possibly sent to reeducation) accused of being a former PIDE agent. In Macuvele's estimation, Langa was behind the sacking of the former secretary to take up his post.

After the details on Langa's compromising situation, Macuvele provided details about the other two *comprometidos*. He said that comrade Rodolfo Nogueira, a white man who served as personal secretary to the governor, had joined the white rebellion during the violent events of September 7, 1974 in Lourenço Marques. He claimed to have heard that Nogueira had a Portuguese flag in his car which he hid under his seat. As to Sansão Tamele, the denouncer said that he was a member of the ANP. When comrade Torres Nhamitambo pressed Macuvele to prove how he knew of Tamele's association with the ANP, the denouncer claimed that he saw every list with the names of the people who payed quotas for the fascist party, and Tamele was one of them. "I was the doorkeeper of the building of the district administration", he insisted, "and no one could enter the general office, so it was I who took the papers in." Comrade Nhamitambo was impressed, and hailed Macuvele for being such an exemplary vigilant citizen even before the fall of colonialism and the triumphal arrival of Frelimo in the capital city. This was proof of his farsightedness and political consciousness. "After all, Macuvele has always been vigilant since colonial times", he claimed, "He knew it would happen!"

Macuvele was allowed to sit down amid praises that made him feel proud. Comrade Nhamitambo – who had now taken the position of chairman – stood up and declared that the situation was grave and urged the accused to speak for themselves and confess. To him, the evidence was clear. "We would like to invite comrade secretary Langa whom we now consider an infiltrated agent belonging to PIDE/DGS to stand up", he said. "We are all conscious that the situation is very serious, aren't we? He was denounced", he continued, "we are now going to ask comrade secretary to describe his activities as a PIDE agent. This is very pitiable."

The now disgraced secretary stood up and tried to keep himself together. He initially spoke calmly, trying to preserve the serenity of his opening remarks. "I am very pleased indeed", he began, "that we are finally identifying many PIDE agents. It is indeed unfortunate that others are still holding back and don't want to confess." He then denied any connection with PIDE or any other "puppet organizations." He claimed that the *mulungu* that Macuvele saw was a debt collector who worked for Dr. Sobral – a renowned attorney in Lourenço Marques – whom Langa owed some money after having been represented in a dispute over his property. "I did not know that he

worked for PIDE”, he said, “if he was a PIDE agent or not, only Macuvele can say.” Langa’s defense, which seemed to be going well, quickly derailed when he attacked Macuvele and counter-accused him of having taken money from passport fees paid by people who were trying to leave the country. This happened, he claimed, when many people, mostly white settlers, were busily trying to leave the newly liberated country. His speech – so faithfully transcribed in the meeting minutes – denotes his nervousness as it became incoherent. Noting his pivoting, Comrade Bechardas intervened and reminded him that the session was about the *comprometidos* and not about “petty intrigues.” He urged the secretary to speak the truth and confess. Langa recomposed himself and declared that he never collaborated with the Portuguese. “You can carry out investigations and if you find out that I belonged to PIDE you can cut my head off”, he spurted.

Macuvele stood up again and insisted that the white man Langa was often consorting with was not a collector but a PIDE agent. One comrade Maria Lubrino raised her hand and said that as a long time employee in the administration and a doorkeeper, Macuvele was speaking the truth. Macuvele seemed to have the scenario perfectly orchestrated and it focused on the secretary of the GD. The other accused members were also in muddy waters. Macuvele seemed to have convinced the self-constituted jury that the very organizers of the confession session were agents of the enemy infiltrated in the state apparatus.

However, the convincing narrative that Macuvele composed revealed cracks when he was pressed on the particulars of one of his colleagues whom he accused of being a member of the ANP. The acting chairman who had just praised Macuvele for his revolutionary zeal actually raised the question. Nhamitambo asked Macuvele in which year he saw Sansão Tamele’s name in the list of payers of the ANP’s quotas; in which department did Tamele work; and if they ever worked together before independence. The accuser was not sure. He said he worked in the administration with Tamele “ a long time ago” (*há muito tempo*). Nhamitambo asked whether he saw Tamele before or after the fall of the Portuguese. “It was before the Coup d’état in Portugal”, he replied, suggesting that he knew of Tamele’s alignment with the Portuguese before April 1974.

Here is where Macuvele’s story fell apart. All the senior employees raised their hands and said that Sansão Tamele was not employed in the district administration of Lourenço Marques before 1975 simply because he did not live in the Maputo area. “I only met Sansão in 1975”, said one Jerónimo Macassa, “before that he was in Zambézia, Tete, Inhambane, and he started working here on May 1975.” Macassa insisted that comrade Macuvele was committing a serious error in

accusing Tamele of being a member of the ANP. Several people joined the chorus of condemnations of Macuvele's flaw. Secretary Langa, who now seemed to be a little relieved, joined in to say that all other accusations that Macuvele made should be taken with caution. And Salvador Bazima, the first and only confessor, added: "from what we hear from comrade Macuvele it looks like he's mistaken. It can be said that he's mistaken." The accuser consented and said that he was indeed mistaken about Tamele. "*Eu estive enganado quando indiquei o camarada Sansão. Não pertenceu à ANP*" (I was mistaken when I pointed to Comrade Sansão. He did not belong to ANP).

The meeting was closed with the following resolution: An investigation was to be carried out about the shady past of secretary Paulino Langa, until then he was suspended from his position in the GD; the governor was to be informed about the case of the confessor Salvador Bazima, and he would decide about the "appropriate measures regarding Bazima"; a new team in the GD had to be formed to carry out the investigation on the cases of Rodolfo Nogueira and Paulino Langa. In the report sent to governor José Moiane in November, the self-appointed committee wrote that "the employees suggested that the [three] elements be integrated in productive units, that is, they should not continue in the state apparatus" (*os trabalhadores propoem que esses elementos sejam integrados nas Unidades Produtivas, isto é, não continuem no Aparelho de Estado.*) The case of Tamele was classified as a "lapse" of Macuvele's memory.<sup>113</sup>

What are we to make of this case? It is obvious that Macuvele made up his story. His accusations were not animated by his revolutionary zeal as some of his superior colleagues believed. As it turned out, Macuvele had a long grievance with Langa and his colleagues who dominated the *Grupo Dinamizador*. All three people he accused of collaboration were high-ranking civil servants, whose education and command of Portuguese gave them great advantages when Frelimo took power. During the chaotic period of transition, Macuvele seemed to have flourished under Francisco Langa, the sacked secretary of the GD who was replaced by Paulino Langa. Under the former secretary, Macuvele controlled the coffers of the administration and made a little fortune for himself. The new secretariat under Paulino Langa shut off his milking cow. As the party was moving towards placing more qualified cadres in important positions in the public sector – after the tumultuous phase of voluntarism between 1974 and 1977 in which anyone was

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<sup>113</sup> AGGPM/Grupo Dinamizador de Gabinete o Governador Provincial do Maputo, Relatório. Maputo, 3 Nov. 1978



put in charge regardless of qualifications – Macuvele saw no possibility to improve his position given his lack of formal education. By denouncing Paulino Langa and his colleagues, Macuvele was trying to kill two birds with one stone. He expected to get rid of the people who dried out his fountain of illegal money and possibly take one of their positions in the GD, where political allegiance and committed vigilantism was still favored compared to academic qualifications. Despite the incoherence of his testimony, which crumbled under close inspection, Macuvele succeeded in his efforts. Paulino Langa and Rodolfo Nogueira were suspended, and later on sent to reeducation camps.<sup>114</sup>

Cases like these were rampant in the public administration. They were also prevalent in residential areas. The pipeline of reeducation and labor camps was fed by these kinds of intimate accusations among ordinary people, which were motivated by personal intrigues rather than any commitment to the socialist revolution. Frelimo's reformist campaigns and moralist discourses provided a platform for people to pursue agendas of their own. Macuvele was one among thousands of civil servants who found a utilitarian crack in the larger politics of reformism to get rid of personal enemies. This state of things reached higher heights during anti-urban cleanup campaigns, in which the “murmurs” and ‘roars’ of popular vigilantes grew louder.

### *People's Vigilance, People's Voices*

The enthusiasm with which citizens welcomed their role as vigilantes can be seen from the staggering number of people who volunteered to join the GVPs, as well as in the number of people detained during police round ups. In a political culture of transparency in which most operations were done in the open and the results widely showcased in the media, we do not need classified documents to see the works of the GVPs and the role of ordinary citizens in providing information for the cleanup campaigns.

When the police launched another operation against black marketeers and undocumented vagrants in June 1982 to provide labor to the newly created *green belts*, the editor of *Notícias* dispatched reporters to hear public sentiment and inquire how citizens could help the authorities

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<sup>114</sup> AGGPM/Acta da Reunião do Grupo Dinamizador do Governo da Província do Maputo. Agenda: Denúncia dos que pertenceram às organizações fantoches (PIDE/DGS, OPVDC, GE, GEP, GUMO, etc.), 21 Outubro 1978.

in such a “noble” task. “Vigilance must begin in our own homes”, said one forty-nine-year-old vendor in Xipamanine market named Alberto Napore. In tune with the party line, he added that “the unemployed must be forced to work” in state farms because “if they continue to live in the city they can easily be won by the enemy.” Another interviewee, thirty-year-old Romeu Valente, declared: “we must begin vigilance in our neighbor’s house because we know that these criminals are infiltrated in our midst.”<sup>115</sup> Laurinda Macuácuá, a housewife of forty-three years of age living in Bairro Inhagóia also had few words to say: “each resident in the bairro must watch the way of life of his neighbor.” Bernardino Xavier, aged forty-three, also suggested that residents had to sharpen their gazes over their neighbors houses and search for vagrants in their own families. “We must be vigilant”, he said, “we must define and analyze the life of our neighbors and our relatives as well.” Xavier had more in his arsenal. He claimed that Maputo residents were also to be blamed for the increasing problem of vagrancy and unemployment. “We are also responsible because we send for our country relatives without any occupation, only to come and increase the rate of unemployment.” Twenty-three-year-old Francisco Nhantumbo, a bartender living in Laulane, was more cutting: “we don’t need these elements in our city.” And suggested: “in the [GD] meetings we must analyze the life of each resident in the bairro. It’s during these gatherings that we have to denounce everybody that we suspect.”<sup>116</sup>

It may well be that these random citizens were reproducing verbatim discourses they heard on the radio, read in the papers, or discussed in public meetings. Like Mr. Bila, they were also speaking in the language of the revolutionary state. But theirs were not simple sentiments with no consequences. The demography of reeducation camps – which I examine in detail in chapter 5 – indicates that citizens like Alberto Napore, Bernardino Xavier, Laurinda Macuácuá, and Francisco Nhantumbo meant business. In June 1982, during the same police operation mentioned above, members of the GD of Bairro Inhagóia and Bairro Luís Cabral in Maputo – who were not named in the news report – called on the police to “go clean the vagrants” who “lived in the clover, spending the day drinking or sleeping” in their bairros.<sup>117</sup> A police brigade arrived at dawn and knocked on designated houses. According to the news report, the police knew exactly which house

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<sup>115</sup> “Enviar marginais para Zonas Verdes”, *Notícias*, 4 Jun. 1982.

<sup>116</sup> “Enviar marginais para Zonas Verdes”, *Notícias*, 8 Jun. 1982.

<sup>117</sup> “Nos bairros Luís Cabral e Inhagóia: PPM estende rede de limpeza de marginais. 32 vadios e oito criminosos detidos”, *Notícias*, 22 Jun. 1982.

to target. The night round yielded 40 arrests. When the reporter asked the un-named authority about the reasons for the detention of the 40 residents of the two bairros, he replied: “*é claro que essas pessoas à noite vão roubar casas alheias*” (of course these people are going to rob other people’s houses at night).

The denouncers knew that regardless of their guilt or innocence, their unwanted neighbors would certainly be condemned for reeducation. As the reporter observed, of the 40 detainees sent to the police station, only 5 were identified as “criminals.” He also noted that in that “selective campaign” the police detained “hundreds of individuals” who were “not criminals” but “individuals accused of vagrancy (*vadiagem*).” Most detainees, the reporter wrote, “were undesirable individuals denounced by the people.” As the police officer in charge of the operation told the reporter: “during the early hours of the morning, the [police] vehicle brigade runs through the various streets of the city’s neighborhoods looking for the residencies of undesirable individuals indicated by the population.” It is unclear whether the denouncers joined the police brigade to help them identify the targeted houses, as was often the case. Some of the residents in Inhagóia interviewed by the *Notícias* reporter, who must have been among the people who called on the police, declared: “we don’t want these individuals in our neighborhoods. Wherever they hide, we will indicate their den to the police. We want to do away with all the vagrants.”<sup>118</sup> Convinced of the righteousness of the cleanup campaigns, reporters covered several similar cases with the same transparency.

As in other campaigns since the launching of the *Ofensiva* in 1980, the detainees of Inhagóia and Luis Cabral were sent to Maputo People’s Tribunal, where judge João Trindade pronounced their sentence. They were all condemned to serve up to two years in reeducation camps in northern Mozambique, after which they were to be sent to state farms. The judge told the reporter that, “although those vagrants were not accused of any crimes, they are on the margins of society, and their danger is accentuated because they do not have a means of subsistence.”<sup>119</sup> After the launching of the *Ofensiva*, this was the kind of juridical proceeding that got thousands of people condemned for reeducation. As I noted in chapter 3, after the launching of the *Ofensiva* in 1980,

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<sup>118</sup> “Nos bairros Luís Cabral e Inhagóia: PPM estende rede de limpeza de marginais. 32 vadios e oito criminosos detidos”, *Notícias*, 22 Jun. 1982.

<sup>119</sup> “Nos bairros Luís Cabral e Inhagóia: PPM estende rede de limpeza de marginais. 32 vadios e oito criminosos detidos”, *Notícias*, 22 Jun. 1982.

sentences for reeducation had to be pronounced by a judge after a “proper” trial. But these were often hasty trials. Compelled to deliver justice in a timely manner, judges could not keep the pace with the number of detainees brought to the courts by the police. Sometimes the trials – like almost everything else – took place in the open, with judges delivering sentences for hundreds of detainees in just one day in the market place.<sup>120</sup> Although the *Ofensiva* was meant to put an end the extra-legal detentions, it did not resolve the contradictions of a justice system based on a moralistic understanding of wrongdoing. In his deliberations, judge Trindade was not employing any penal juridical code formally elaborated by the state. He was following the same unwritten moral codes that animated the extra-judicial phase of the round-ups before the *Ofensiva*. Vagrants were not criminals, he agreed, but they were living “on the margins of society” and therefore a threat to social order. In this and all other juridical proceedings involving the urban undesirable, it was the potential of urban disorder that stood trial and was condemned for banishment, not an actual crime (see Chapter 3).



*Fig. 20. Residents celebrating after a meeting on people's vigilance. Maputo, 1980. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

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<sup>120</sup> See chapter 3.

Because most people accused of vagrancy were informal and self-employed workers with no papers, they could not prove their worth as urban citizens of equal merit. With a justice system in which offenders had no defense advocates, going to the court was almost half way to a reeducation camp. In many cases, beginning in 1980, arrested “vagrants” were tried in so-called *tribunais populares* or People’s courts in their neighborhoods. Members of the local GDs, including selected *chefes de quarteirão*, leaders of GVPs, representatives of local branches of OMM and OJM constituted the jury of these tribunals. Selected by the party among the most respected members of their community, these judges had very limited exposure to legal procedures and edicts. They were largely “instructed to apply good sense in deciding disputes and dealing with minor infractions.”<sup>121</sup> Legal scholars working in Mozambique at the time of the revolution hailed the “truly popular nature” of these courts and the revolutionary justice delivered by “barefoot judges in the shade of a cashew tree.”<sup>122</sup> But the premises of these courts, the use of “good sense” and the predominance of unwritten moral rules, gave ample room for injustices as the sentences were largely influenced by the watching crowds who often rose to testify on the cases. In an environment in which anti-vagrancy and xenophobic sentiments were rampant, and in which the accused were denounced by their neighbors – some of whom sometimes sat at the jury table – made these courts an arena of struggle ruled by extra-legal proceedings and by popular moods.

Although these courts might have been effective in dealing with cases involving divorce, *lobolo* and polygamy, they were largely feeble in delivering justice in cases of vagrancy, prostitution, or any case during cleanup campaigns. In these occasions, the moods of local residents dictated the fate of defendants. In October 1982, twelve young men stood trial in the people’s court of Bairro Chamanculo accused of vagrancy. The police officer who instructed the process declared that the defendants “had the habit of staying home during the day and of going out at night.” This was often the “evidence” provided to police authorities by local vigilantes and the cause of detention. In this particular case, the *chefes de quarteirão* who called on the police to arrest the twelve “vagrants” did not attend the trial, and local residents testified in favor of ten defendants who were set free. The other two, who did not find any sympathetic soul among the attending

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<sup>121</sup> J. Tarter, “Government and Politics”, p. 199; “Justiça Popular em debate”, *Tempo*, 413, 3 Set. 1978.

<sup>122</sup> A. Sachs and G. H. Welch, *Liberating the Law*, p. 55.

crowd, were pronounced guilty and sentenced for “six months to three years of reeducation to be served in a camp indicated by the Ministry of the Interior.”<sup>123</sup> Before the *Ofensiva* all the twelve defendants would have been sent to a reeducation camp directly from the police station. Now, at least some could escape reeducation. But the whole juridical system crumbled with the launching of Operation Production.

### **Denunciation and Intimate Enmity during Operação Produção**

As I pointed out in chapter 3, unlike previous campaigns, which consisted of unannounced police round ups in designated locations, *Operação Produção* was largely a street-to-street and door-to-door sweeping campaign. And unlike prior short-term campaigns, *Operação Produção* was meant to be a permanent operation, running uninterrupted for about a year (June 1983-May 1984) and intermittently until May 1988. Estimates place the number of people scooped out of all major cities to the countryside at around 100,000, half of which from Maputo alone (see chapter 3). Yet, 100,000 is only the tentative number of those shipped out of the cities, not of those who were arrested and sent to verification and evacuation centers.<sup>124</sup> The few scholarly works on *Operação Produção* often draw a picture in which the party-state appears as the masterful agent, marshaling the victims out of the cities in what is portrayed as an unpopular program.<sup>125</sup> However, the campaign was greeted with cheerful popular support. Those numbers could have not been reached if it were not for the active and enthusiastic participation of ordinary citizens and local authorities. They all played a central role in the campaign, leading the brigades of security forces in the searches and indicating the houses to be targeted and the people to be arrested.

While many people were arrested in public locations, an equal proportion of “unproductive” urbanites were detained at home. The house-to-house search was often done in late hours of the night or even at dawn to find the people unguarded. For most residents targeted by the search brigades, the people who accompanied the police and took them to verification and evacuation centers bore no strange or unfamiliar faces. As Alfredo Langa told me in the Niassa village of Matama, “It was 23:45 when they took me from my house. It was July, and the secretary

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<sup>123</sup> “Tribunais Populares: Democracia na Justiça”, *Tempo*, 17 Out. 1982.

<sup>124</sup> Most of the people arrested during OP were released in the verification centers.

<sup>125</sup> See M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 81; C. Quembro, *Poder do Poder*.

of my neighborhood knew me personally, he knew that I was a handyman.”<sup>126</sup> *Operação Produção* was an intimate campaign carried out by people who knew their victims. The cityscape of Mozambique – particularly the layout of the *bairros* in the *caniço* area, which was reorganized in 1982 – made the task of vigilante citizens a lot easier during the largest of Mozambique’s cleanup campaign.

For anyone who is familiar with the cityscape of Mozambique’s neighborhoods, it is not hard to imagine the ease with which *chefes de quarteirão*, *secretários de bairro*, members of local GVPs, and vigilant residents identified their victims. In all major cities the overwhelming majority of residents lived in the labyrinthine and crowded *bairros* in the unplanned suburban areas. One common feature of these *bairros* – at least until the early 1990s – was the lack of privacy. Sociologists who carried out surveys in Maputo in the 1950s and in the early 1970s were fascinated with the ways in which the overcrowded disposition of the *subúrbios* was in sharp contrast to the secluded and private homesteads in the countryside.



Fig. 21. A resident presenting his papers to a search brigade during *Operação Produção*. Source: *Tempo*, July 1983.

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<sup>126</sup> Interview: Alfredo Langa, Matama, Niassa, 18 May 2015

Coming from rural areas, most residents in the *caniço* area of Maputo built fences to demarcate the perimeter of their households and to protect their animal husbandry (ducks, chickens, and sometimes goats and pigs). Built from discarded materials – corrugated sheet-metal, reed or wooden poles – fences were often used to conceal a family’s poverty from the gazes of passers-by. But this was often an attempt because, despite the fence, residents lived in the open. Building on the survey of Hillary Mitchel conducted in 1957, António Rita-Ferreira pointed out in 1968 that in Lourenço Marques African families could not afford any privacy. “People can hear the conversations of their neighbors and they know a great deal about what happens in their homes”, he wrote. “Family matters are discussed in hubbub, doors and windows are open to the eyes of passers-by.” He concluded that “the fences of reed encircling the backyards seem to be more for defending the house utensils than for privacy.”<sup>127</sup>

A decade later the situation was still the same. The surveyors of Bairro Malhangalane in 1976 observed that most households had a *caniço* built fence (although this was already in the “age of concrete” – as David Morton puts it<sup>128</sup> – unlike the houses which were now mostly built of concrete, fences were still constructed of reed and discarded metal sheets). While better-off families normally had low walls or net fences “which fully exposed the house and its garden”, poor families tried to build higher fences. However, people could still see the household through the fence. More often, the *caniço* or the sheet-metal rotted or rusted, leaving open holes. The surveyors of Malhangalane noted that “people also used [the open holes] for a nice chat with the neighbors.” They came to the conclusion that the fence was “not solely a matter of seeking privacy”, but a way of demarcating one’s backyard perimeters and an attempt at concealing the “poverty of the family” from passers-by.<sup>129</sup>

In a developed country, this feature of suburban households would not have been a serious problem. But in Mozambique, where almost every household activity took place in the front yard outside the house – from cooking to eating, laundry and bathing, to receiving guests – this was a serious predicament. Under such circumstances, it was not easy to conceal secrets. Most homesteads were open to the curious eyes and ears of neighbors, making denunciation a very simple act. Like ordinary Russians who resorted to whispering and keep to themselves in order to

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<sup>127</sup> A. Rita-Ferreira, *Os Africanos de Lourenço Marques*, p. 180.

<sup>128</sup> D. Morton, *Age of Concrete*.

<sup>129</sup> K. Nimpuno et al, *The Malhangalane Survey*, p. 159.



escape the ever present ears of neighbors,<sup>130</sup> many families in Mozambique learned to avoid talking politics.<sup>131</sup> But unlike the Russians, who could try to conceal their secrets inside the thick walls of their apartments, most Mozambican families in the *caniço* lived in the open, exposed to onlookers.

In these conditions, it was not a difficult task for vigilantes to find their victims. A simple round in the *bairro* was enough to provide them with elements to send the police to fetch a suspected resident. Walking in the crooked streets of a neighborhood like Inhagóia, local authorities could easily hear a radio playing; they could see the smoke from the cooking fire and smell the food; they could distinguish nourished faces of children of one household from the hungry ones in the next; or see residents taking a nap under the shade of a mango tree or having drinks during working days. In many cases, such mundane scenes provided enough “evidence” to incriminate individuals. After all, vigilantes were not instructed to investigate and report objective facts, but to denounce based on suspicion. The sound of the radio could serve as proof that the resident was engaged in illegal activities that were harming the national economy, such as smuggling batteries or buying them from *candongueiros*, or even worse, getting them from South Africans in exchange for critical information about Mozambique.<sup>132</sup> My interviewee Carlos Sevene Matsinhe, who was denounced by neighbors in Maputo during *Operação Produção* in 1983, told me that he was a very industrious man. “My family never suffered from hunger because I always provided for them”, he told me in front of his small hut in Unango, Niassa province.<sup>133</sup> From their homes, Matsinhe’s neighbors could see that in his house food was never wanting. Matsinhe was a fisherman, and could exchange the yields of his fishing for foodstuffs. From the perspective of his less fortunate neighbors, Matsinhe could only be employing illegal methods to

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<sup>130</sup> On the Russians’ strategy to avoid public gazes and scrutiny under Stalin, see O. Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia*.

<sup>131</sup> As the famous song *Catchassa* from Gémeos Paruque goes, “ai me lembro que politica era conversa perigosa” (I remember that politics was a dangerous talk).

<sup>132</sup> Since 1979, when the South African regime took over the rebel group MNR from the Rhodesians and transformed it into a well-equipped anti-Frelimo guerilla army, the poor relations between the two countries deteriorated completely. In January 1981, a South African special army brigade drove all the way to Matola and launched an attack on ANC operatives, killing several of them including civilian populations. Frelimo was convinced that such audacious operation could have not happened without the collaboration of Mozambican citizens who provided intelligence about the exact location of the houses where ANC operatives lived. Therefore, any allegation of “collusion” with South Africans was a serious crime, punishable with death under the *Law for Crimes Against the People and the People’s State*. See MHN – “Esmagaremos Qualquer Agressão: Discurso do Camarada Presidente na Praça da Independência”, *Boletim da Célula*, Número Especial, Fevereiro 1981.

<sup>133</sup> Interview: Carlos Sevene Matsinhe and Adelaide Matsolo. Unango, Niassa, 13 June 2015.

provide for his family in a time of tremendous food shortages. In such situations, jealousy prevailed, and was a very powerful tool. Matsinhe's neighbors accused him of selling secrets to South Africans, who rewarded his traitorous acts with foodstuffs. This was all too familiar a story during *Operação Produção*.

In 2015 I interviewed a community of peasants in the rural village of Matama near Lichinga in Niassa. Unlike their counterpart in Unango who were a mix of victims from the reeducation camps and those of *Operação Produção*, the villagers of Matama were all from the 1983 campaign. Each one of them could name the person who pointed the finger to their houses and who were behind their evacuation. Alexandre Jorge told me that one day he had an altercation with the secretary of his bairro in Magoanine in Maputo. The goats of *camarada secretário*, who lived across the street from Jorge's home, went into his *machamba* and ate his beans. He went to the neighbor to demand reparations and the conversation turned into a bitter fight. But the secretary had the upper hand, and when the campaign began he found an opportunity to punish Jorge for the audacity to demand reparations. "I had documents, but the secretary contributed in my evacuation", he said, "when the campaign began, he did not think twice to have me sent here."<sup>134</sup>

Alberto Malate was a *txova* pusher in Maputo, and like most cart pushers he had no working card. But his little business was enough to get him and his little family by. He was pushing his loaded cart when his neighbor pointed the finger towards him, signaling the militias to detain him. "We were neighbors", he said, "the *chefe de quarteirão* was my neighbor, but because I had this little business which was going well he did not like me."<sup>135</sup> It is possible that the *chefe de quarteirão* was simply doing his job and had no particular grievance with Malate. But this is very unlikely for the decision over who got sent away and who stayed often followed a subjective reason related to the kind of personal relations that residents had with their local authorities. We have no way to know whether all the cart pushers of Malate's neighborhood were sent away, but cart pushers did not vanish from Maputo's neighborhoods during or after the campaign. One may be tempted to give little credence to Malate's claim that his neighbor was jealous of his success, but as Adam Smith once argued, the world of human action is moved by moral sentiments, jealousy or envy being one of them.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Group Interview: Alexandre Jorge, Matama, Niassa, 24 May 2015.

<sup>135</sup> Interview: Alberto Malate, Unango, Niassa, 13 June 2015.

<sup>136</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979 [1759].

Most of my interviewees pointed to jealousy from neighbors as the cause of their evacuation from Maputo to Niassa during *Operação Produção*. José Ngovene told me that he was a good student and a talented soccer player in Infulene in Maputo. “Unlike other families who led a precarious life”, he said, “in my family we all went to school and that created resentment in my neighborhood, people saw us as *evoluidos* (evolved).” His fate was sealed when he was coming back from school in August. Instead of getting out in his usual bus stop near his home, he left the bus one stop before to see his girlfriend. “I was seventeen. I saw the GVs, some of them were my neighbors. I was only 500 meters from my home, but they did not let me go to bring my student card. The following day I was in Lichinga.”<sup>137</sup>

People who kept good relations with local authorities often found ways to escape the evacuation. For example, Manuel Cossa was “saved” twice by the secretary of his bairro in Matola. “He knew that I was a good man and twice he sent me back home.” A self-employed painter, Manuel Cossa had no documents. In his third arrest the secretary could not rescue him anymore.<sup>138</sup> In some cases, local authorities protected some people even if they led a wayward lifestyle. In small towns where local authorities seemed to have enjoyed considerable power, the outcome of the campaign was different. Ananias Tivane was the district political commissar in the agricultural township of Chokwé in Gaza province during *Operação Produção*. In charge of the campaign, he solicited his subordinates – the members of the GDs – to produce lists of people to be evacuated from the town. His subordinates produced only one list with five people. As he told me, all the five people were “foreign” women accused of prostitution, among them a school teacher. By foreign he meant outsiders. Tivane himself was an outsider. Although he knew several unemployed people, including youngsters who in his opinion “should have been sent to reeducation”, no native of Chokwé was put in the list. As he put it, “they were using the campaign to get rid of those women for whatever reason. I could not do anything because I was afraid, there is a lot of witchcraft in Chokwé and I didn’t want to upset people.” Powerless, Tivane drove the five women away, while the local “ruffians” were sent to the army and police corps.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Interview: José Afonso Ngovene, Unango, Niassa, 25 June 2015

<sup>138</sup> Interview: Manuel Felix Cossa, Lichinga, 13 May 2015. Manuel is now 80 years old and lives in a shack decorated with Frelimo electoral campaign pamphlets in Lichinga.

<sup>139</sup> Group Interview: Ananias Tivane, Xai-Xai, 14 Dec. 2014

In fact, as many reporters observed during the campaign, to escape evacuation, many people of “doubtful conduct” joined the militias and were involved in the cleanup of “vagrants”, “prostitutes”, and the “unproductive.” Reports from various operative brigades in charge of *Operação Produção* in Maputo acknowledged that the campaign teams had been “infiltrated” by people who had no understanding of the directive guiding the campaign. As one report from the district of Boane to Maputo’s Provincial Operative Commando (COP) observed, many officials in charge of carrying out the operation “don’t know about the existence of the directive defining vagrancy, prostitution, and this state of things can misconstrue the objectives of ‘Operação Produção.’”<sup>140</sup> To tackle the problem, the Central Operative Commando (COC) issued a new directive signed by Minister Guebuza clarifying the concepts of “prostitution”, “vagrancy”, and “unemployed.”<sup>141</sup> Teams of supervisory brigades were dispatched to various District Operative Commandos (COD) to instruct local teams on how to “correct the mistakes.” But these brigades often arrived too late.

In no other campaign was the “bureaucratic pathology” of Frelimo’s government more evident.<sup>142</sup> As I pointed out in chapter 3, the campaign was launched without a master plan and the very government departments that were instructed to carry it out were not informed of its particulars until a week before its launching. With no time to prepare, many CODs welcomed anyone with enough enthusiasm to get the work done. Consequently, “irregularities” were rampant. News reporters went from evacuation to evacuation center and chose particular cases to highlight the “irregularities” of the campaign. The case of *mamã* Lídia was “exemplary.” *Tempo* journalist Calisto Muianga recognized Lídia as one of his neighbors among the mass of people awaiting trial in a verification center in Maputo. She had been dragged there by her *chefe de quarteirão* and his assistant, a militiaman named Sonda. Her case came to the attention of the mobile team of attorneys. One attorney asked the *chefe de quarteirão* why the lady was to be evacuated. The man pivoted and pointed his assistant as the responsible for her detention. Sonda was brought to the verification center to justify Lídia’s evacuation. His reply was tantalizing: “...well...I mean...it is because this lady has no marriage certificate”, he stammered, “and also

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<sup>140</sup> AGGPM/CPO de Maputo – Seminário Provincial. Síntese do 2º Grupo. Namaacha, 9 Set. 1983.

<sup>141</sup> AGGPM/CO-OP/Síntese do Encontro Realizado no dia 28 de Julho de 1983 com a Brigada do Comando Operativo Central. Maputo, 2 Agosto 1983.

<sup>142</sup> A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 121.

because the man she lives with is not the father of her children. Also because in our neighborhood she does not greet us, she despises us.”<sup>143</sup>

Cases like Lídia’s were rampant in verification centers across the country. Although these kinds of “irregularities” did not follow gender rules, as both men and women were victimized by authorities seeking to settle personal animosities, women were by far more vulnerable.<sup>144</sup> As Kathleen Sheldon observed, women

were less likely to have a waged job that would provide the necessary papers, they were more likely to be illiterate and unable to follow the complicated directions to obtain the proper identification forms, and they generally were more apt to be outside of the bureaucratic structures of the government.<sup>145</sup>

Lídia was a widow and mother of three children living with a second husband. She was a housewife with no working papers, and as the reporter noted, she had no idea why she was to be evacuated. The reporter did not say anything about the exact motives that led the *chefe de quarteirão* and militiaman Sonda to arrest her. But these two men – in their conservative masculine world – might have seen her matrimonial situation as an affront, especially because the man she was living with moved into her house instead of taking her to his own. In patriarchal southern Mozambique, situations like these often aroused public condemnation in local communities. For many citizens, *Operação Produção* was launched to put an end to such “dishonorable” situations, not simply to tackle unemployment. But there was also something else in Sonda’s nervous justification of Lidia’s arrest that suggests a tense relationship between them – maybe a rejected proposal for an affair. Surely the campaign had presented an opportunity for one of the two men who arrested her to either get his revenge or fix a “shameful” problem in his residential block.

Another “exemplary” case was reported in the second-largest city of Beira in November 1983. Fifteen-year-old Heroísa Isabel was taken to the evacuation post by her father. According to the news report, the angry father did not want to see his daughter dating a certain individual, and “handed her to the authorities as a prostitute” to be sent away.<sup>146</sup> For this father, the campaign was a perfect occasion to teach a lesson to an “embarrassing” and “unruly” daughter. As the reporter

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<sup>143</sup> ‘Um Caso Exemplar’, *Tempo*, 28 August 1983, pp. 24-25.

<sup>144</sup> “Bairro da Coop: Detectados casos de denúncias infundadas”, *Notícias*, 18 Julho 1983.

<sup>145</sup> K. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*, p. 155.

<sup>146</sup> “Sofala: Os passos que a ‘Operação Produção’ deu”, *Tempo*, 6 Nov. 1983, p. 31.

observed, evacuation centers received several identical cases. Asked about the main problems in her verification center in Bairro da Costa do Sol in Maputo, Helena Maria Simango, of the OMM, responded: “there are problems of prostitution, adultery, concubinage, and polygamy.” For local authorities entrusted to run the campaign, *Operação Produção* had a much broader objective, and their independent understanding of what the campaign was all about and who should be targeted shaped the operation, not the architects of the scheme at the COC.



*Fig. 22. A relieved citizen showcasing her papers after a successful verification trial. Maputo, July 1983. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

Lídia and Heroísa Isabel were lucky to have had their cases verified by a professional team of attorneys. But several other women in their situation did not have the same fortune, especially those who were arrested in the first two months of the compulsive phase of *Operação Produção*

in July and August, before the COC realized that innocent people were being evacuated by the thousands. For example, a woman sent to Chipembe, Cabo Delgado, said to a press reporter: “I did not marry officially, so in my identity card still it is written ‘single.’ But I married a long time ago, I have children and everything. I explained this, but they did not consider it.”<sup>147</sup> As in all previous cleanup campaigns, the government lost control of *Operação Produção* from the very beginning of the operation. Attempts to regain control were often sporadic. For example, in August the COC issued a new directive determining that the OMM had to take responsibility in dealing with cases related to women, particularly accusations of prostitution, and that girls less than 16 years of age were not required to carry work cards and those between 17 and 23, as long as they lived with their parents, should not be evacuated.<sup>148</sup> In one of his visits to the verification center of Machava district in Maputo, minister Armando Guebuza, the chief head of the COC, had to give orders for local authorities to release pregnant women waiting to be evacuated to Niassa.<sup>149</sup> But neither the minister nor any of the several mobile teams of attorneys could be present in all evacuation posts established in the cities. And up to May 1984, when the campaign finally slowed down, local vigilantes continued to arrest and evacuate people out of personal scores or independent interpretations of the aims of the campaign.

### *Fernanda Mazuze: A Common Yet Exceptional Case*

At the age of 29, Fernanda Mazuze was sent to Niassa as an “unproductive” in January 1984. On June 6 of that year she wrote a six-pages letter to Niassa’s new governor, Sérgio Vieira, narrating her case.<sup>150</sup> In it, she claimed that her doleful situation began in 1972, when she married Momade Bicá Bijal. By the time of independence the couple lived at Bairro Alto Maé in Maputo, with two children, one of them with “mental problems.” But their relationship deteriorated. In 1978 she asked for divorce. Momade Bijal, “a SNASP officer with important connections”, refused to grant her a divorce. Eventually, he consented and moved out of the house, leaving her and the two children. But Bijal soon resented having left the house and wanted it back. For several occasions

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<sup>147</sup> “Operação Produção: Uma Missão Histórica”, *Tempo*, 14 August 1983, pp. 14-19.

<sup>148</sup> “Desempregados a Caminho do Futuro”, *Tempo*, 21 Ago. 1983, pp. 22-24.

<sup>149</sup> “Medidas para Corrigir Erros na ‘Operação Produção’: Postas em Liberdade Mulheres Detidas Irregularmente”, *Notícias*, 14 July 1983.

<sup>150</sup> AGGPN/OP/Carta de Fernanda Mazuze ao Governor Sérgio Vieira. 26 Junho 1984.

he told her to leave the house, but she refused. In 1979, Fernanda received a “notification” from SNASP with a “detention order” (*ordem de captura*). The notification stated that she was being accused of prostitution, of having “white friends”, and “of maintaining contacts with South Africa.” Fernanda was arrested and held in detention for two months, during which she was subjected to constant interrogations. The investigator, who she named “Agente Aurélio”, realized that her case was motivated by “family problems” (*problemas familiares*) and set her free. Bijal, it seems, had crafted the letter denouncing her with the hope that she would be sent away to Niassa and he would move into the house with his new partner.

But he did not give up, for the house was too valuable.<sup>151</sup> Fernanda was detained again in 1981 and interrogated at the police criminal investigation unit (PIC), where Bijal’s sister held an important position. She narrowly escaped reeducation and was released. But the case got worse in 1982 when Fernanda brought her new partner, Adão Ismael, to live with her and her two children. In July 1983, as the compulsive stage of *Operação Produção* was getting started, three police officers knocked on her door. Fernanda was five-months pregnant. They took her to the Second Police Station at Alto Maé, where she stayed overnight. On the following day, she was taken to a solitary room and handed a letter written by her ex-husband dated 1981, with the same accusations that led to her first detention in 1979. Bijal was brought into the room and stated that she should be evacuated to Niassa. After two days in police custody, Fernanda was sent to the evacuation center of Machava, where thousands of “unproductive” detainees awaited transport to northern Mozambique. By chance, the COC had issued a new directive instructing operative commandos to release all pregnant women from evacuation centers. On her way home, a neighbor alerted her that her ex-husband was inside the house with the children. To avoid confrontation, she sought refuge in her neighbors, but Bijal soon discovered her and again brought the police. She was taken back to the same police station, where she was flogged 35 times and then sent to the female section of the Civil Penitentiary. She was kept in the prison for several months, until her labor pains began. The newborn died eight days after birth, and Fernanda was sent home. Two days later, after

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<sup>151</sup> After the euphoric wave of house occupation in the first two years of independence, no more houses were left and the real-estate agency, APIE, had thousands of applications and could no longer satisfy the demand (AGGPM/RPM-SNASP/Secreto/Relatório sobre a APIE. Maputo, 18 Fev. 1980). Bijal might have failed to get another house and was trying all he could to get his ex-wife out.



burying her child, the police came in again and took her back to the prison. Two months later, in January 1984, she was put on a plane to Niassa.

As soon as she arrived in Lichinga, Fernanda had a mental breakdown and was interned in the local hospital. She was later discharged and roamed around the town, where hundreds of other lost souls from *Operação Produção* who were not evacuated to labor camps or returned from the camps for health reasons wandered aimlessly, left to fend for themselves in the city (see chapter 7). In June she composed her narrative in a letter addressed to governor Vieira.

In addition to her ex-husband and Mr. Santos Cuinica, the secretary of Bairro Alto Maé, Fernanda mentioned another person who, in her opinion, was behind her ordeal. That person was the famed poet laureate, José Craveirinha, who was her neighbor at Bairro Alto Maé. She mentioned Craveirinha three times in her narrative, aware that she was pointing her finger to a very important figure. This is what she wrote:

Mr. Governor, after writing about all that happened to me, I would like to make some final considerations that are very sensitive (*delicadas*), about some well-known people who I think are implicated in my detention. First, Mr. José Craveirinha (poet), resident of Bairro do Alto Maé, street Romão Fernandes Farinha, my neighbor, close friends (*amigo pessoal*) with my ex-husband and with secretary Mr. Santos Quinica. Despite his 62 years of age, this gentleman likes to hang out (*ter contacto*) with young women, and he wanted to do the same with me and I refused. I know that he has important connections, and I was once told that he is close to Minister Armando Guebuza, who is also aware of my being here.

Fernanda claimed that minister Guebuza inquired about her during one of his visits to Niassa to supervise the campaign, which to her meant that the minister was aware of her case. She got the information from Dona Fátima, a member of the COC who accompanied the minister in one of his visits to Niassa to supervise the ongoing campaign. Although the archival record is silent about the “veracity” of Fernanda’s claim that the head of the COC inquired about her, governor Vieira conducted a quick investigation and concluded that Fernanda had been victim of persecution motivated by personal intrigues.<sup>152</sup> It was an all too common a story, and governor Vieira had seen and intervened in many similar cases since the beginning of *Operação Produção* (see chapter 7).

What Fernanda’s case shows is not just the pervasiveness of opportunistic manipulation of Frelimo’s reformist policies for mundane personal scores by prominent and obscure citizens, but

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<sup>152</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 322/GAB/49, ao Major General Jorge Rebelo 1o Secretário da Cidade de Maputo, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira Governador de Niassa. Relâmpago, 26/6/84

also the fact that some victims sought to fight back and were not intimidated by the power and influence of those behind their ordeal. Governor Sérgio Vieira (and his predecessor Aurélio Manave), received several letters from those sent for reeducation and “unproductive” evacuees trying to clear their cases and find justice. But Fernanda was an exceptional case. First, hers was the only letter I found in Niassa written by a woman. Second, the clarity and cleverness of her letter – handwritten in perfect Portuguese with no single blot – shows that she was well educated and did not succumb to despair despite all she went through. “Mr. Governor, I am a woman”, she wrote in conclusion, “I have two children and I am here in this province without any motive. I ask you to direct my case to a person of law (*alguém de direito*) to judge me if that is the case. I believe in all of this there is ‘illegality’ that *we* are trying to combat” (my emphasis).

Instead of asking for a hearing with the governor – as many people opted to do when in Lichinga – Fernanda knew the power of written words. She also knew the language of the state. By writing “illegality” in quotation marks she was asserting to her addressee that she knew the source of that particular vocabulary. For two years between 1980 and 1982 President Machel traversed the country “combating illegality” during *Ofensiva*. And reporters covering the campaign highlighted several cases like hers. Fernanda was showing that, as a dutiful citizen, she was attentive to the revolutionary process in her country and that she was part of that process, hence the third person “we.” She knew the language of the state and she spoke back to it in it. As a result, she got the attention of the governor, who sent a “flash” (*relâmpago*) inquiry to Maputo to get her story straight.<sup>153</sup> A few days later Fernanda was sent back home.<sup>154</sup>

## Conclusion

Contrary to scholarly representations of Frelimo’s urban cleanup campaigns as a solo act of the powerful, this chapter demonstrates that nitty-gritty complexities of everyday life in the grass roots level shaped the work of cleaning urban undesirables in socialist Mozambique. Urban citizens

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<sup>153</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 322/GAB/49, ao Major General Jorge Rebelo 1º Secretário da Cidade de Maputo, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira Governador de Niassa. *Relâmpago*, 26/6/84

<sup>154</sup> Presently Fernanda Mazuze lives in Xai-Xai, where she runs a small business. For two times I tried and failed to interview her about her story and the particulars of her letter. Although she was eager to talk to me, her business kept her busy and we did not find time to speak. However, I confirmed aspects of her story with her elder brother, Simeão Mazuze.

recognized in Frelimo's reformist agenda their own long held assumptions about civility and appropriate urban citizenship. Long before the arrival of the socialist revolutionaries, ordinary urban residents wrote letters of opinion to newspapers condemning the improper conduct of their fellow city dwellers, and urged authorities to take action. Frelimo's rhetoric on urban moral decadence fell on welcoming ears. Their campaigns to rid the cities of immorality and degeneracy were greeted with cheerful enthusiasm. The economic difficulties of the immediate postcolonial period did not create the general uneasiness with urban disorder among Mozambique's urbanites, they simply amplified older moralist apprehensions. Called to participate in the revolutionary process, citizens did not hesitate to take their place as dutiful vigilantes, sharpening their gazes over the improper and suspicious behavior of neighbors, colleagues, including friends and family members.

This chapter demonstrated that Mozambican citizens were not passive recipients of Frelimo's directives and blind followers of ideological rhetoric. Quite the opposite, they took advantage of- and sometimes manipulated the government's reformist programs and campaigns to pursue agendas of their own. They called on the police to come scoop unwanted neighbors under allegations of idleness or threat to social order. They informed on their friends and colleagues in order to vacate positions of privilege with the hope to take their places, either as chiefs of working units or secretaries of the local party cells. Frelimo's campaigns offered citizens opportunities to settle personal and often mundane conflicts. The overwhelming majority of detainees in reeducation and labor camps were product of intimate practices of self-policing and denunciation that had no ideological motivation. As we shall see in the next two chapters, reeducation and labor camps were populated by people denounced by close relatives, neighbors, and co-workers, accused of offenses that had little if nothing to do with the categories of people that Frelimo authorities framed as enemies and obstacles to the socialist revolution.

**Chapter 5**  
**A Different Kind of Panopticon: The Anatomy of Mozambique's Reeducation Camps (1974-1981)**

**Introduction**

In August 1976, an anonymous reporter from *Notícias* visited the female internment camp of M'sawize in Niassa province. In a lengthy article that covered an entire page of the country's premier daily newspaper, he produced one of the most informative depictions of a reeducation camp.<sup>1</sup> He was impressed with the physical features that distinguished the camp from the thick expanse of the forest as his Jeep approached the site. It had taken him and his crew about an hour drive from the nearby village of M'sawize to the camp, only twenty-five kilometers (fifteen miles) away. "A bamboo stick and a thatch mark the entrance", he wrote. "Not far away, the first houses of reasonable dimensions plastered with clay and thatched roof; then a large open field." He continued, sketching out the spatial arrangement of the camp:

The camp consists of two distinct parts: near the entrance is the sector destined to the Female Detachment with housing [for camp overseers], the secretariat, the station for radio transmissions, and the refectory. On the opposite side, there are the facilities of the internees, a series of sheds arranged in length, forming in the background a semi-circle.<sup>2</sup>

The reporter described the inmates' lodging facilities as "very rudimentary pole huts, very exposed to cold." In fact, August is the last month of the dry season in southern Africa, and in Niassa's mountainous plateau that means winter. The newsman noted that the huts were "built by *reeducandas* themselves and by local peasants." He also observed with wonder and a sense of pride that the camp was devoid of fences and had no standing army of guards on permanent watch. Like most of his colleagues who wrote laudably about re-education at the time, he stressed out that in M'sawize there was no semblance of the infamous concentration camps or prisons. Here, he

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<sup>1</sup> AJN – "Centro de Reeducação de Msauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial", *Notícias*, 18 Ago.1976. With the socialist euphoria at its apex, it became common fashion for reporters to forego their signatures, thus rendering their news articles a product of collective effort. From the photographs that I discovered at the AJN, one of which was the unedited copy of the photo that was published with the news article in consideration here, I know that the reporter was a white male.

<sup>2</sup> AJN – "Centro de Reeducação de M'sauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial", *Notícias*, 18 Ago.1976.

claimed, the internees lived in a semi-free regimen, as only in Mozambique – guided by such magnanimous revolutionary party as it were – could be possible.

For those who are invaded by certain doubts regarding the reeducation camps, we can say that there is no fence or enclosure that makes it look like a special camp. In fact, several kilometers away [from the camp], we could see women in re-education, who moved without authorization to the people's shop in the village of Msauise [sic] or to the Central Military Base to receive visits.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Mozambique's reeducation camps were deprived of the most iconic features commonly associated with modern internment camps. The camps lacked any kind of erected barriers. They had no fences and no central watch towers. And the number of security personnel was remarkably small in relation to the inmate population in each camp, rendering the surveillance regimen very loose indeed. Despite authorities' attempts to control the movement of people, detainees had considerable leeway inside and outside the camps. This aspect of the reeducation program impressed many people who visited the camps in the 1970s and early 1980s. Unlike the Russian Gulag or other similar internment camps – which remained terra incognita for the wider public and for scholars until former detainees produced memoirs or the so-called literature of survival – Mozambique's camps were open to outside visitors given appropriate authorization from the authorities. From the very beginning of the reeducation program, diplomats, domestic and international journalists, filmmakers, and academics with close ties to Frelimo visited the camps (the only exception being the camp of M' telela for its political detainees). The visitors were often left with the impression of having visited a common *aldeia communal* or rural settlement with the difference that the residents were uniformed.<sup>4</sup> Aside from the black khaki uniforms that the inmates wore and the few warders armed with AK47 rifles, there was in fact little in the camps that resembled a penal institution. The camps looked very much like the *ujamaa*-inspired communal villages that were Frelimo's key strategy for rural development and socialist transformation.

If one assumes, as anthropologists Christian Geffray and Harry West did, that the *aldeias comunais* were part of the biopolitical mechanisms of state surveillance aimed at rendering

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<sup>3</sup> AJN – “Centro de Reeducação de Msauize: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Noticias*, 18 Ago.1976.

<sup>4</sup> See for example “Centros de Reeducação em Moçambique”, *Tempo*, 26 Março 1976; and Alves Gomes, “O que hoje somos: Dois factos”, *Tempo*, 454, 24 Junho 1979

peasants “more legible and, thus, more amenable to state intervention”, then what is to be said of reeducation camps?<sup>5</sup> Following Michel Foucault and James Scott, Harry West suggested that, “in fundamental ways, the communal village worked like Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon.” He argued that “the spatial concentration of the village rendered subjects directly susceptible to a monitoring eye – embodied in Frelimo-appointed village president – that could pass unobstructed through surveillance corridors in a matter of hours.”<sup>6</sup> If free villagers were subjected to a panopticon, as West claims, what to make, then, of the reporter’s observation that the detainees of M’sawize lived in a semi-free regimen in a place that was supposed to be a detention camp? Or was he right in assuming that the peculiar features of the camps stemmed from the lenient nature of the revolutionary party? The answer lies somewhere else. What impressed the reporter – and most people who visited the camps – was the reflection of the ambience of austerity in which the camps were created and in which they had to operate.

As I elaborated in the introduction to this study, Frelimo authorities envisioned the reeducation camp as a disciplinary institution. In July 1976, during a meeting of the Council of Ministers, President Machel instructed his top cabinet officers that the camps should be organized in categories and *reeducandos* should be classified and interned according to their offenses. There should be specific camps for drug addicts, for prostitutes, for drunkards, for vagrants, for the undisciplined, for thieves, and so on. “Our general concern”, the President averred, “is to transform the old man into the new man, to transform society. Now, all we need is to find the adequate means to achieve this goal.”<sup>7</sup> To achieve this goal, camp overseers were to be diligent knowledge gatherers, observing the behavior of each detainee and recording their improvement.<sup>8</sup> This is what the *Notícias* reporter was sent to see and document in M’sawize. His article was meant to soothe the minds of those who had doubts about the reeducation camps and to counter the “rumors” that the camps were sites of macabre punishment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Christian Geffray, *Le Cause des Armes au Mozambique: Anthropologie d’une Guerre Civile*. Paris: Karthala, 1990; Harry West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005, p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> H. West, *Kupilikula*, p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 7ª Sessão Ordinária do Conselho de Ministros de 9 de Julho de 1976. Síntese XI-Parte – Centros de Reeducação. Maputo, 9 Julho 1976, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> AGGPM – MINT. Circular 6/GMI/976. Assunto: Objectivos dos Centros de Reeducação. 5 Jan. 1976.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, MHN – Marlon Duncan, “Mozambique: Machel re-education camps teach a tough lesson”, *To the Point*, 3 June 1977; MHN – José Ramalho, “Alarm spreads as executions continue”, *To the Point*. 1 June 1979.

But intensions did not reflect the actual reality of the camps. Frelimo's panoptic intents were never realized. Reality turned out to be something utterly different. The reeducation program was carried out in a very chaotic way; and the camps functioned chaotically. The high-minded yearning for social and spatial legibility, discipline, order, and moral purity were never realized, not in the camps nor in the communal villages. If we were to accept West's claim, then what the reporter described with awe in M'sawize was an eyeless panopticon. The anatomic sketch of the reeducation camp complex that I draw in this chapter illustrates how far apart Frelimo's ambitions were from the material conditions in which the reeducation program operated. The chapter begins with a description of the ways in which detainees were transported to the camps and then explores the composition of the camps' inmate population. I explore a unique set of archival documents to bring the faces, names, including the age, marital status, and professional occupations of detainees to light. I also describe the physical arrangement of the camps and their daily regimens, including aspects of punishment. I conclude the chapter by looking at the social life inside the camps. The last section not only highlights the subversion of Frelimo's technocratic moralism by detainees as well as by camp supervisors, it also makes the point that, despite the camp's wretchedness, they were far from being locales of social death.

### **The Veiled Journey to Reeducation**

The transportation of detainees to the camps was invariably a veiled, chilling, and tedious journey. Detainees were not only kept in the dark as to their offenses. They were also uninformed about their destiny. Generally, after arrest, detainees were put in police custody. Depending on the transportation arrangements, they could stay in the small cells or even in the local jails for hours, days, weeks, or even months. During this time, no interrogations were held and no single police officer spoke to them. The trip often came in the same unannounced, swift, and surprising way as the arrest. The expedient operation often took place during the night. The abrupt cracking sound of the cages' iron bars and the shouts by armed guards were enough to indicate that everybody was to stand up and head outside where a vehicle was impatiently waiting with the engines roaring. The vehicle could be an army truck or a rented bus from *Oliveiras*, one of the few private transportation companies. Detainees were thus herded into the vehicles and taken all the way to their designated camps or to the Army air base in the city's airport (all major airports in

Mozambique have army air bases). Air transportation was mostly carried in an Antanov (a made-in-Russia cargo plane), and sometimes in civil aircrafts from the national aviation company DETA/LAM. Air transportation was more frequent for detainees from Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane, who were going to Niassa, Cabo Delgado, or Nampula. The transportation was carried by a multiparty security team including agents of SNASP, police officers, and army soldiers. The chief coordinator was often a SNASP operative. Again, no word was passed on to the detainees as to their destiny.

The lack of information as to their future filled the detainees with all kinds of anxieties. Although most people knew that they were being sent off to a reeducation camp, no one knew which. This kaffian process served one deliberate purpose: to prevent any escape attempt at the final destination. That the journey often took place during the night served this goal, to prevent detainees from having any idea of their whereabouts. Even when the journey was made in vehicles with open tailgates, arrangements were made so that the final stretch to the camp was done in the dark cover of the night. Carlos Fumo, who was sent to Ruarua in Cabo Delgado, narrated the chilling journey in our interview:

After two weeks at Maputo's central prison, we were taken to the airport at dawn. We were all frightened, for we didn't know where we were going. They kept us at the army airbase. We saw army soldiers walking up and down, and nobody talked to us, so we had no idea what was going on. Suddenly, an Antanov arrived around 5 a.m. and we boarded. We arrived in Cabo Delgado at about 2 p.m. When we landed they hid us in the bush inside the airport. We only knew that we were in Cabo Delgado thanks to a plate with the name of the province behind the bushes. Yet we still didn't know where we were going. At about 7 or 8 p.m. a military truck arrived and the armed soldiers shoved us inside the tailgate. We drove for hours and arrived at the site at 1 a.m. The camp commander came, looked at us in the eye, and went back to his office. We had not eaten or drunken anything since we left Maputo. Although the camp didn't have that many people, there were no rooms for us to sleep. There were no lodgings for newcomers. We spent the night in the open. Before sunrise they woke us up to march as soldiers, and later we went into the forest to cut down the bamboos to build our huts.<sup>10</sup>

Initially, before Renamo activities spread all over the country, most journeys were made by road and lasted for several days. A one-way trip from Maputo to Niassa – the longest route – could take up to a week. During the trip detainees were forced to sing Frelimo anthems that lauded the liberation saga, celebrated the revolutionary leaders, and mocked the traitors and counter-revolutionaries. Silva Santana, a SNASP officer tasked with transporting detainees to Niassa and Cabo Delgado, recalled: “before the war we traveled by bus, singing all the way. We initiated the

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<sup>10</sup> Interview: Carlos Fumo, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.



songs and they were forced to follow.”<sup>11</sup> The singing was partly intended to ease the tension among detainees and help the guards sustain the boredom of such a long journey. It was also a prelude, an introduction to what their re-education would consist of. But nothing could soothe detainee’s restless minds. In moments of extreme angst, some people jumped out of the moving vehicle in a last desperate attempt to be free. Rare as these daring attempts were, they hardly ended well. The fleeing detainee either died from the impact of falling down or was captured after a chase and rifle shots. For the captured, hurt or not, chastisement for such acts was inevitable and was often brutal.<sup>12</sup>

The long journey to reeducation camps was more perilous for women. In the deserted sand tracks opened in the bush leading to the camps, far away from popular gaze, female detainees were often fair game for sexual assault by army guards. As Silva Santana told me, soldiers often “took advantage of the girls along the way by forcing them into sex.”<sup>13</sup> Sexual abuse was often the initiation into re-education for many women sent to M’sawize and Ilumba.<sup>14</sup> For some, it was the order of the day throughout their entire detention. The remote location of the camps was a perfect cover for such cruel exploitation.

At the present stage of the research, it is not possible to glean from the sources the ways in which detainees were distributed in the camp complex. While most detainees from southern Mozambique, particularly from Maputo, tended to be sent as far away from the capital as possible, detainees from central and northern Mozambique tended to be distributed locally. Initially MINT attempted to concentrate detainees according to criminal categories: political prisoners; deserters; vagrants and drug addicts; prostitutes; common law offenders, and so on. For example, in Niassa, M’sawize and Ilumba were reserved for “prostitutes.” Naisseco, also in Niassa, was opened for “individuals considered drug addicts.”<sup>15</sup> Chiputo and M’telela (in Niassa) and Chaimite (Cabo Delgado) were established in 1975 to house Frelimo’s dissidents. However, the scheme did not hold, and chaos rapidly descended into the re-education program. The camp of Sacudzu in Sofala

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<sup>11</sup> Interview: Silva Santana, Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Group Interview: Simeão Mazuze, Felizardo Chaguala, and Ché Mafuiane, Matola, 8 Dec. 2014. For a literary description, see JP. Borges Coelho, *Campo de Trânsito*, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Interview: Silva Santana, Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

<sup>14</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 May 1976. There are conflicting dates for the establishment of M’sawize and Ilumba. Some sources indicate November 1974 and others point to November 1975.

<sup>15</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 May 1976.

province concentrated more than 1,000 *reeducandos*, among them street children, non-convicted thieves and murderers, undocumented civilians who failed to produce ID cards during the cleanup campaigns, as well as sacked civil servants (including teachers, “undisciplined” soldiers and police officers).<sup>16</sup> In Ruarua, common criminal offenders shared the wretched barracks with Frelimo’s deserters. The camp of Chicomo in Manjacaze (Gaza province), concentrated a miscellaneous detainee population of 750.<sup>17</sup> Even M’telela, a camp destined for prominent political prisoners with no more than 130 inmates, received detainees for common law offences. As we shall see from the lists of inmates from M’sawize and Naisseco produced in 1978 by the *Direcção Provincial dos Serviços de Reeducação do Niassa* or Provincial Directorate of Reeducation Services of Niassa, DPSRN), the inmate population was a wide mixture of people from all over the country detained for all sorts of offenses, the majority of which of very little significance.

The explanation for this mishmash of detainees is quite simple. There was no centralized, bureaucratic body in the government to coordinate the re-education program. Although MINT was in charge of the camps, it was not until 1976 that the ministry created a cabinet to run the camps’ affairs. By this time the entire camp complex was in place and running full. But even then, the *Direcção Nacional dos Serviços de Reeducação* or National Directorate of Reeducation Services (DNSR) was understaffed and largely on the sidelines when it came to deciding where detainees should go.<sup>18</sup> Given that anybody in the party-state – from the highest-ranking officer to the lowest agent – could condemn anyone to reeducation without reporting to MINT and without producing any kind of documentation, there simply was no way to coordinate the process. In the end, detainees were dispatched to a designated province, and the local DPSR decided where to send them. Since most people had not been formally sentenced and therefore had no written records of their offenses, they were quite randomly distributed in the camps without any objective criteria. Proper interrogation was something that security and DPSR officers had no time for, much less qualification. Even when, in 1980, a more capable officer named José Castiano Zumbire was nominated to head the DNSR, the camps continued to follow no classification order and no criteria.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze, Matola, 20 Nov. 2014; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>17</sup> MHN – Jay Ross, “Mozambican re-education camps raise rights questions”, *The Washington Post*, 7 May 1980.

<sup>18</sup> Interview: João Carlos Trindade, Maputo, 10 Sept. 2014; Interview: Benedito Marrime, Maputo, 9 Dec. 2015.

<sup>19</sup> AGGPN – MINT/Boletim Informativo n° 5. Maputo, 31 Maio 1980.

Upon arrival, detainees were dressed in black khaki uniforms. Each received two pairs of pants, two long or short sleeve shirts, a cap, and a pair of canvas boots. The origins of this uniform are unclear. The uniform seems to have been used by the colonial police force and by the army, most probably for recruits in training. Stocks of it might have been deposited in the police headquarters when Frelimo assumed power, and MINT decided to give it a new function. And no other color could be better suited to dress the fallen urbanites sent to the countryside to be purified of their moral sins. Black was the color of doom, of the same darkness from which detainees were immersed and from where they were expected to rise through re-education. The black uniform also symbolized the state of suspension of citizenship to which detainees were placed (as a *reeducando*, one was stripped of all civil rights). At the same time, the uniform made it easy to exert control upon inmates. This was perhaps the only palpable attempt at giving the camps a sense of uniformity and render detainees legible. Peasant populations living near the camps were instructed to be vigilant and inform authorities whenever they saw black dressed people wondering about without armed guards. The uniform also gave the regimen of camp life the military semblance that Frelimo authorities wanted to see in the camps.<sup>20</sup>

However, the reality of austerity made the effort at uniformity in detainees' attire impossible. Clothing was a luxury in freshly independent Mozambique – and it continued to be so until the collapse of the socialist experiment in the late 1980s. The stocks of uniforms quickly ran out and in a few months, after the first internees received their pairs, there was no more to be distributed to newcomers. It also became problematic for the government to dress detainees in the extremely impoverished countryside where local populations still lived largely naked or half-naked. Most of my interviewees recalled the shocking encounters with nearly naked peasants in the villages near their camps, and the envy with which they were often met because of their “good looks” in black uniforms. In Niassa and Cabo Delgado, for example, detainees were known as *Mkunya Woripa* or white blacks. As former detainee Ché Mafuane told me, “*mkunya woripa* means that the person is black but at the same time he is white because he was dressed.”<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup> The first seminar on reeducation camps held in Maputo in November 1976 determined that in order to successfully implement the political program in the reeducation camps, detainees had to be “organized according to a composition similar to a military structure.” AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 1o Seminário Nacional de Reeducação. Documento de Apio n.º. 2 – Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação, Novembro de 1976.

<sup>21</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014.

label *white* does not stand for race here. It stands for social status. For the Macua speaking people in the remote corners of northern Mozambique, the detainees were somewhat privileged because they were dressed and looked good in their black garments, a clear indication of the level of scarcity in which local populations lived (as I demonstrate later in this chapter, some detainees took advantage of this situation to get access to local women and build social networks that alleviated the hardship of internment).



*Fig. 23. Detainees in a meeting. Some still wear the black uniform or what remained of it. The name of the camp is not indicated in the photograph. Undated. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

By 1976, there was no semblance of uniformity in most reeducation camps. Detainees dressed their own clothes or whatever they could find in the camp. Those who received the two pairs of uniforms sold one out to local peasants or they simply exchanged them for food, *suruma* or *mbange* (cannabis sativa), and *cajulima* (a locally distilled and highly intoxicating brandy).<sup>22</sup> And after a few years, the one remaining pair was nothing more than rags. Photographs taken by

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<sup>22</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014.

*Tempo* and *Notícias* reporters show *reeducandos* in tattered clothes, lining miserably for meager meals or warming up in the sun. Most are dressed in their discolored clothes, others with only one piece of their once black uniforms. The majority are barefoot.<sup>23</sup>

All reeducation camps were established in places of difficult access. Officials often chose areas suitable for agriculture along river banks. Except for Manica and Tete, all provinces had camps, most of which were located in the northernmost province of Niassa (see Map. 1). Due to their location, at the border with the then enemy regime of southern Rhodesia, Manica and Tete were inappropriate to host *reeducandos*. The government's fears were confirmed when André Matsangaissa, a former detainee in Sacudzo, attacked the camp on May 6, 1977, and recruited fifty inmates for his newly formed anti-Frelimo rebel group that later came to be known as Mozambique National Resistance or Renamo.<sup>24</sup> Following the attack, the number of inmates in Sacudzo was reduced. Some inmates, like my interviewee Felizardo Chaguala (who was 18 years old at the time), were set free.<sup>25</sup> Others, like Beto Tembe, were sent to the military training center at Dondo (Sofala province), with the intention to integrate them in the newly formed militias that were being deployed to fight Renamo and the Rhodesians.<sup>26</sup> The majority, however, were transferred to other reeducation camps further north in Nampula, Cabo Delgado, and Niassa. Sacudzo continued to operate until 1979, when it was closed down definitively because of intensified Renamo activities in the region. By 1982 – when the civil war engulfed all the territory except for Niassa and Cabo Delgado – the government shut down all camps in Maputo, Inhambane, Sofala, and Zambezia provinces. The archival record suggests that most detainees were set free, and only those accused of serious offenses were moved to other camps in the north.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the threat of Renamo incursions continued to loom large in reeducation camps, even in the northernmost provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. In chapter 6 I examine in more detail the ways in which the civil war

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<sup>23</sup> In other photographs, detainees have clear signs of untreated festered wounds and *matequenha* or tungiasis (see figures in chapter 6).

<sup>24</sup> André Matsangaissa was a former Frelimo soldier. He was arrested in September 1975 “for allegedly stealing Army property” and sent to Sacudzo. As João Cabrita narrates, he first escaped in October 1976, and was recaptured in December during a failed attempt to recruit members for his anti-Frelimo organization. He escaped again, and carried another attack on Sacudzo in May 1977. Of the fifty detainees he recruited, only twenty-eight managed to reach Mutare, where the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Office had established a base in Odzi for the rebel group. This was the beginning of a harrowing civil war that lasted for sixteen years. See J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 144-7.

<sup>25</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Interview: Beto Tembe, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015.

<sup>27</sup> AGGPM – Reeducação/Direção Provincial de Apoio e Controlo. Comissão de Reintegração Social, 1981-1987.

disrupted the re-education program, leading to its ultimate collapse. For now, let us explore the world inside the camps, starting with the inmates.

### **The Inmates: A Portrait from Niassa**

When the reporter from *Notícias* visited M'sawize in 1976, he did not speak to any of the 501 detainees, who watched the white visitor walk around the premises with a mix of amusement and fear. The newsman was only allowed to speak to the chief of the camp. Although he did not mention her name in his lengthy article, I know from DPSRN reports that her name was Silência David.<sup>28</sup> Upon his arrival, the reporter was greeted with revolutionary chants and folk dances: “at the center for meetings”, he noted, “a few hundred women wearing mostly black uniforms sang songs and danced.”<sup>29</sup> The three photographs accompanying the news article are too small-sized and only give a partial glimpse of the camp. But the original photographs, which I found in the newspaper archives in Maputo, give a better view of the inmates. One of them shows some *reeducandas* seated in an unwallied hut that served as a kitchen, and a line of metal dishes on top of small tins that were used for drinking cups (Fig. 25). The reporter is standing nearby (in the photograph published with the news article he was cut off). In the news article, a subtitle indicates that each dish in the line marked somebody's place in the line for the eagerly awaited meal of *chima* and beans. Some *reeducandas* wore the black uniform shirts or what remained of them. Others – who most probably arrived after the uniforms had ran out – had *capulanas* tied in place of trousers or wore ordinary clothes. Another photograph – which was not published with the article – shows them clapping and singing (Fig. 24). Their faces were too close to the camera. Most are of tender age. Their eyes and facial expressions transmit something of a deep sorrow and interrogations. No one smiles. They were surely singing and clapping against their will. All had their hair cut off. This was done as soon as they arrived in the camp, an attempt to clear off the signs of degeneration and alienation (wigs and straightened hair) supposedly bred by the corrupting urban environment.

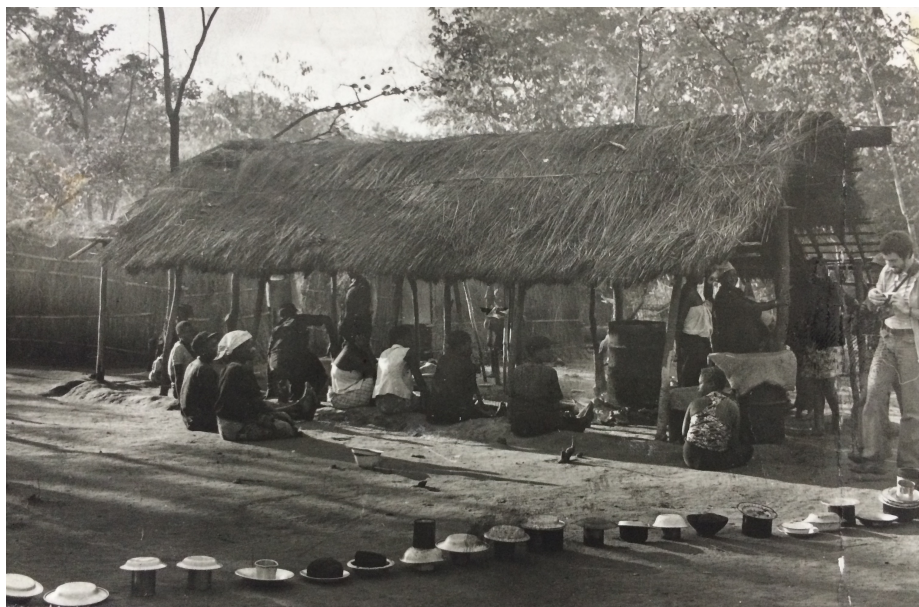
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<sup>28</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

<sup>29</sup> AJN – “Centro de Reeducação de Msauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Notícias*, 18 Aug. 1976



*Fig. 24. Women detainees singing at M'sawize as they welcome the Notícias visitor. Note the stern expression on their faces: they are clearly singing against their will. August 1976. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.*



*Fig. 25. M'sawize reeducandas waiting for meal in the camp's kitchen. Each has her line marked by her tin cup and plate on the floor. The Notícias reporter is standing on the right corner. August 1976. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.*

Mozambican and international journalists produced a number of portraits like these. Though very instructive, they only present a mass of nameless and sad looking people. They said nothing about their individual stories. We know, for example, that at least four camps held political

prisoners and Frelimo’s deserters: M’telela and Chiputo in Niassa, and Chaimite and Ruarua in Cabo Delgado. Yet, these camps also held the urban ‘anti-socials’, who constituted the majority of detainees. Who, then, were these *reeducandos* and *reeducandas* and under which crimes were they being held captive? What do we know about their origins, that is, the city from where they were expelled? What do we know about their age, marital status, and professional occupation? Answering these questions not only illuminates one of the key arguments of this study, it is also part of the effort to redeem the nameless victims of the re-education program.

In 1978, the DPSRN compiled several lists with details about 827 detainees from Naisseco and M’sawize, with the objective of alerting Governor Aurélio Manave and the authorities in the capital about the arbitrary ways in which most detainees were arrested in their places of origin and the mundane offenses for which they were being held indefinitely in the camps.<sup>30</sup> The DPSRN officers proposed the release of the 827 detainees, and in several reports, they indicated that the situation of most detainees in other camps was similar (see chapter 6). Although these are exceptional records, for they speak of selected detainees, they are nevertheless illustrative of the social composition of Niassa’s camp inmate population, which can be used to extrapolate on the whole reeducation camp complex. In the DPSRN lists, 580 detainees were men and 247 were women. They came from all over Mozambique. But most of them were from Maputo and the neighboring town of Xai-Xai in Gaza province. The origins of 68 detainees were not indicated.

**Table 3:** Place of origin of the 827 detainees from Naisseco and M’sawize

	<i>Maputo</i>	<i>Gaza</i>	<i>Inhambane</i>	<i>Sofala</i>	<i>Manica</i>	<i>Tete</i>	<i>Zambezia</i>	<i>Nampula</i>	<i>C.Delgado</i>	<i>Niassa</i>
<i>M</i>	263	34	49	26	39	29	32	12	1	32
<i>W</i>	54	46	9	28	19	22	2	10	25	27

Although most inmates were single, the number of married people in both sexes was considerably high. At least 191 male detainees were listed as married, and 267 as single. There were 147 single women and 89 recorded as married. The inmate population was predominantly young, with an average age at about 25 years. Excluding the infants living with their detained mothers, the age of detainees ranged from ten to seventy-seven. Given the high level of illiteracy in the first years of independence, a good number of detainees did not know their exact age when

<sup>30</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978; AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais que por terem sido detidos arbitrariamente se propõe o seu regresso à procedência. Lichinga, 4 Abril 1978.



the DPSRN officers inquired them. The table below illustrates that illiteracy was higher among female detainees. The youngest male detainee in Naisseco was ten-year-old Carlos Vasco Machel, from Chibuto (Gaza), who was “falsely suspected of theft.”<sup>31</sup> The oldest male *reeducando* was Zacarias Cossa, aged seventy-seven, who was condemned for “manslaughter” in Maputo – the only grave crime on all lists.<sup>32</sup> Among the female detainees, the youngest were two girls aged fifteen, Elisa Fernando and Georgina Macone, one detained for unknown motives and the other for prostitution. The oldest *reeducanda* was Elina Tembe, aged fifty-three. She was detained in Maputo for “selling alcoholic drinks.”<sup>33</sup>

**Table 4:** Marital Status

<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Single	267	147
Married/Amancebad@	191	89
Divorced/Separated		
Widow/er	5	4

**Table 5:** Age

<i>Age (Years)</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
10-17	52	15
18-25	198	52
26-35	103	31
36-45	61	13
46-55	64	7
56-65	27	
66-75	9	
Over 76	1	
Unknown	65	129
Total	580	247

The offenses for which the 827 detainees on the lists were held captive were a miscellaneous body of petty trivialities, from minor theft, adultery, fights with relatives and neighbors, to alcoholic drinking and smoking of *suruma*. But the majority were undocumented urbanites who failed to produce identification papers during round ups in places of leisure. Among

<sup>31</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Menores de 16 anos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>32</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Casos duvidosos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>33</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

the female detainees, the major cause of detention was prostitution, marital disputes and adultery. Yet, the overwhelming majority of female detainees (100 of them) were held without any known offense. Their offense record reads as *motivo desconhecido* or *sem motivo* (unknown or without offense).

**Table 6:** Offenses of the 827 detainees from M'sawize and Naisseco

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Undocumented during round-ups</i>	170	28
<i>Unknown</i>	30	100
<i>Alcohol and cannabis (producing, consumption, and sale)</i>	84	
<i>Prostitution</i>		58
<i>Minor theft</i>	46	
<i>Suspect of theft</i>	43	
<i>Vagrancy, gambling, unemployment</i>	31	5
<i>Theft of cattle</i>	24	
<i>Arguments w/neighbors, friends, relatives</i>	22	29
<i>Corruption (sexual and moral); adultery; marital disputes</i>	22	18
<i>Discord with GD or local authorities</i>	15	7
<i>Fencing (dealing in stolen goods) or black marketeering</i>	8	
<i>Work related</i>	6	
<i>Possession of foreign currency (SA Rand) or illegal border crossing</i>	5	
<i>Traditional healing and sorcery</i>	4	
<i>Political dissent or ill-speaking about the Party/Leaders</i>	4	
<i>Comprometido (PIDE agent or Cipaio)</i>	1	
<i>Religious fanaticism or Jehovah's Witness</i>	1	
<i>Serious theft</i>	1	
<i>Murder or Rape</i>	0	
<i>Other</i>	5	
<i>Total of recorded offenses</i>	523	245

Most of the offenses for which people were arrested and sent to re-education were so mundane that DPSRN officers were outraged and did not shy away from expressing their disappointment in their reports. A fisherman from the coastal town of Quelimane, in Zambezia province, Francisco António Manuel, forty-two years old and married, was in detention because “he pushed somebody in the line for bread” (*empurrou uma pessoa na bixa do pão*). The poor man arrived in Naisseco on January 25, 1975. When his case was recorded he had been in detention for three years. One Marcelo Francisco, a twenty-one-year-old resident of Beira, was serving an indefinite sentence in Naisseco “for entering the premises of the custom services without permission.” Similarly, António Chavane, a young lad of sixteen, was found wondering in the vicinities of the airport in Maputo, for which he was sent to Niassa. Sebastião Gabito Mazive, a self-employed locksmith, was found by the militia in the rubbish hill of Hulene in Maputo, while

scavenging for raw materials for his workshop (old iron and metals). Unable to produce an ID and a working card, this self-employed man was shipped off to Niassa as a vagrant.<sup>34</sup>

Undocumented victims of the clean-up campaigns against vagrancy and alcoholism, irrespective of their age, were kept for several years in the camps. One Carlos Bassequete, sixty-three years old, was detained for “vagrancy and for having no profession.” Fernando Rafael, fifty-one, from Chipungabera in Sofala, “was found sleeping in the market.” Two ladies named Cristina Magaia, aged fifty-two, and Elina Tembe, fifty-three, were detained for “producing alcoholic drinks” in Maputo. And fifty-year-old Luís Chibaquela Chissicu was “found drunk on the street” in Maputo. His intemperance earned him an indefinite sentence to re-education in Naisseco. When his case was recorded he had been detained for two years.<sup>35</sup>

Many people were serving sentences under unproved suspicion of minor theft. Since no indictments were produced and no judicial hearings were held, suspicion was conviction. Filipe Mucotonheni, who could not tell his exact age when he was interrogated by DPSRN officers, “was accused of stealing sugar.” João Timbana, from the village of Marracuene in Maputo province, “was accused of stealing potatoes.” Twenty-year-old Rodrigues Ndzeco, also from Maputo, was “accused of stealing a radio.” And Valente Joaquim, thirty-one, from Niassa, “was accused of losing a pig.” Even the twelve-year-old José Macavana from Bairro Infulene in Maputo did not escape re-education for suspicion of “stealing 200 Escudos (\$6 dollars).”<sup>36</sup> They were all in re-education for three years.

Even those detainees whose crimes were confessed, the penalty was still shockingly disproportionate to the crime. For example, fifteen-year-old Samuel Afani “stole two chickens” when he was thirteen. When he was interrogated in 1978, it had been two years since he was sent to Naisseco.<sup>37</sup> Most of the confessed crimes consisted of stealing cattle in the rural areas near Maputo (Ressano Garcia and Moamba) or of buying illegal goods (particularly clothing and appliances). Carrying foreign currency, particularly Rand from the neighboring apartheid South Africa was a grave crime. For it paid heavily one fifty-eight-year-old miner named Rafael Mucave,

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<sup>34</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Casos duvidosos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>35</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

<sup>36</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978.

<sup>37</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Menores de 16 anos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

who was “found with lots of money on his return from South Africa.”<sup>38</sup> Although the government’s nervousness about people holding foreign currency stemmed from the massive illegal exports of money during the transition period (1974-1976), which depleted the national reserve bank, Rafael Mucave was a victim of a blind excessive zeal and opportunism.<sup>39</sup> With thirty percent of the people of southern Mozambique dependent on migrant labor to South Africa, it was not uncommon for returning migrants to carry loads of cash in Rands. It would not be unheard of if Mucave was sent to Niassa by people keen on keeping his hard-earned money. The reeducation program provided plenty of opportunities for such unscrupulous acts motivated by material gain. The same opportunistic and blind excessive zeal that victimized Mucave was predominant in the enormous civil sector. Here too, the re-education program allowed rank-and-file government authorities to get rid of unwanted workers for all kinds of petty faults. A driver named Jacinto Chongo took the car from his work and drove home at Bairro Hulene in Maputo “without authorization.” For this his boss sent him to Niassa.<sup>40</sup> Domingos Francisco Trindade, aged fifty-two, was also serving an indefinite sentence in Niassa because “he broke the fun of a car.”<sup>41</sup>

Discord with local authorities – the *Grupos Dinamizadores*, militias, or army soldiers and police officers – often ended with arrest and deportation. Failure to participate in local party-meetings and collective public works (such as cleaning the streets or building the *bairros’* headquarters) were often used to blackmail and then incriminate residents. But most discords were motivated by rages of jealousy, vengeance or retribution for past, personal offenses, or for refusal to consent to demands from local authorities. Francisco Quebe, a senior of sixty-four, was in re-education because “he refused to give his daughter to a member of the Dynamizing Group” of his neighborhood in Maputo. Francisco Zumpuza, also sixty-four, shared the same fate for “refusing to offer his daughter to an agent of the FPLM (the army).”<sup>42</sup> Protective fathers were not the only ones to pay heavily for refusing the hand of their beloved daughters. Women who obstinately

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<sup>38</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Hanlon estimated in 150 million pounds sterling the amount of money illegally exported from Mozambique between 1975 and 1976. See J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire*, p. 48.

<sup>40</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Casos duvidosos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>41</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

<sup>42</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

refused the sexual advances of local authorities – irrespective of their marital status – ended up in reeducation camps. One Anastácia Cabona, a resident of Tete, “refused to wed a police officer named José Sabora”, for which she was in M’sawize for three years.<sup>43</sup> But sometimes it only took a simple confrontation of ideas with a *chefe de quarteirão* or a *Secretário do Grupo Dinamizador* to be evacuated. Such was the case of Augusto Matias, who was in Naisseco since May 1975 for “arguing with the secretary of the GD.”<sup>44</sup>

The re-education program not only empowered government officers and local authorities. It entitled almost anyone in a position of advantage against an opponent, irrespective of the kind or gravity of the situation. In such a loaded environment, trifle acts of indiscipline or recklessness could cost someone several years of detention. This was the case of a sixteen-year-old lad named Eduardo Mabuie who “argued with the driver of a public bus” in Maputo. The unruly boy might have been fourteen when the offended driver took him to the police station, from where he was sent to Niassa.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, others were sent for re-education by their own relatives, friends, and neighbors – often with the aid of local authorities (GDs and militias) – after skirmishes of various kinds. Marital disputes ranked high in this category. João Rafael, a forty-two-year-old resident of Quelimane, was in re-education because “he had an argument with his wife.” Similarly, twenty-five-year-old Rosa Ajudante, from Vilanculos, “had a disagreement with her husband.” Ganani João, aged fifty-seven, was sent to re-education for “beating his wife.” Likewise, fifty-year-old Viola Chirondo, from Chimoio, “beat his wife for committing adultery.”<sup>46</sup> Ordinary people got rid of their offending relatives and friends by calling local authorities or by filing a case with the police. And these were invariably minor transgressions. Twenty-two-year-old Chico Charles “had an argument with his father” (*brigou com o pai*) in Homoine, Inhambane, which cots him an indefinite internment in Naisseco. Sixteen-year-old Ernesto Ofiço, from Bairro Mafalala in Maputo, was sent to reeducation for “fighting with his brother.” The list of these cases is very long. Zacarias Pandire, aged thirty, from Chibabava in Sofala province, was said to have “beaten his mother.” Inácio

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<sup>43</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978.

<sup>44</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Casos duvidosos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>45</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Menores de 16 anos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

<sup>46</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

Francisco, a twenty-three-year-old resident of Manhiça, “spent his cousin’s money” without consent. Eusébio Francisco, a young lad of seventeen from Quelimane, “fled from school.”<sup>47</sup> Sixty-four-year-old Matendenja Sebuie from Guijá in Gaza province, was in Niassa for “fighting with a friend.” And a worker in the cashew factory of Cumbane in Inhambane, named Manuel Naife, aged thirty-eight, “pushed off his friend for cuddling his wife in front of him.” This offended but aggressive husband arrived in Naisseco in December 1975 and was still there in August 1977 when his case was recorded by the DPSRN.<sup>48</sup>

Some of the offenses that can be classified as political crimes were in the very least derisory. One fifty-year-old Ardinho Soprino was in detention because “he said that Frelimo is not good.” For this he was in Naisseco for two years.<sup>49</sup> Another unfortunate detainee named Decamata Bambo from Beira was sent in because somebody accused him of “tearing off a photograph of the President.”<sup>50</sup> For that he was in detention for three years.

More aspects of the social composition of the reeducation camps’ inmate population could be gleaned from the detailed lists of 827 detainees produced by the DPSRN in 1978. The professional occupations recorded from detainees in Naisseco and M’sawize, for example, indicate that the majority of the inmates were not the parasites and idle vagrants that the authorities believed to have relieved the cities of. As table seven illustrates, the people sent to reeducation camps were engaged in a motley of trades. It is not surprising that most people worked in the sectors that were most impacted by the massive flight of white settlers: housekeepers (listed as *mainatos* and *empregados domésticos*), bartenders and restaurant cooks and servants. Immediately under this group were people who worked in the most volatile and unstable jobs during the transitional period, which were also heavily impacted by the exodus of settlers: carpenters, electricians, plumbers, masons or bricklayers, painters, clerks, and stock keepers. Miners also featured prominently, as well as farmers who went out of work as consequence of the transitional crisis (see chapter 2). However, these lists say little about the actual state of employment of detainees at the time of arrest. Given that only four people (one man and three women) were listed as unemployed, this

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<sup>47</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978.

<sup>48</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

<sup>49</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 536/SR/77. Relação nominal dos reeducandos existentes nos centros da Reeducação desta província, maiores de 50 anos de idade. Lichinga, 30 Agosto 1977.

<sup>50</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Lista Nominal de Reeducados de M’sawize e Naisseco. Casos duvidosos em Naisseco. Lichinga, 1978

indicates that most people were actively engaged in occupations of their trade when they were arrested.

**Table 7:** Professional occupations of the 827 detainees from M'sawize and Naisseco

<i>Trade</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>Housekeeper, Cook, Servant, Bartender</i>	79	17
<i>Carpenter, Electrician, plumber, blacksmith</i>	41	
<i>Clerk, stock keeper, typewriter</i>	37	3
<i>Driver, driver's assistant</i>	37	
<i>Farmer (camponês/agricultor), charcoal maker</i>	35	40
<i>Mechanic</i>	32	
<i>Mason, bricklayer, painter</i>	29	
<i>Vendor, shopkeeper</i>	29	9
<i>Student</i>	28	7
<i>Miner, migrant worker</i>	24	
<i>Factory worker</i>	22	11
<i>Fisher, sailor</i>	16	
<i>Housewife</i>		40
<i>Baker</i>	10	
<i>Tailor, shoemaker/repairer</i>	8	11
<i>Guard</i>	7	
<i>Civil Servant</i>	5	
<i>Nurse, health worker, hospital servant</i>	4	1
<i>Stevedore</i>	4	
<i>Watchmaker/repairer, repairer of appliances</i>	4	
<i>Fireman</i>	2	
<i>Army soldier, Police officer</i>	1	1
<i>Declared Unemployed</i>	1	3
<i>Other</i>	14	2
<i>Unrecorded trades</i>	109	104
<i>Total of recorded trades</i>	468	144

The portrait that we see from the DPSRN's lists with details of 827 detainees from Naisseco and M'sawize in Niassa province is indicative of the general composition of the inmate population in all reeducation camps throughout the country. People served indefinite sentences in remote camps for the most mundane of transgressions or, worse, unproved suspicion of transgressions. These suspicions and accusations were invariably made by people who knew the accused and sought revenge or to gain advantage by sending the unfortunate fellows away.

Why did it take three years for these lists to be produced? The answer is quite simple and it illustrates a very significant feature of Mozambique's internment camps. The camps were run by people with no training for the kind of diligent work that the camps required. The shortage of qualified cadres that Frelimo had to contend with meant that only the least prepared ones were employed in reeducation camps. But the fact that no one in the central government cared to ask for

detailed weekly or monthly reports about the behavior and improvement of detainees indicates that the very authorities who conceived the camps were unable to enforce their rules. How could they have enforced such rule if they were unable to send the packets of paper and ink for the reports to be produced? Therefore, there was no permanent registration of detainees, no meticulous observations and no knowledge gathering – the very methods that are defined as being intrinsic to the functioning of modern penal institutions. The camp’s monitoring eye was dormant if not blind. Simply put, the camps were a dumping ground; they were sites of permanent abandonment where people were sent and forgotten. That it took three years for camp overseers from the DPSRN to carry out what was meant to be a daily routine is indicative of the dysfunctional panopticon. No permanent “seeing machine” monitored the detainees and no individualized classification was recorded. The austerity in which the camps operated made it impossible for such work to be realized. Instead of a disciplinary system, it took two dedicated rank-and-file bureaucrats, who were personally motivated and at the risk of losing their positions, that the lists of disproportionately penalized offenders were produced.<sup>51</sup>

Outraged by the sheer injustices, Francisco Taibo and André Trabuco produced those lists to call the governor and the Minister of the Interior back to reason, not for panoptic considerations. I do not know the verdict issued by Governor Manave after he read the extensive lists sent to him. Since the proposal that was meant to legislate on the reeducation program was never passed into law (see chapter 2), no legal attributions were defined as to who could release detainees. The general understanding was that the Minister of the Interior had the ultimate prerogative on this matter, only below the supreme leader of the revolution, President Machel. Yet, in several occasions Governor Manave consented with DPSRN suggestions to release such and such detainee when he was presented with evidences of their innocence or the undisputed fact of the impracticality of their re-education in the province. For example, when the DPSRN submitted yet another list of 37 detainees arrested “arbitrarily” and suggested their repatriation in April 1978, the governor authorized their release. One of the female detainees, forty-year-old Maria Lindri, from Quelimane, had been “detained for being single.” In this case, the governor wrote on the top corner of the file: “*concordo com a sua devolução*” (I agree with their repatriation).<sup>52</sup> But the release of

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<sup>51</sup> I elaborate in more detail the work of DPSRN officers in chapter 6.

<sup>52</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais que por terem sido detidos arbitrariamente se propõe o seu regresso à procedência. Lichinga, 4 Abril 1978.



827 detainees was certainly something that the governor could not decide upon singlehandedly without consulting the “nation.” The archival record is silent here. In the conclusion I describe briefly the irregular and chaotic ways in which detainees were released. For now, let us examine the spatial anatomy of the camps and the physical arrangement of its rudimentary infrastructures. For all that could be expected from such modern penal colony – from which the “dangerous mixtures” of Mozambican society were meant to be brought to disciplinary order – the reeducation camp was an unsighted panopticon.

### **An Eyeless Panopticon: The Spatial Anatomy and the Functioning of Reeducation Camps**

With very few exceptions, most camps had no single standing infrastructure but a small cleared area when the first detainees arrived. In most cases, after days of a torturing journey, inmates had to open the clearing themselves as soon as the first pale rays of daybreak pierced through the jungle trees. While some groups cleared the area, others ventured into a designated bush area to fell trees and collect the wooden poles to build the huts and the grass to roof them. In Niassa and Cabo Delgado, the huts were then plastered with mud to cover the open sides as local villagers do. But this labor-intensive task took longer to complete. In the two female camps, it seems to have never been completed until the camps were closed in the early 1980s. In southern and central Mozambique, the huts were simply built with reeds. Such hastily and unskillfully built huts, even with the help of experienced local peasants, hardly protected the detainees from nature’s elements (cold in the winter nights, snake bites in hot days, and other life-threatening hazards).<sup>53</sup>

Although some camps were slightly better than others, in general there was no comfort. Detainees slept in the bare, sand floor. Those who were skilled enough built wooden bed frames. Although the frames were rougher than the floor, at least the detainees avoided the biting worms and insects, including snakes in search of warm shelters or after little rodents attracted by the strong smell of the lodgings. In Niassa, the great nightmare was the cold. Even in male camps, where walls were plastered, the mud often dissolved with rain and then dried hard and fell. Since detainees were not compelled to repair their lodgings – left to their own devices as they often were

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<sup>53</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze, Matola, 20 Nov. 2014; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Che Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Beto Tembe, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015.

– few people had the willing and strength to do the painstaking work of re-plastering the huts. The permanent struggle to find food in the hunger stricken camps left little room for such work. Consequently, most lodgings were unprotected on the sides. Malarial mosquitoes and tsetse flies (responsible for sleeping sickness or trypanosomiasis) found easy way into the huts and plenty of blood to feast. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, camp overseers were not better off either.



*Fig. 26. Dormitories for female detainees and their children in M'sawize-I. Note the unprotected walls, which left detainees exposed to cold and other nature's elements. August 1976. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias*

The arrangement of camp lodgings was in accordance with Frelimo's high-modernist ideal of how rural settlements should look like in socialist Mozambique. Geometrically aligned, rectangular or square shaped houses replaced the traditional round huts. The *aldeias comunais* or communal villages were arranged after the Tanzanian *ujamaas*, with straight lines and a large central square reserved for the revolutionary activities of the people.<sup>54</sup> Reeducation camps

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<sup>54</sup> See Manuel Araujo, "As Aldeias Comunais e o seu Papel na Distribuição Territorial da População Rural na RPM", *Finisterra*, 28, 36 (1983): 365-377; and Adolfo Yanes Casal, "Le Processus de Socialization au Mozambique: Les Villages Communaux." PhD thesis. Paris, IEDS, 1987.

followed the same layout, with rectangular huts aligned around an open square area known as *rassemblement*.<sup>55</sup> Like the villages' square, the *rassemblement* was the center of the camp's collective life. Meetings, roll calls, parades, cultural performances, and public punishment took place here. Where scholars see biopolitical mechanisms of power in the orthogonal shape of Frelimo's rural settlements (from which the arrangement of reeducation camps derived its form), I see Christian missionary architectural and aesthetic ideals.<sup>56</sup> Like their missionary instructors, Frelimo revolutionaries saw the nonrectilinear shape of African dwellings – the “circular kraal of huts” as missionary Henri Junod once described them – as physical expressions of spiritual and moral damnation and backwardness.<sup>57</sup> Enlightenment, self-awareness, moral regeneration and salvation were strictly related to the orderliness and modern shape of square houses and regular lines. As primary locations for moral purification of anti-socials, reeducation camps had to be organized according to this orderly form, not so much for legibility or surveillance considerations. The orthogonal shape of the camp was to express the conquest of nature by men according to scientific methods (an important component of reeducation). Circles were primitive. Squares were modern and rational.<sup>58</sup>

As the aerial photograph of Chiputo illustrates (Fig. 27), the camp had no erected barriers and many unguarded paths led freely to the working fields and into the forest. As most of my interviewees told me, warders had little concern with keeping sentinel in the camp and were often interested in going for hunting ventures or playing games among themselves.<sup>59</sup> The reduced number of warders and camp overseers compared to the size of the inmate population gave the impression that detainees lived as semi-free peasants. But this shortage of personnel was often the cause of permanent headaches for camp authorities. In his monthly reports in 1977, André Trabuco, the head of Niassa's re-education department, lamented insistently that the number of

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<sup>55</sup> A French term that means to assemble or to gather. It was brought into Frelimo's vocabulary by the first group of guerrillas trained in Algeria in 1963.

<sup>56</sup> On communal villages as kinds of panopticon, See H. West, *Kupilikula*, p. 176.

<sup>57</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, p. 324.

<sup>58</sup> But one would not be wrong to assume that, maybe, legibility, surveillance, and the regenerating effect of orthogonal forms of settlements were all part of Frelimo's rationale, a blend of various ideals as it were.

<sup>59</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze, Matola, 20 Nov. 2014; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Che Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Beto Tembe, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015.

detainees in most camps in the province, particularly M'sawize, Ilumba and Naisseco, was too high, while camp wardens were very few.<sup>60</sup>

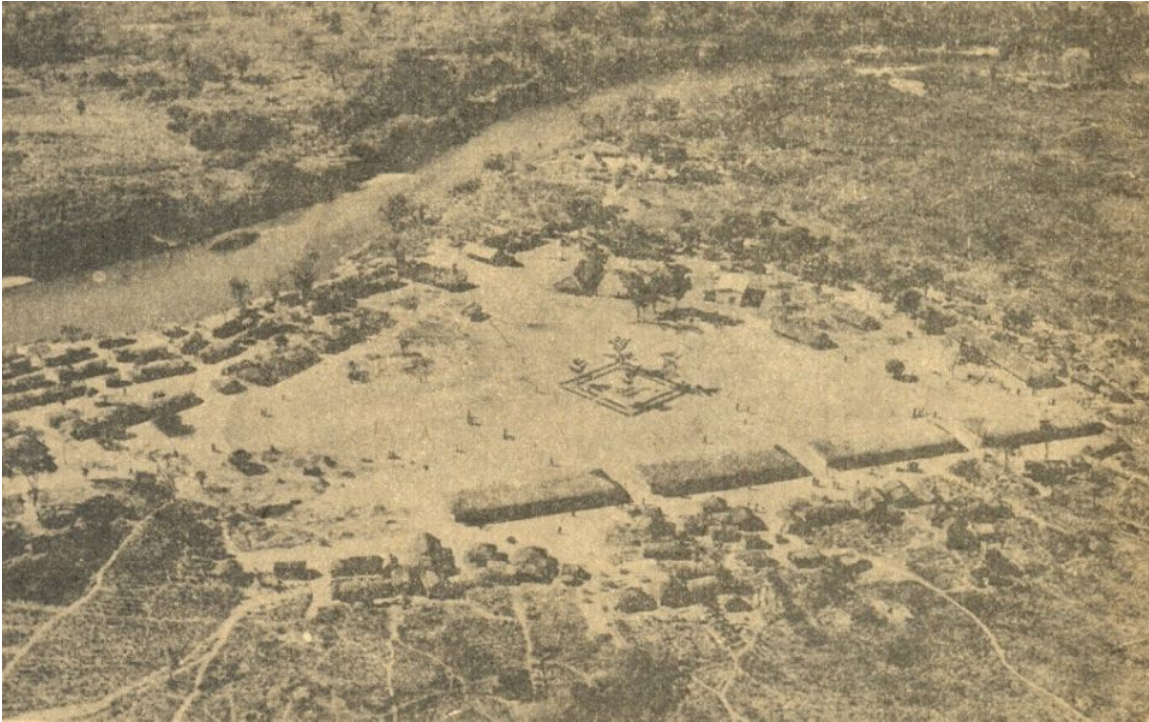


Fig. 27. Aerial view of Chiputo. Note the river at the upper corner, the orthogonal shape of the lodgings, the square rassemblement in the middle of the camp, the absence of fences and a watching tower, and the various unpatrolled paths leading to the bush. Source: Tempo, 1979.

According to MINT directives, each camp was supposed to have five *responsáveis*, each with a deputy in charge of specific tasks. These include a chief of the camp – the highest hierarchical position in the camp; a military camp commander; a political commissar (who was in charge of political education and ideological indoctrination); a *responsável* for agricultural production; and a *responsável* for cultural activities. The camps were also meant to have a secretariat with at least one or two typists to produce the required monthly reports.<sup>61</sup> Generally, the chief of the camp and his deputy were police officers under the paycheck of MINT. And so were the typists. The rest of *responsáveis* and wardens were army soldiers. However, they all had

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<sup>60</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fevereiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977

<sup>61</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 1o Seminário Nacional de Reeducação. Documento de Apio nº. 2 – Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação, Novembro de 1976.

the same background as Frelimo guerrillas and veterans of the liberation struggle, with very little academic instruction. The number of warders for each camp was never specified. But it was a general consensus – even among top members of the central government – that the camps were alarmingly short of guards and qualified overseers. For example, in July 1976, the Council of Ministers proposed the training of at least 100 professional camp overseers. This number was indicated as an initial, urgent necessity, but in the long run the camps would need more cadres.<sup>62</sup> In the First National Seminar on Re-education, held in Maputo in November 1976, MINT proposed a two to three months training program for camp overseers. The training package was to include political education, sociology, psychology, administration and book-keeping, mathematics, geography and Constitution. The program was to be supplemented with talks by high-ranking party officers and guided visits to productive units. Camp overseers were to be versed in farming techniques (including the husbandry of small animals); in production planning; in techniques of storage and conservation of food; in notions of hygiene and first aid; and in sports and cultural activities.<sup>63</sup>

However, between intentions and actions there was a very wide gape. Austerity often had the final word and no training program for camp overseers was carried out. With priorities defined elsewhere, no new professional camp supervisors were recruited. Frelimo ran short of cadres to run the massive bureaucracy left in shambles by the fleeing Portuguese.<sup>64</sup> With illiteracy rated well over 90 percent at the time of independence, the few educated people had to be employed in the most important positions in the government.<sup>65</sup> The situation was even more critical in the field of security. After the rebellion of conservative settlers in September 7 – which Frelimo saw as a coup attempt against their incoming power – and the violent riots of October 21, 1974, the capital city needed extensive security. The fear of an invasion by apartheid South Africa was very real,

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<sup>62</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 7<sup>a</sup> Sessão Ordinária do Conselho de Ministros de 9 de Julho de 1976. Síntese XI-Parte – Centros de Reeducação. Maputo, 9 Julho 1976, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT – 1<sup>o</sup> Seminário Nacional de Reeducação. Documento de Apio n.º. 2 – Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação, Novembro de 1976

<sup>64</sup> See Malyn Newitt, “Mozambique”, in Patrick Chabal *et al*, eds. *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 207.

<sup>65</sup> The situation did not improve very much in the first years of independence, despite the herculean efforts by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Judith Marshall estimated that in 1984, in a total population of 13 million, seven people out of ten were still illiterate. See Judith Marshall, “Making Education Revolutionary”, in J. Saul, ed. *A Difficult Road*, p. 157

specially after the South African failed but bloody invasion of Angola.<sup>66</sup> All of these developments led Frelimo to concentrate most of its guerrilla troops in Lourenço Marques and in the southern border with South Africa. In addition, the ransacking and destruction of property undertaken by angry settlers on their exit also increased the demand for security personnel. Factories and economic enterprises had to be protected to avoid further sabotage. The nationalized clinics and schools also needed security. The departure in June 1975 of the last company of the Portuguese troops that helped Frelimo secure the transition made the security situation more critical. The start of the war with Rhodesia in 1976 – although the initial fights were concentrated in the neighboring provinces of Manica and Gaza – squeezed the *Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique* (FPLM) even more. As Rhodesia's aggression evolved into a civil war led by Renamo in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the war effort consumed almost all the newly recruited cadres.<sup>67</sup>

There was, therefore, little left for the reeducation camps. In M'sawize, Silência David and her deputy, Judite Florêncio, commanded a platoon of seventeen female guards. This small group was tasked with guarding and re-educating half-a-thousand inmates. This was the case in almost all reeducation camps, where a handful of soldiers guarded hundreds of detainees. In the reeducation camp of Chicomo, in Gaza province, commander Jaime Rebich had only fifteen soldiers under his command to guard 750 inmates.<sup>68</sup> Yet, it was not only guards that were in very short supply. The camps also ran very short on *responsáveis* or camp overseers. In Niassa, only one camp, Chiputo, had the five required positions filled in. In the rest of the camps, overseers had to combine two or more positions, often serving as commanders, political commissars, and *responsáveis* for production.<sup>69</sup> Initially, M'telela had three overseers; M'sawize, Ilumba, and Naisseco only had two.

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<sup>66</sup> On South Africa's invasion of Angola and the fears of invasion of Mozambique, see David Martin and Phillis Johnson, eds. *Destructive Engagement: South Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986; D. Wield, "Mozambique: Late colonialism and Early Problems of Transition"; F. Couto, *Moçambique 1974*; see also Maria Paula Meneses, Celso Rosa, and Bruno Sena Martins, "Colonial Wars, Colonial Alliances: The Alcora Exercise in the Context of Southern Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 2 (2017): 397-410.

<sup>67</sup> See J.P. Borges Coelho e Paulino Macaringue, "Da Paz Negativa à Paz Positiva: Uma Perspectiva Histórica sobre o Papel das Forças Armadas Moçambicanas num Contexto de Segurança em Transformação", *Estudos Moçambicanos*, 20 (2002):41-90.

<sup>68</sup> MHN – Jay Ross, "Mozambican re-education camps raise rights questions", *The Washington Post*, 7 May 1980.

<sup>69</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Efectivo dos Campos de Reeducação – Relação dos responsáveis e pessoal em serço nos campos de reeducação. Lichinga, sd.



Fig. 28. Detainees and a warder posing for a photograph in Unango. This photo was taken during the construction of one the camp's barracks. The detainees wear fodder sacks during work to avoid damaging their uniforms – the only clothes that they have. The fact that only one warder posed for the photo indicates that there were in fact very few armed warders in the camp. Undated. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

Since all *responsáveis* were former guerillas with very little academic instruction, much of the managerial activities fell on the shoulders of rank-and-file officers in the provincial re-education departments like the DPSRN. In many camps, to alleviate the shortage of guards the overseers appointing selected detainees to serve as auxiliaries of patrol units. These detainee-guards were pejoratively called *Gatos Vermelhos* or red cats by their fellow *reeducandos*.<sup>70</sup> Other fortunate detainees were appointed for certain positions as assistants of camp administration, as teachers, and as heads of working platoons.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> The name derives from the red arm band that the *Gatos Vermelhos* wore. Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014

<sup>71</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014; J. Pinto de Sá, “A História inédita dos ‘centros de reeducação’”, p. 28. The Black Cats were detainees trusted with keeping watch on their fellow inmates, and they seem to have only existed in selected camps, such as Sacudzo, Chaimite, and Bilibiza. They wore arm badges.

Therefore, the environment that the *Notícias* newsman found so reassuring in M'sawize – with detainees moving in and out of the camp at will – was a reflection of the shortages that shaped and conditioned the organic functioning of Mozambique's reeducation camps, not the magnanimous nature of Frelimo and its government.

However, this does not mean that detainees were not under any kind of control. There were other forms to keep the internees within the vicinities of the camps and prevent escape attempts. The semi-free women that the *Notícias* reporter saw along the road linking M'sawize with the nearby village could only move in that open stretch of Mavago district. The remote location of the camps, where detainees were transported to in the dark cover of the night, managed to keep them in line. Like most camps in Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, and Sofala provinces, M'sawize was established in an unmarked forest within the perimeter of the country's largest hunting reserve (*Reserva de Caça do Niassa*). The reserve is well known for its man-eating lions and other wild beasts.<sup>72</sup> The camp laid some three-hours-walking-distance from the village. A walking trip to the provincial city of Lichinga generally took two to three days. The area had been one of Frelimo's *zonas libertadas* during the armed struggle, and a military base (Base Central) was maintained hundreds of miles away from the camp. Local communities were often instructed to report to authorities if the *mkunya woripas* showed up in their villages. Many detainees attempted to escape, and some navigated successfully the wild forests and found the freedom they longed for. Generally, the leading escapees were natives who were somewhat familiar with the area and, with their fluency in local vernaculars, they could convince local villagers to let them go or even alleviate their thirst and hunger along the perilous journey.<sup>73</sup> But these were exceptional cases. Most detainees did not dare brave the unknown wilderness for they had no sense of geography and could not speak local languages. Former Sacudzo inmate, Felizardo Chaguala, told me that he never thought about escaping for he had no idea where the camp was located and did not know where he could go: "it was full of animals around and we could not go anywhere."<sup>74</sup> Like

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<sup>72</sup> On lions in northern Mozambique, see Paolo Israel, "The War on Lions: Witch-Hunts, Occult Idioms and Post-socialism in Northern Mozambique", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 1 (2009): 155-174.

<sup>73</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 23 Dec. 2014. For example, a walk from M'sawize to the nearest village of the same name in Mavago took 2,5 hours, and only if the walker was using the road opened by detainees. Escapees avoided open paths and ventured through the thick bush that covers much of Niassa. Under such circumstances, half a day was the time to reach Mavago. Reaching Lichinga in such escape walk could take 3 to 5 exhaustive days, during which the escapee would need water, food, and sometimes shelter.

<sup>74</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 December 2014.



M'sawize, Sacudzo was in the heart of the Cudzo boscage inside the Gorongosa National Park in central Mozambique.

Many people who chanced their luck, even those who were knowledgeable about the area, found gruesome deaths in the jaws of lions and other wild beasts. As former detainee at Chaimite André Mavoco recalled, “those who tried to escape were killed by lions. There were also a lot of crocodiles in the Lúrio river, and they killed many people, sometimes we saw skulls of our inmates there.”<sup>75</sup> In 1976, the administrator of the district of Majune in Niassa informed the DPSRN and Governor Manave that, on June 17, eight detainees fled from Naisseco. One of them, João Manhiça, was “eaten by a lion and we do not know about the other seven.”<sup>76</sup> *Tempo* photojournalist Naita Ussene, who visited and photographed camps throughout the country, told me that in Niassa “many people were devoured by lions” while trying to escape.<sup>77</sup> Most of my interviewees in Niassa mentioned several examples of runaways who fell prey to lions.<sup>78</sup> Manuela Nascimento, who worked for Niassa’s *Caritas* and visited most reeducation camps, told me that her traveling team often had to stop to bury human remains. “Sometimes it was only half the body”, she said, “or just the bones.”<sup>79</sup> Camp overseers publicized these chilling cases among detainees to prevent further attempts. Sometimes they forced detainees to bury the incomplete and disfigured remains of their devoured companions to stir more fear of the bush.<sup>80</sup>

“Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.” This is how Foucault described the necessary elements in the working of a panoptic institution.<sup>81</sup> In Mozambique’s reeducation camps, the features of a modern penal institution were put upside down. This was an eyeless panopticon that relied on the remote location of the camps, their wild surroundings, and the frightful dark of the bush night to keep its subjects in line. The roaring of lions, the growling fights of *mhisis* or hyenas, and the singing of owls in the bush night was something that few urbanites would dare confront. The camps’ geographical location – in the heart of the country’s wildest corners – was largely enough of an

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<sup>75</sup> Interview: André Macovo (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014

<sup>76</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 346/SR/76, do Administrador de Majune ao GPN, Lichinga, 22 Julho 1976

<sup>77</sup> Interview: Naita Ussene, Maputo, 17 February 2015.

<sup>78</sup> Interview: Father Inácio, Lichinga Diocese, 19 May 2015; Interview: Manuela Nascimento, Lichinga, 11 June 2015

<sup>79</sup> Interview: Manuela Nascimento, Lichinga, 11 June 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Interview: André Macovo (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014.

<sup>81</sup> M. Foucault, *Punish and Discipline*, p. 200.

obstacle to curb escapes. Therefore, the range of control in the camp did not rest on the “monitoring eye” of the representatives of the state, nor did it lie on the “architectural apparatus” of the camp with its square shaped huts and the wide open *rassemblement*. Not even on armed guards. Rather, it rested on the remoteness of the camps’ location and the state of ignorance about the geographic location of the camp that detainees were kept in. This is why it was crucial that detainees were not informed about their destiny when they were transported. This is why officials made tremendous effort to prevent detainees from seeing plaques and signs in the airports and along the road leading to the camp. This is why, inside the camps, geographical maps were kept out of sight (in most cases, there were simply forbidden even among wardens). Hiding, concealing, and darkness, these were the techniques of surveillance put at work in the reeducation camp.

### **The Camps’ Daily Regimen 1: Work**

Despite several attempts to produce a centrally coordinated program for the camps, the Ministry of the Interior was never able to pass any regulations with detailed rules on how the camps ought to operate on a daily basis. The ministry was short of capable people to elaborate such rules and the administrative capacity of the ministry was overstretched given its ample responsibilities. Consequently, camp supervisors had to come up with their own plans on how to keep the detainees busy. Although a tentative program was introduced later in 1980, when José Castiano Zumbire was nominated director for the National Directorate of Reeducation Services, the program still left much of the daily camp routine up to supervisors to decide.<sup>82</sup> The only area in which MINT outlined a detailed program was in the political education of detainees. Yet, the program lacked qualified instructors and didactic materials to be properly carried out. The general consensus was that detainees had to work in the fields (*machamba*), from where their food ought to come. But unlike penal labor camps elsewhere, where productivity and outputs were often prioritized over other activities, in Mozambique the camps had no economic relevance whatsoever. There were no production quotas and no defined number of hectares for the fields. The produce from *machambas* was entirely destined for the inmates’ subsistence – and even here they often fell very short. Not only did the camps lack appropriate implements for agriculture (short cable hoes and axes were

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<sup>82</sup> AGGPN – MINT/Boletim Informativo n° 5. Maputo, 31 Maio 1980.

the only tools available), they had no qualified experts in this field. Therefore, no camp was ever self-sufficient. They all depended almost entirely on rations from respective DPSRs, which often failed to arrive and hunger loomed large (see chapter 6). Nevertheless, every week-days detainees were marched in working brigades to the fields, where they grew a few rain-dependent crops that made the camps' staple food: corn, manioc, and beans. Small vegetable gardens, which could only be worked on the banks of nearby rivers, were often left for individual initiatives. Although in some camps detainees collected timber and produced charcoal, subsistence agriculture was the only serious industry in which they were engaged. With no established production quotas, the work regime was relatively mild. Despite the hardship of farming, detainees were subjected to very little regimentation in reeducation camps.

The daily routine in most camps began very early in the morning. “Dawn at 4:30 in the morning. Cleaning and breakfast. Then farm. Lunch. Farm again.” This is how Silência David resumed the daily program of M’sawize as she guided the *Notícias* visitor around the camp. “In the evening, they eat again”, she continued, “however, we do not always have enough food, so sometimes nobody eats at night.”<sup>83</sup> As in Frelimo’s former training camps, the day often started with a whistle, at which sound detainees had to form a line in the *rassemblement*. The chief commander called the roll and gave the instructions of the day. Organized as brigades of up to 25 to 40 people, some groups would work the *machamba*, others would cut and collect wood, and still others would fetch drinking and cooking water from nearby rivers. Others would build the huts and, in the case of M’sawize, they would continue working on the opening of the road linking the camp with the nearby village (to allow the trucks to deliver the rations and bring more detainees).

After the roll call, detainees had a cup of sweet tea (if there was sugar) and a piece of manioc or cornmeal porridge. This was the breakfast. Bread was a luxury that never made into reeducation camps. Immediately after breakfast, detainees joined their working platoons and marched to the fields. While in some camps, like M’sawize, detainees farmed in the morning and in the afternoon, in most camps the work was resumed by noon, for the heat of the sun made it impossible to continue (unless one was under punishment for breaking a camp rule, the end of the

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<sup>83</sup> AJN – “Centro de Reeducação de Msauise: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Notícias*, 18 Aug. 1976

work day depended on the guard entrusted to watch the infringer). Other works consisted in falling trees for local constructions, for firewood, and for the production of charcoal, which was then sold in the local markets. In some camps, such as M'telela and Chiputo, there were groups of artisans that were dispensed from the hard labor of tilling the land. These artisans produced woodworks (benches, doors, bedframes, etc.) and carried out the small carpentry and masonry maintenance work inside the camp. Other artisans produced utensils such as baskets and mats. In camps like M'telela and Chiputo, some of these utensils were sold in the local markets and camp overseers used the money to buy food.<sup>84</sup>



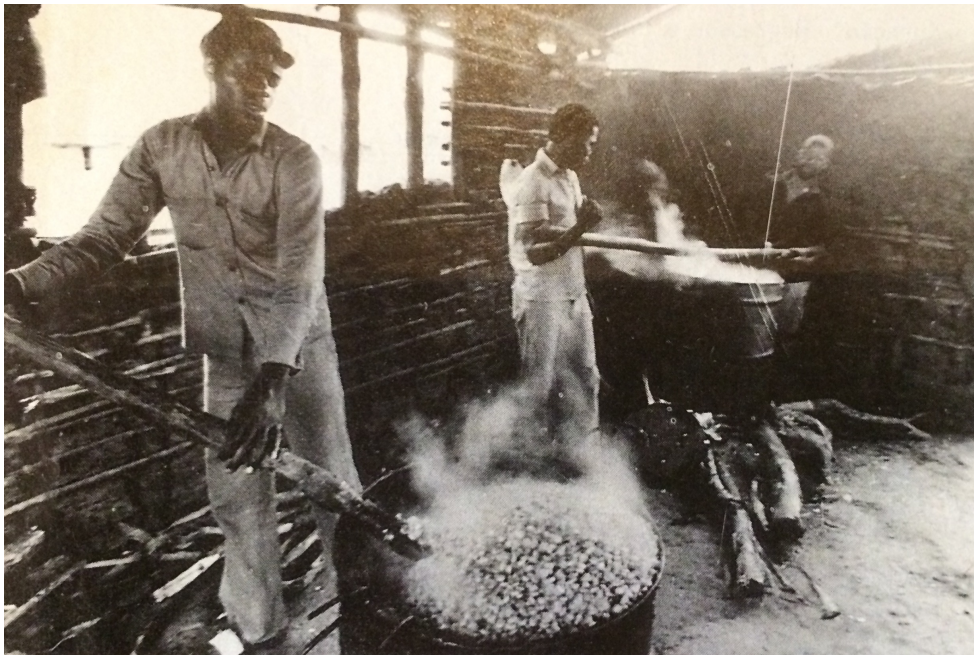
Fig. 29. Detainees at work in Inhassune, 1976. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.

After work, detainees returned to the camp for lunch. The staple food was cornmeal pap or *chima* (in other places in Africa it is known as *ugali*, *sadza*, or *uswa*), and beans. Generally the food was poorly cooked and unseasoned. The beans – which grow everywhere in Niassa – were only prepared with water, salt and cooking oil (sometimes it was only water and salt, for oil was often unavailable). As Carlos Fumo recalled of Ruarua, “we practically lived as savages, we had no food. Most of the time we ate dry corn. We poured the entire sack of corn in the drum with

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<sup>84</sup> J. Pinto de Sá, “A História inédita dos ‘centros de reeducação’”; Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014

boiling water until it softened. We ate that for lunch and for supper.”<sup>85</sup> Occasionally, in happy good days, game meat was served. But this only happened in certain camps near hunting reserves (such as M’sawize, or Sacudzo in Sofala province. In Sacudzo, detainees were also served dried fish, as the camp was located along the main corridor of dried fish trade from Beira to Zimbabwe).<sup>86</sup> Skilled and resolute detainees often supplemented their meager meals with a piece of fresh fish from nearby rivers. However, given the lack of fishing hooks and nets, catching fish in the camps took great skill and patience. For those who worked on vegetable gardens, the unpalatable taste of *chima* and beans could be flavored with some green leaves. A team of selected detainees prepared the food. These teams seem to have been rotated daily or weekly. But detainees who were renown for being good cooks often held their positions permanently. Cooking was the most sought job in the camp because it allowed detainees to be closer to the source of food and a guarantee for more generous portions compared to the meager ones that the majority received.<sup>87</sup>



*Fig. 30. Detainees cooking beans and chima. Undated. Credit: Público Magazine*

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<sup>85</sup> Interview: Carlos Fumo, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.



Fig. 31. Detainees lining for food in Naisseco. Undated. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.

There was no order in eating time, much less a “modern” table. As soon as their rusty iron dishes were filled, the *reeducandos* set wherever they found appropriate in the vast open camp in company of close inmates (or friends). In his kafkian novel *Campo de Trânsito*, Mozambican fiction writer and historian João Paulo Borges Coelho captured the eating time in the reeducation camp with satirical yet very informative detail.<sup>88</sup> Most detainees – modern urbanites as they were – had to learn how to eat by hand, for cutlery was a luxury that only few, and often senior detainees could afford. Like other metal tools (such as knives), spoons were markers of hierarchy inside the camp. For most urban southerners, eating with cutlery was the norm (this was one of the many enduring influences of Portuguese assimilationist colonial rule as well as missionary education). Eating by hand was thus tantamount to backwardness. Those who were obstinate to keep their “civilized” ways of eating, used barks of trees or hardened leaves in place of spoons. Yet, these attempts to keep some kind of dignity in eating did not last for long. As some of my interviewees reiterated, “we lived as savages.”<sup>89</sup>

Camp overseers ate the same unpalatable food, but theirs was often prepared on separate, smaller pots by relatively better skilled cook detainees. At times, they ate in the open, like their

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<sup>88</sup> J.P. Borges Coelho, *Campo de Trânsito*, p. 46-9.

<sup>89</sup> Group Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Ché Mafuiane, and Felizardo Cuaguala, Matola, 8 Dec. 2014.

captives. At others, they concealed themselves in a less visible spot where detainees were not allowed to approach.<sup>90</sup> As much as some camp overseers attempted to keep a kind of hierarchical and statutory distance from detainees, the camp offered little alternatives. The differentiation was in the uniforms, the firearms that warders bore, and the undisputed reality that some were captors and others were captives.

In most camps, where farming was only done in the morning, lunch marked the end of the daily work for most detainees. They spent the remainder of the day very much on their own. With their hungry bellies appeased (at least for the time being), most detainees spent the afternoons chitchatting or daydreaming under the cool shade of a tree during the hot summers, or warming up in the sun in the open *rassemblement* during the chilly dry season. Some detainees employed the free time patching up their ragged black khaki uniforms or sewing their worn shoes. Others, the most industrious, went to their small vegetable gardens or fixed their lodgings, which needed permanent repair given their rudimentary features. Except for the female camps of Ilumba and M'sawize-1, where political education seemed to have been mandatory from the outset, in most camps it was optional (at least until the late 1970s). Therefore, those thirsty of knowledge spent the two hours after lunch attending the political commissar's lectures. Those allowed to hunt (specially in M'sawize-2 and Chiputo) braved the forest with a couple of guards on their heels.<sup>91</sup> The addicted ones found a less visible spot to smoke weed or to gulp *cajulima*. In many cases, affluent detainees sneaked to the nearby villages to quench their thirst for alcohol or to alleviate the urge for a smoke, even at the risk of being caught and punished. However, punishment for smoking weed or drinking only happened in case a mean guard decided to enforce a camp rule that was often overlooked, particularly if camp warders were themselves frequent visitors of the village for the same reason – and this was often the case in most camps.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Interview: Carlos Fumo, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Camp guards did most of the hunting, since their firearms allowed them to kill large animals (elephants, hippos or rhinos). Normally this happened during times when food supplies ran very short, particularly during the rainy season (November-February). In case of an elephant killing (or any other large animal), the precious tusks, horns and skins were sent to the governor's cabinet in Lichinga. In October 1978, the DPSRN sent to the governor 14 elephant tusks, 4 hippo's teeth, and two leopard skins. There were, however, cases in which camp overseers traded the precious game prizes on their own. Yet, if discovered by the DPSRN office, such illicit acts often ended in grave reprimand and at times punishment with internment in a different reeducation camp. AGGPN – DPSRN/Guia de remessa no 189. Lichinga, 19 Outubro 1979.

<sup>92</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

The most creative detainees joined the folkloric groups known as *Grupo Cultural Polivalente* (GCP). These were highly selective groups and membership was a free pass to the elite class of *reeducandos* dispensed from the heaviest labor. The GCPs were responsible for cultural production and entertainment of all sorts, from plays, choirs, dancing, to poetry. They spent most of the day rehearsing the numbers to be presented on Saturdays and Sundays afternoon, or on a festive day in the many revolutionary holidays in the calendar (heroes day, women's day, workers' day, Independence Day, and victory day). Occasionally they rehearsed for a reception of an important visitor.<sup>93</sup>

There was no strict time to return to the camp in the afternoon. Hunger led everyone to the kitchen line for supper as the falling sun cast its last reddish rays from above the trees surrounding the camp. The meal was invariably the same one eaten at lunch. Sunset marked the end of the day. With no electricity and no lights, at night the dense darkness of the camp was often dotted with sparks of fire where detainees gathered for a last chitchat, trying to get most of the heat before bedtime (this was more indispensable during the cold dry season of Niassa between May and August). Smaller lights could shine inside the lodgings of camp overseers, the only privileged camp dwellers to have a candle or a petrol lamp (these were the little luxuries that differentiated detainees from their captors). When the last fires were extinguished, and the candles at the supervisors' lodgings blown off, the dark mantle of night engulfed the camp. If there was a permanent "monitoring eye" in the camp, surely it went totally blind at night. Therefore, permanent visibility in reeducation camps was an impossibility. The kind of visibility that was possible in the camps was not determined by modern mechanisms of surveillance, but by the freaks of nature.

### **The Camps' Daily Regimen 2: The Façade of Political Education**

Despite the elegant rhetoric of political and ideological (Marxist-Leninist) education, which Frelimo leaders flamboyantly claimed was at the heart of the rehabilitation of Mozambique's anti-socials, there was little in the camps' educational program worthy of such designation. In Niassa, for example, DPRSN officers saw the education program as a façade or at most a meaningless

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<sup>93</sup> J. Pinto de Sá, "A História inédita dos 'centros de reeducação'", p. 28; Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 Nov. 2014.



activity.<sup>94</sup> The camps were deprived of basic didactic materials, rooms for classes, and qualified cadres to carry out the program. Political commissars were responsible for the educational program. However, not all camps had a political commissar. Camp overseers were often forced to take up this task, combining the responsibilities of camp commander and political commissar. Yet, very few overseers had the qualifications to instruct detainees in politics or any other academic matter. In many reports, DPSRN directors lamented about the shortage of cadres to run the camps in Niassa and the lack of a clear program for reeducation other than compelled manual labor and the “pointless” sessions of political education. In one of those rare moments of enlightenment (perhaps good will), MINT recognized this fact and it was the main subject of the First National Seminar on Re-education held in November 1976 in Maputo.

The Seminar concluded that while manual labor was undoubtedly a crucial component of re-education, a meaningful political program had to be created. It was decided that each activity inside the camp ought to have a political explanation informed by scientific socialism. “For example,” it was stated, “production has to be studied” and detainees had to be explained that it was “through production that humanity evolved”; they had to be explained about the “role of the surplus and the emergence of class division in society.” They also had to study the “current revolutionary process in Mozambique” and the pursuit of a “classless society.”<sup>95</sup> Learning the history of Mozambique’s colonial domination, the rise of Frelimo, and the struggle for liberation were key aspects in transforming detainees into awakened, conscious new women and new men. It was determined that the “implementation of a meaningful political program implied the organization of *reeducandos* according to a military structure.” Camps ought to have a monthly plan that dictated all activities. Each Saturday afternoon camp overseers were to meet and meticulously study the execution of the plan, and trace new programs. The daily program had to mandatorily include two hours for political study.

Political education had to include lectures, the production of a camp journal, and the collective study of newspapers. There were detailed instructions on how the two hours of political education had to be spent. One hour was to be dedicated to lectures; half an hour for debate and

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<sup>94</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fevereiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977.

<sup>95</sup> AGGPN –MINT/1º Seminário sobre Reeducação. Documento de Apoio n.º. 2: Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação. Novembro de 1976, p. 3

clarification of doubts; and the other half hour for commentaries on daily news and such issues as “the definition of the enemy, the behavior and erroneous ideas among *reeducandos*, exposition of new initiatives”, and so on. For the program to be successful, a designated group of detainees had to listen to the 12:30 p.m. radio news, then transmit and comment on it for all detainees in the general parade. Camps were to introduce gymnastics, sports, and cultural activities. In addition, professional training was to be implemented in crafts such as carpentry, mechanics, and arts. In their capacity as chief political instructors, political commissars had to create a group of aids among exemplary detainees, who were to prepare – under their supervision – the materials for the lectures. These aids were to be dispensed from certain activities in the camp but production (since this was a “fundamental aspect of their re-education”). Each class had to have 20 to 40 students. Political commissars were to inform detainees that participation in these activities was a “decisive step towards their freedom.”<sup>96</sup>

However, these detailed instructions remained a dead letter and little if nothing changed in the precarious nature of the educational program inside the camps. DPSRN officers continued to be greatly concerned about the level of education of many camp overseers in Niassa. In April 1977 – six months after the Seminar on Re-education recommended special training for camp supervisors – the new director of the DPSRN, André Trabuco, noted that the “political and technical capabilities” of Niassa’s camp officers “are minute.”<sup>97</sup> He sadly informed his superiors that in Ilumba, for example, “the various programs are being implemented with much difficulty due to lack of personnel in quantity and quality to materialize the instructions.” The main difficulties were noted in political education and alphabetization. “The camp lacks personnel capable of understanding the instructions through political documents, *Tempo* magazine and newspapers, and interpret them”, he wrote.<sup>98</sup>

The only didactic materials that camp overseers had to work with were newspapers (especially *Tempo* and *Notícias*). Speeches by Frelimo authorities (President Machel’s in particular), were the primary and often the only guiding tools for political education. More than

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<sup>96</sup> AGGPN –MINT/1º Seminário sobre Reeducação. Documento de Apoio nº. 2: Projecto de Programa para os Centros de Reeducação. Novembro de 1976, p. 3-4

<sup>97</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fereveiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977

<sup>98</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fereveiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977

often, these “precious” materials arrived in the camps several months after they had been published. Oriented by people with “minute” instruction, it is not difficult to imagine the theatrical nature of lectures on political and ideological education that *reeducandos* were compelled to attend every day after returning from the fields. Seated under the shade of a tree, as it was often the case because huts to serve as classrooms were inexistent, detainees listened their political instructors read aloud a section of a speech by the president or a piece of news. A discussion of the content of a months-old news article would then follow. If the commissar happened to be versed in Frelimo’s socialist maxims or had a certain knowledge of the history of the armed struggle, she or he would throw some ready-made slogans about the virtues of collective labor, the class struggle, the heroic saga of the liberation war, or the actions of global imperialism and internal enemies to undermine the revolution. That is what the lecture consisted of.

Here is another example of how, even when plans were elaborated in the capital, austerity dictated the outcome. With no trained instructors and no didactic materials, political education amounted to nothing more than propaganda, mobilization, and moral exhortation. In response to a question about education in M’sawize by the *Noticias* visitor, *chefe* Silência David said: “three times per week we have meetings for political mobilization.”<sup>99</sup> With few available cadres to run the camp, Silência David was combining her role as chief and political commissar, a task for which she had no training according to her boss Francisco Taibo.<sup>100</sup> Like her colleagues, Silência David understood political education as the verbatim repetition of President Machel’s speeches and related party publications that lauded the achievements of the revolution. For her, political instruction aimed at explaining detainees the reason of their re-education (regardless of the motives and circumstances of their arrest), and to convince them of the magnanimous character of the party. This is how she explained to the newsman the aims of her political work among putative prostitutes in M’sawize-1:

Political education is part of our working methods. At first, if we said ‘Viva Frelimo’, nobody responded. Nobody understood why they were brought here, why they had to suffer this much and endure these life conditions. To explain what the lives of these women represented in the colonial society, to explain the kind of society we want to build in Mozambique, to explain why they are in this isolated place, a political explanation was necessary.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> AJN – “Centro de Reeducação de Msauíse: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Noticias*, 18 Aug. 1976.

<sup>100</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, N° 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976.

<sup>101</sup> “Centro de Reeducação de M’sauíse: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Noticias*, 18 Aug. 1976.

Like her colleagues in other camps, Silência David measured the success of her political work by the unison shouts of *Viva Frelimo* with hundreds of arms in raised fists, as well as the military discipline that detainees seemed to show in the roll calls and parades. That is what re-education was all about. One interviewee who was detained in a dance club in Maputo and spent two years in M'sawize-1 told me sarcastically: "I learned to be a soldier. I did not need any re-education, but I was re-educated, I did not dance anymore, for example."<sup>102</sup> Another former detainee, who was seventeen when he was sent to Sacudzo, said to me in anger: "I don't think I was re-educated, quite the opposite, I cultivated hatred and resentment."<sup>103</sup>

Four years after the first seminar on re-education, the government recognized that little had been done to implement an effective educational program in the camps. During the Second Seminar, also held in Maputo on January 15-19, 1980, the new interior minister, Mariano Matsinhe, urged participants to find solutions to improve the situation by listing the same tasks defined in 1976. Nevertheless, he lauded the "successes achieved", and claimed that they "attest to the righteousness of Frelimo's political line and the measures taken by the government for the re-education of thousands of vagrants and delinquents who swarmed the urban areas of the country."<sup>104</sup>

While political leaders applauded their revolutionary program in the comfort of the capital city, in the remote corners of the country some camp supervisors supplemented their disciplinary measures with gruesome forms of punishment. To many detainees, re-education amounted to nothing more than physical punishment.

### **On Discipline and Punishment**

Simeão Mazuze, aka Salimo Mohamed, is a well-known pop musician in Mozambique. His quite popular song, *Bilibiza*, is often aired in radio-stations in Mozambique. Yet, very few of his countless fans know about the backstage of this dancing *marrabenta* tune. "This song has a special meaning that I will never forget", Mazuze told me when I first interviewed him at his warm and spacious home in Matola in 2014. After a brief, yet almost endless moment of silence and deep

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<sup>102</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>104</sup> "Trabalho da reeducação foi positivo – Constata II Seminário efectuado em Maputo", *Tempo*, 27 Jan. 1980, p. 2.

sadness, he wiped the tears from his face and continued: “this song is dedicated to all reeducation camps, which I consider concentration camps because they concentrated many Mozambicans. They used these reeducation camps to brain-wash us.”<sup>105</sup> Simeão Mazuze was my first interviewee and a key figure in the first phase of my field work in Maputo. He spent three years in several reeducation camps in central and northern Mozambique (Sacudzo, Bilibiza, and Chaimite). After a small grievance with his superior officer in Maputo’s air force base, where he was responsible for overseeing the Army aircrafts, Mazuze was sent for re-education without trial on April 10, 1977. In his mid-twenties, he was freshly married to “a beautiful woman” and they were happily waiting for their first child. The reeducation camp of Sacudzo in Sofala province was his first detention camp. It was here where he composed in his native language, Changana, the first version of the song, which went “*Ya bamba le Sacudzo.*” He changed the lyrics to “*Ya bamba le Bilibiza*” when he was transferred to Bilibiza reeducation camp in Cabo Delgado province.

*Ya ‘bamba le Bilibiza, a hi fambeni hi ya kuvona*  
 Life is hard [or It’s beating hard] in Bilibiza, let’s go see it  
*Bilibiza ku ni tinena, a hi fambeni hi ya kuvona*  
 There are brave men in Bilibiza, let’s go see it.  
*Bilibiza ka rimiwa, a hi fambeni hi ya kuvona*  
 There’s farming in Bilibiza, let’s go see it.  
*Bilibiza ka fundiwa, a hi fambeni hi ya kuvona*  
 There’s education in Bilibiza, let’s go see it  
*Bilibiza ku ni makwayela, a hi fambeni hi ya kuvona*  
 There’s kwayela dance in Bilibiza, let’s go see it.

These simple lyrics sum up some of the most characteristic aspects of reeducation camps: hardship, farming, political education, and cultural activities. But the picture of the camp that Mazuze’s song paints is a sanitized one and more in line with Frelimo’s sloganeering about the goals of the reeducation program. The sentence *ya ‘bamba le Bilibiza* is very vague. It can mean “life is hard” as I translated it. But it can also mean something different. The word *Kubamba* does not appear in any dictionary of Changana or Ronga. And Mazuze did not give a clear definition of what he meant with it in our conversations. He also never mentioned censorship of his lyrics. But since he performed this and other songs of his authorship in the camps during festive days to the amusement of camp overseers and important visitors, it is not surprising that there is no outward dissent in the song or a line that clearly presents the camps in a problematic way. At first glance,

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<sup>105</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 November 2014.

Bilibiza emerges in the song as a place of industriousness, social and cultural renewal, and as such worthy of public attention (*Let's go see it*). This is the image that Frelimo authorities envisioned in setting up the camps: bands of idle urbanites being transformed into industrious and upstanding citizens through hard labor, political indoctrination, and cultural awakening. But *Ya Bamba le Bilibiza* could also mean that the *chamboco* was ringing hard on people's bodies in the camp, an allusion to the most pervasive form of punishment not only in the camps, but all over the county.<sup>106</sup>

Although elusive in his song, the theme of punishment dominated Mazuze's recollection of camp life during our several conversations. In public statements, President Machel and his cabinet members often denied that punishment was part of re-education. "Punishment is not the objective of re-education", said President Machel in 1981, "but the reintegration into society of the man who went astray."<sup>107</sup> However, for former detainees the most vivid aspect they remember about camp life were the gruesome forms of physical violence that they sustained. Of all aspects of everyday life in reeducation camps, punishment was the one that all my informants had an unshaken recollection. The archival record gives a hint at what detainees suffered under certain camp commanders, but it is generally silent about the kinds of disciplinary methods employed to remonstrate wrongdoers inside the camps: felling trees, digging holes, floggings, and weeks of solitary confinement in underground drenched cells.

The ways in which camp supervisors attempted to enforce the unwritten rules of internment also demonstrate the peculiar features of reeducation camps. MINT never issued directives on how to handle cases of indiscipline inside the camps or even escape attempts. There were no written rules on what detainees were allowed and what they were forbidden inside and outside the camp. Yet there was a general understanding that they should not drink alcohol, smoke marijuana or any kinds of drugs, engage in sexual activities among themselves and with local villagers. Fleeing from the camp was out of question. Everyone was compelled to work. In some camps, attending political lectures was mandatory. Hunting and going to the nearby villages without authorization was forbidden. The enforcement of these "rules" was often left at the discretion of camp commanders and their deputies. Given the loose security, in all camps detainees broke these "rules" frequently. Consequently, each camp had its own distinct characteristic when it came to enforcing discipline.

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<sup>106</sup> On *chamboco*, see chapter 3.

<sup>107</sup> AHM – António Souto, "Reeducação e legalidade fabricam Homen Novo", *Notícias*, 29 Aug. 1981.

But because “law enforcement” depended on the person in charge of the camp, such characteristics also varied from time to time in the same camp, for supervisors were rotated constantly.

Except for solitary confinement and felling trees (which often took place in the bush), all other forms of punishment were invariably a public spectacle, performed in the *rassemblement* in the presence of all inmates. There were no individualities in these odd, eyeless panopticons. And punishment had little to do with the private soul and reformation. Punishment was about degradation and theatrical mass pedagogy. As offending detainees were being chastened, their fellow inmates had to form a circle in the *rassemblement* and were forced to sing revolutionary anthems and to clap. Ché Mafuiane and André Macovo recalled one of the songs from Chaimite: “*A wile mucolonyi, a wile, a wile mucolonyi, a wile – the colonialist has fallen, he has fallen.*”<sup>108</sup>. All the techniques of physical punishment came from the playbook of Frelimo’s guerrilla. They were all refined during the struggle for liberation to discipline deviant soldiers and civilian populations under guerrilla authority.<sup>109</sup>

One of the most prevalent form of punishment, one that was employed in almost all camps, was *destronca* or felling trees. The daunting task did not only consist of cutting a tree down, but of uprooting it with a simple axe. The task could take days, and the punishment did not end until the tree was down. “You could take a week, that was up to you”, recalled André Macovo, “they waited for you with a rifle while you were at it, tired, hungry, or sick, they forced you to do it until it was done.”<sup>110</sup> Any offense could be punished with *destronca*, depending on the mood of the camp supervisor. Sometimes there were no motives at all, and the task was used sadistically to “welcome” detainees arrested for grave crimes, such as collaboration with Renamo. José Araújo (aka Zequinho), who arrived at M’sawize-2 in 1982 at the age of seventeen for distributing Renamo pamphlets in Maputo, was “greeted” with *destronca*. He recalled:

As soon as I jumped out of the helicopter, they gave me an axe to uproot a big tree. You could see sparks coming out from the impact of the axe on the wood. But you had to bring the tree down with all its roots. I had never held an axe before. I lived in the city. My hand palms were torn and bled. But I could not stop. Whenever I stopped they hit me with their butts. I worked until it was dawn, and I ended up fainting because of exhaustion and hunger. They poured water on me and told me to continue the work. I could not go on. My axe was bloody. I fell sick. I had fevers for a month.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Interview: André Macovo (aka Picuane) and Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014.

<sup>109</sup> See “O Direito e a Justiça nas Zonas Libertadas”, *Justiça Popular*, 8/9 (Jan-Jun 1984): 11-14.

<sup>110</sup> Interview: André Macovo (aka Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014.

<sup>111</sup> Interview: José Araújo (aka Zequinha), Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

Some camps were renowned for their cruel forms of punishment. Chaimite and Ruarua in Cabo Delgado, and M'sawize-2 in Niassa had underground solitary "cells" known as *Xiconhoca* (an allusion to the caricature figure that represented the internal enemy). These cells were holes dug in the camp and covered with wood. In Chaimite – a former Portuguese military base – the cell was established in a hole that the Portuguese army used to stock weaponry. These holes were always kept wet and muddy, and detainees were sent there naked.<sup>112</sup> Simeão Mazuze – who was sent to such cell in Chaimite – recalled:

Although each re-education camp had its rules, punishment was almost the same. There was a place called *Xiconhoca* where a person wearing only a sack was confined, excluded from all other *reeducandos*. They tucked you inside the site and then they poured water. After a while earthworms began to rise out. I do not know if they were really worms, but they pierced you, and you could not sleep. After spending several days there they sent you to fell black wood trees.<sup>113</sup>

The motives for which detainees were punished in such horrific a place varied. Some were very serious. José Araújo was sent there for two months for attempting to escape from M'sawize-2 in 1985. "It rained and the hole was filled with water and mud", he told me, "I ate and did everything else there. I got very sick. That's when they took me out."<sup>114</sup> An escape attempt was one of the gravest offenses. Before being sent to solitary confinement, Zaquinho was flogged. André Macovo ventured out of the camp at Chaimite one day in 1977 to spend a night with a woman in a nearby village. Upon his return, he was sent to *Xiconhoca*.<sup>115</sup>

Other motives were mundane and arbitrary. At Chaimite, Simeão Mazuze was punished in this gruesome and barbaric way for calling one of the warders *senhor* instead of *camarada*. Upon hearing the word *senhor*, Mazuze told me, the warder rang his whistle and summoned all detainees to the *rassemblement*. "Some people were three or four miles away working in the fields, but they had to come running." The offended guard informed the detainees that their colleague was a reactionary and had to be disciplined. Asked if Mazuze's fault needed punishment or not, all detainees raised their hands in agreement. Naturally they feared to oppose the authority and end

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<sup>112</sup> Interview: Salimo Mohamed, Matola, 20 Nov. 2014. Interview: André Macovo (aka Picuane) and Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014; Interview: José Araújo (aka Zequinha), Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

<sup>113</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 Nov. 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Interview: José Araújo (aka Zequinha), Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

<sup>115</sup> Interview: André Macovo (aka Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014



up sharing Mazuze's inevitable fate. The offender tried to argue that indeed the warder was a *senhor* because he was in charge of all detainees, and that *camaradas* were the detainees because they were all in the same category. His argument only made his case worse. He was flogged in front of the crowd at the soundtrack of a revolutionary song by his own companions. After the beating he was stripped naked, dressed in a sack and thrown inside the *Xiconhoca*, the underground solitary cell. "I was kept there for twenty-two days", he recalled, "it rained, I was wet, and this time I was alone. I only came out once to bath in the river. When they finally took me out I ran around the camp like a madman."<sup>116</sup>

*Chamboco* was the most common form of chastisement. It was invariably inflicted in highly choreographed public spectacles, under the soundtrack of a revolutionary anthem. Other forms of punishment included undressing and burying detainees up to the neck; or force them to lay down in the middle of the open *rassemblement* and face the sun with wide opened eyes (this cruel castigation – well captured in Licínio Azevedo's *Virgem Margarida* – was often done in the hot summer days when the sun was at its pick). Sometimes detainees were castigated like cadets, with extensive physical exercises (like crawling or running for hours round the *rassemblement* carrying heavy objects: a wooden pole, or even rolling a drum).

Some of the most sadistic forms of punishment were inflicted on Jehovah's Witnesses. Devoted to their religious creed of only bowing before God, Jehovah's Witnesses – pejoratively called "religious fanatics" by Frelimo authorities – obstinately refused to pay homage to the national flag and anthem, and refused to shout the *vivas* to the ruling party.<sup>117</sup> One camp commander in Naisseco was notorious for employing gruesome forms of torture against recalcitrant Jehovah's Witnesses. As reported in the Geneva-based *Review of International Commission of Jurists*, the Naisseco commander "frequently ordered (detainees) to be tied with ropes soaked with salt." This form of torture left many detainees crippled. When Governor Manave was informed about the abuses at Naisseco in 1978, he ordered the detention of the commander, who was in turn sent to a reeducation camp as a prisoner.<sup>118</sup> When President Machel visited the camps of Cabo Delgado and Niassa for the second time in 1981 during the *Ofensiva* campaign, he

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<sup>116</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze (aka Salimo Mohamed), Matola, 20 Nov. 2014.

<sup>117</sup> The majority of the members of the Jehovah's Witnesses were interned at Carioco in Milange, Zambezia province.

<sup>118</sup> MHN – "Mozambique's Re-education Camps", *The Review of International Commission of Jurists*, Geneva. December 1981, p. 14-15.

was shocked with reports about torture in Ruarua and ordered the arrest of the camp commander.<sup>119</sup> Jorge da Costa, the National Director of Security who fled to South Africa in 1982, told journalists that the “well-meaning” reeducation camps “dissolved into feudal kingdoms run by the soldiers who controlled the camps.” He claimed that some camp authorities “lived on the people in the camps. They raped the women, forced the others to work and ate the produce.”<sup>120</sup>

Of all camps in the reeducation complex, M’telela stood out for its special category as a camp destined for the most notorious political prisoners. Aside from the Machava-BO penitentiary in Maputo, M’telela seem to have been the only place where political prisoners were kept. The camp was established in a former Portuguese army garrison in the district of Majune to house part of the “traitors” showcased in Nashingwea. Frelimo former vice-president Uria Simango, his wife Celina, politician Joana Simeão, and dissidents Lázaro Nkavandame, Paulo Gumane, Father Mateus Gwengere, and several other prominent figures who defected from Frelimo during the liberation struggle and attempted to create alternative parties were sent here in November 1975. The number of inmates never surpassed 140. The regimen was rigorous, and no outside visitors could go in without a written authorization from Niassa’s governor Aurélio Manave and from President Machel.<sup>121</sup> It was the most feared camp, and the one detainees were the most afraid of being transferred to. In an article published in 1996, Dalmazia Colombo, an Italian nun working in the Diocese of the Catholic Church in Lichinga at the time, described M’telela as an “extermination camp” to be equated with Auschwitz and the Siberian Gulag.<sup>122</sup> Father Inácio told me in Lichinga that the invocation of M’telela still arises discomfort in Niassa. “People do not want to talk about that place here, it is a great shame that our province bears”, he said.<sup>123</sup>

These acid references to M’telela stem from the fact that those prominent figures listed above did not come out alive from the camp. They were all executed in a covert operation (possibly in 1979), under motives that have never been explained.<sup>124</sup> Among the executed was a young

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<sup>119</sup> MHN – “Mozambique’s Re-education Camps”, *The Review of International Commission of Jurists*, Geneva. December 1981, p. 14-15.

<sup>120</sup> MHN – “The Da Costa File”, *SCOPE*, February 11, 1983.

<sup>121</sup> Interview: João Carlos Trindade, Maputo, 10 Sept. 2014.

<sup>122</sup> Dalmazia Colombo, “Ntelela: Campo di sterminio”, *Missione in Directa*, 3 Marzo 1996.

<sup>123</sup> Interview: Father Inácio, Lichinga, 19 Maio 2015.

<sup>124</sup> The execution of Simango and company was in gross contrast with President Machel’s statement at the close of the Nashingwea trial, in which he declared that the “traitors” would not be killed, but re-educated and then reintegrated in rural villages (“Frelimo militants expose traitors”, *Daily News* [Dar es Salaam], 20 March 1975.). The closer scholars have come to explain the killing of these political prisoners, the motive falls at the supposed fear

Catholic priest from Cuamba (Niassa) named Estevão Mirassi, who was detained in 1977 by governor Manave for speaking up against Frelimo's authoritarianism.<sup>125</sup> It is probable that many obscure detainees were also "eliminated" in M'telela under the governor's orders. A former commander in the famed camp of Nashingwea during the liberation war, Governor Manave was renowned for being very autocratic and for sending to re-education or even for execution people that seemed to challenge his authority. Those who knew- and worked with him in Niassa had a set of terms to describe his persona: *implacável* and *carrasco* (implacable and hangman) were some of them.<sup>126</sup> Terms like *Tanzania Individual* or *Lenha* (firewood) were codenames for execution in Niassa, possibly coined by the governor.<sup>127</sup> João Trindade – who served as Niassa's chief justice between 1979 and 1981 – told me that Governor Manave was "the maximum authority in the province, he was above everything, including justice. The last word on everything was his. It was up to him to decide who died and who lived."<sup>128</sup> It is a famous story in Niassa that he once sent to re-education a young man who tried to date his daughter, and the young man was never seen again.<sup>129</sup>

However, the archival record gives a different picture of M'telela. Despite the undisputed fact that the camp was a very rigorous one – an aspect well documented in the archival material – the living conditions there seem to have been better compared to other camps in Niassa. Some detainees lived in stone houses, thus protected from the elements, although they lacked enough bed frames as one report indicated (see chapter 6). Detainees could write letters to their relatives, save that they could not mention the name and the actual location of the camp. The treatment they received from warders were often courteous, with very little cases of physical punishment (and these were often related to escaping attempts). In a 1976 report, DPSRN director Francisco Taibo informed MINT that the conditions in M'telela had to be improved to match the "qualification" of the detainees. "Some detainees", he wrote, "live in huts that do not offer conditions for a camp destined for reactionaries who, for their qualification, deserve a special vigilance."<sup>130</sup> In his careful

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by Frelimo that Renamo would set the detainees free and recruit them to lead the rebel movement. For details on how they were killed, and the possible rationale behind the operation, see J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 100-3.

<sup>125</sup> D. Colombo, "Ntelela: Campo di sterminio"; Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 Jun. 2015.

<sup>126</sup> Interview: Father Inácio, Lichinga, 19 Maio 2015; Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 Jun. 2015.

<sup>127</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 Jun. 2015.

<sup>128</sup> Interview: João Carlos Trindade, Maputo, 10 Sept. 2014.

<sup>129</sup> Everyone I interviewed in Niassa told me about this case.

<sup>130</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976.

wording, Taibo was showing concern for people who were once his superiors and who he believed should be treated better. The sadistic forms of punishment that were prevalent in other camps seem to have been quite rare in M'telela. The execution of those prominent detainees was carried out by soldiers who did not work in the camp complex, and the acts did not take place in the camp in front of all inmates. Death sentenced detainees were taken out in military convoys – often under the pretense that they were to be sent home or transferred to other camps. The killing by firing squad happened in the middle of the forest, far away from the camp.<sup>131</sup>

### **The Social Life Inside the Camps**

Despite the wretchedness of Mozambique's reeducation camps, there was more to life than suffering. Although many people died from malnutrition, disease, animal attacks, and other causes – which I discuss in detail in chapter 6 – the camps were far from being locales of social death. In his *marrabenta* tune, *Bilibiza*, Simeão Mazuze did not mention the pastimes with *suruma* and *cajulima*, which were procured in villages near the camps and often ignored by camp warders.<sup>132</sup> He also left out male detainees' ventures into the villages – at great risk of punishment – to alleviate their abhorred chastity with local women. Many detainees, including Mazuze, fathered children that they never saw. Many female detainees had fatherless children as well. Female camp warders got pregnant from their male colleagues and sometimes from detainees (as was the case in M'sawize). Male warders or camp servicemen fell in love with female detainees in Ilumba and M'sawize, and some even asked Governor Manave for permission to marry them. The dormant panopticon of Mozambique's penal colonies could not tame these idiosyncrasies of nature.

Despite the unwritten rules about temperance and abstinence, much of the social life inside the camps revolved around drinking, hemp smoking, and sex. As Ana Maria told me in our interview, “if you did not smoke you had to learn to smoke. If you did not drink, there you had to drink. Otherwise you would go crazy and die alone.” And she added: “many people begun smoking in the camps.”<sup>133</sup> In fact, all the former detainees that I interviewed are addicted to hemp and most of our interviews took place amid hemp smoking. Throughout Mozambique, rural populations had

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<sup>131</sup> See J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 100-3.

<sup>132</sup> Many detainees who survived camps continued to be prisoners of these inebriants for the rest of their lives.

<sup>133</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

always planted hemp in their gardens for pastime smoking. The distillation of *cajulima* from sugar cane or other fruit-based spirits was a centuries-old tradition.<sup>134</sup> The presence of detainees near rural villages provided a market – incipient as it were – to the intoxicating and inebriating produce that was never wanting in most rural homesteads. Detainees were frequent visitors in local villages to quench their thirst and fill their pockets with herbs. Generally, detainees exchanged the few but very precious goods that they received as part of their ration, mainly soap and clothing, for drinks and hemp. As Felizardo Chaguala recalled, in Sacudzo a small group of detainees often combined to go to the village during or immediately after work in the fields, endowed with goods collected from several detainees (bars of soap, pieces of cloth, and occasionally money).

Although the drinks were consumed locally, for bottles were harder to conceal, the group would bring the hemp to the camp and distribute it to their comrades.<sup>135</sup> Although smoking and drinking was forbidden and one could be flogged if caught red-handed, this unwritten rule was often ignored by camp warders. Warders and camp commanders had a taste for *cajulima* and *mbange* as well. Sometimes detainees and warders ventured together to purchase *suruma* and *cajulima* in nearby villages. It was common for warders to send detainees to procure the goods for them, or for detainees to bribe warders with hemp to avoid punishment.<sup>136</sup> As Ana Maria and Ché Mafuiane pointed out in our conversation about M’sawize and Chaimite, these schemes between detainees and warders put all camp dwellers on the same plane when it comes to addiction to inebriants. “We did not seat at the same table with the *comandante*”, Ana Maria told me as she puffed a hemp cigarette skillfully rolled by Ché Mafuiane, “but I can say that we smoked with them.”<sup>137</sup> This was one of the many contradictions of the re-education program. For people

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<sup>134</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, missionary Henry Junod observed that among the southern Thonga, for example, “hemp (*mbange*) has been cultivated for a considerable time”, and that although it was not a general pastime, smoking hemp was very much appreciated. H. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, p. 311. Despite the efforts to combat the production of inebriants and drugs by missionaries and colonial authorities, people continued to cultivate and smoke hemp. In rural areas, it was mostly used as a sedative to endure the hardship of tilling the soil with hoes. On alcohol in colonial Mozambique, see J. Capela, *O Álcool na Colonização do Sul do Save*; and A. Rita-Ferreira, “O Problema das Bebidas Africanas.”

<sup>135</sup> Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>136</sup> Group Interview: Simeão Mazuze, Felizardo Chaguala, and Ché Mafuiane, Matola, 8 Dec. 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014. Many servicemen were engaged in the hemp trade outside the camps. As former SNASP operative Silva Santana told me, many soldiers bought the hemp from rural villagers and transported it to urban areas in the ANTANOV planes, which were not inspected at airports. Silva Santana was himself a prosperous hemp trader in the 1970s and 1980s. As he boasted to me, “I built a very nice house with the sale of cannabis” (Interview: Silva Santana, Maputo, 18 Jan 2015). It is therefore not surprising that the military neighborhood in Maputo, near the headquarters of Frelimo, was for many years the center of illicit trade in drugs. To this day the area is known for its well-fitting nickname: Colombia.

detained for smoking or for drinking, the reality of life inside the camps was a bitter irony. For those who never smoked and did not drink, the camps got them initiated. President Machel was incensed when he first visited the camps of Naisseco in Niassa (1979) and Ruarua in Cabo Delgado (1981), where, among many other things, drunkenness and recklessness were the order of the day. Although the supreme leader attributed the chaos in those two camps to an internal enemy deliberately seeking to undermine a revolutionary program, he acknowledged that re-education was rife with contradictions that reproduced the very social ills that the program was meant to eliminate.<sup>138</sup>

In all camps in central and northern Mozambique, going to a village was no small feat. In most camps, the nearest village was some two to three hours away on foot. And getting the villagers to trade took great communicative skills. In the far corners of the country where camps were located, the language of national unity – Portuguese – was of no use. Knowledge of the basics of local vernaculars, particularly Macua, was an asset that many detainees had to quickly acquire in order to ease the hardship of their detention time. But in their frequent visits to local villages, detainees did not only procure drinks and hemp. Using the good looks rendered by their clothing – which put them in great advantage compared to the semi-naked peasants of remote rural Mozambique – the *mukonya woripas* or black whites as they were called in the north often took the chance to take up with local women. As André Macovo recalled, “if you were from Maputo they fancied you a lot.”<sup>139</sup> My interviewees were often reluctant to give details about their sexual exploits in the camps, that is, how they managed to engage with local women and avoid denunciation and punishment. Understandably, they invariably preferred to focus on aspects that highlighted the hardship of detention rather than the pastimes. But most acceded with the fact that they had “partners” in nearby villages. Mazuze suspects that he might have had a child in Bilibiza.<sup>140</sup> José Araújo told me that when he finally returned to Maputo in 1985 he left

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<sup>138</sup> MHN – “Machel’s speech on unjust detentions in re-education camps”, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, London. 6.10.1981. Part 4, The Middle East and Africa: B. Africa, page ME/6846/B/1.

<sup>139</sup> Interview: André Macovo (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014. I am yet to research in detail the ways in which detainees and local populations interacted. Certainly, the reverence that the Macua rendered the *white blacks* was also vested with jealousy and at times contempt, sentiments that contributed in keeping detainees within the camp perimeters.

<sup>140</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze, 20 Nov. 2014.

“somebody” whose name he could not remember pregnant. “I did not say goodbye to her and I don’t know how the situation was with the baby”, he told me.<sup>141</sup>

In the two female camps of Ilumba and M’sawize, there was little that the female camp supervisors could do to prevent the frequent visits of soldiers and paramedics stationed in the military garrisons several miles away from the camps. The lists produced by the DPSRN in 1976 of pregnant detainees in the two camps illustrate the extent to which the situation was out of control. In May 1976, forty-six children were born in M’sawize, and thirty-one in Ilumba. Although some women were already pregnant when they arrived in the camps, some got pregnant there.<sup>142</sup> The archival record is largely silent about how detainees got pregnant. But one case was recorded in August 1977 because of the outrage that the castigation of the offenders caused to DPSRN officers. The case involved an employee of Niassa’s reeducation services contracted to build a brick house in M’sawize. The unnamed fellow was caught red-handed taking up with an unnamed *reeducanda*. According to the report, it was the fourth time that the couple was caught in the act and this time they were punished. The camp commander forced the offending couple to repeat the act in the *rassemblement* in front of everyone in broad day light. Although the couple refused, they were forced to push a barrel of oil round the *rassemblement* completely naked, as all the detainees sang a revolutionary anthem and clapped.<sup>143</sup> However, this was a case of a civilian and law-ranking employee who could be chastened. Most soldiers who visited the camps were often powerful commanders against whom nothing could be done. And they were not only after the detainees. Female warders were in the game as well. As Ana Maria told me about M’sawize, female warders were also involved with soldiers. Pregnant warders were immediately removed from the camp and replaced.<sup>144</sup>

But this was not simply a story of men forcing women into unwanted affairs. As one paramedic put it in an application letter to Governor Manave, “love happened.”<sup>145</sup> In September 1976, a twenty-four-year-old nurse named António Muianga wrote to Governor Manave to ask for his permission to marry Filomena Matangue, a *reeducanda* at Ilumba. The two met in *Base Central*

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<sup>141</sup> Interview: José Araujo (Zequinho), Maputo, 18 Jan 2015.

<sup>142</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976; AGGPN – DPSRN/No 322/Sr/76/Relação das camaradas em estado de gravidez, campo de Reeducação de M’sawize, Lichinga, 13 Julho 1976.

<sup>143</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Nº 514/SR/77. Lichinga, 16 Ago. 1977.

<sup>144</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>145</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/No 458/SR/976, Lichinga, 22 Setembro 1976.

*Ngungunhana*, a military garrison near the camp, where António was temporarily stationed. In Niassa and Cabo Delgado, these military garrisons were often used as points for distribution of rations to various camps. Given the impervious state of the roads leading to the camps, the vehicles from the provincial reeducation services often unloaded the rations at the military garrison, and detainees were then marched to carry them over their heads back to their respective camps. A walking trip from Ilumba to Base Central could take two or more days.<sup>146</sup> It was most likely in one of these trips that António met and fell in love with Filomena, who was in detention for smoking hemp. In his petition, António promised the authorities that if she continued with her vice after their marriage he would send her back to the camp himself.<sup>147</sup> The archival record is silent on the verdict about António's heartfelt request. Other requests to wed female detainees were less profound, as the one written by Mario Francisco in June 1978.<sup>148</sup> But they all reveal how complex and odd the world inside Mozambique's reeducation camps was. A world dictated not by a modern "seeing machine" and technicians of behavior, but by the most untamable laws of nature.

These foibles of nature played an important part in the ways in which female detainees and their warders interacted in Ilumba and M'sawize. Jealousy and competition for lovers among detainees and among detainees and warders were causes for frequent frictions and fights. The warders – having an upper hand – often used their power to punish competitors for the attention of their loved ones. As Ana Maria told me, in M'sawize, "sometimes female guards inflicted senseless punishment on girls that took up with the men with whom the guards were involved."<sup>149</sup> The situation in M'sawize reached a critical point in 1978 due to an odd decision to open a male camp near the female one. In November 1978, MINT moved discharged police officers and "collaborators" (*comprometidos*) with the colonial regime from a reeducation camp in Nampula province and resettled them in a new camp on the opposite bank of river Lugenda near M'sawize.<sup>150</sup> It is unclear why MINT decided to place a male camp near a female camp. With the two camps separated only by the river – which is often shallow during dry season – the running water and the grassy banks became a lovers' paradise.

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<sup>146</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976.

<sup>147</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/No 458/SR/976, Lichinga, 22 Setembro 1976.

<sup>148</sup> AGGPN – GPN/No 986/SC/78. Requerimento de Mário Francisco. Lichinga, 9 Junho 1976.

<sup>149</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>150</sup> AGGPN – Relatórios dos Distritos/Síntese dos Trabalhos da Brigada do Governo Provincial durante a Visita de Trabalho Efectuado ao Distrito de Mavago. Outubro de 1981.



In our conversation, Ana Maria interpreted the establishment of a male camp near her camp as a knavish act on the part of camp overseers who, in her understanding, wanted to satisfy political prisoners with whom military authorities in Niassa had some kind of close relationship. Only further research can confirm this claim. Nevertheless, and according to Ana Maria, “honest romantic affairs” took place when the male detainees arrived, and with it came a “shower of pregnancies.”<sup>151</sup> These “romantic affairs” often began as payment for small favors: fixing somebody’s falling hut or sharing a piece of fresh fish or game meat. Given men’s ability to fish and hunt, their camp was constantly visited by *reeducandas* desperate to “kill” their painful hunger (*matar a fome*) or get a better meal for their infants. And “love happened” in the wretched trail from one camp to another, with the river between. No *chamboco* or any kind of disciplinary measure was able to tame this call of nature. To the point that, after some time, detainees no longer needed to hide their river crossings. As Ana Maria recalled, “our ‘jumping the fence’ to the other side was something visible, specially because on the other side of the river there were better conditions. People wanted to eat, and they had to eat.”<sup>152</sup> The word *fence* does not stand for any erected physical barrier here. It is a reference to the “illicit” act of leaving one’s home to meet a lover. And it was not only detainees who ‘jumped the fence’ in M’sawize. Female warders did too. Hence the sadistic punishment that *reeducandas* were met with whenever they fell in the traps of a love triangle.<sup>153</sup>

Social life inside the camps did not revolve uniquely around drinking, smoking, and triangular love affairs. Cultural activities, a key component of the re-education program, offered *reeducandos* an important outlet to the boredom of detention. Like everything else in the re-education program, the cultural activities that the *Grupos Culturais Polivantes* performed every Sunday afternoon in the *rassemblement* came from Frelimo’s playbook. From the early days of the liberation struggle, Frelimo considered culture as a key tool for the making of the new man.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014. I discuss in detail in chapter 6 the implications for the unchecked sexual life of reeducation camps, particularly on female detainees in Ilumba and M’sawize. Given the lack of any kind of medical assistance and constant crisis of hunger, pregnancies were in some cases a death sentence to women and in many, an ill-omened condition, often ending in miscarriage or stillborn.

<sup>152</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>153</sup> This odd situation did not last long, for the female camp was closed down sometime in 1979 or 1980. I have not interviewed any man who was detained in M’sawize around that time, but one can imagine the same fights over lovers happening among male detainees and their warders with accentuated violence.

<sup>154</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da FRELIMO/FRELIMO, II Conferência do DEC, Recomendações, Setembro 1970.

Often used to signify “song and dance”, and sometimes poetry, culture was defined in pragmatic and instrumental ways. It was a visible and performative act that could be displayed in classrooms and playing grounds, and could be heard in chants and folk dances from all corners of the country. Its role was to teach people about the rich cultural mosaic that colonialism attempted to destroy, and to foster a new, national identity.<sup>155</sup> For Frelimo, like nature and society, culture was a malleable corpus that could be transformed at man’s will. It could be assembled, sorted out, and synthesized in order to produce a multicolor yet unitary expressive form. For instance, to form a valuable culture for the new society, the sculptures and the exhilarating Mapiko mask dances of the Makonde people in Cabo Delgado could not stand on their own, isolated and in no relation to other cultural expressions. They had to be associated with Makwaela from Manhiça or Timbila from Zavala in the south. Cultural expressions were not to be bound to particular geographical locales and belong to specific ethnic communities; they were to be shared by all, learned by all, and performed by all people “from Rovuma to Maputo.” This utilitarian understanding of culture was inscribed in a resolution from the 1970 seminar on Education and Culture:

Let’s dance, sculpture, song, which are traditionally cultivated, be combined with painting, written literature, theater, artistic craftwork. Let’s make the creation of some become of all, men and women, young and old, from North and South, so that a new revolutionary and Mozambican culture may be born from all of us.<sup>156</sup>

However, just like individuals had to cleanse themselves from the impure load bred by colonialism and feudalism to become new man, culture had to be purified and rearranged to serve the goals of the revolution. Expressions seen as representing aspects of the old society were cut off from dances and songs, and replaced with “revolutionary” themes. *Poesia de combate* or combat poetry – a most encouraged literary genre by Frelimo since the days of the liberation struggle – had to have a meaningful and easily readable message to extol the liberation saga and vilify the enemies. “Poetry does not speak of myths, of abstract things” – so went the introduction to the first anthology of Frelimo’s *poesia de combate* – “but rather of our life as struggle, of our hopes and certainties, of our determination, of our love for our friends, of nature, of our

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<sup>155</sup> FRELIMO, “Revolutionary Education”, in A. Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 3, p. 194-5.

<sup>156</sup> CDSM/Pasta 2 – Documentos da FRELIMO/FRELIMO, II Conferência do DEC, Recomendações, Setembro 1970.

country.”<sup>157</sup> Scholars have rightly called Frelimo’s cultural aesthetics “socialist realism.”<sup>158</sup> Mapiko dancers were prohibited from performing numbers that exalted ethnic rivalries or lineage lines. Songs and plays that glorified polygamous chiefs, initiation rites and other rituals shrouded in secrecy were utterly banned.<sup>159</sup> Cultural producers from all genres were armed with an array of “ready-made” revolutionary vocabularies or *palavras de ordem* to furnish their art: *Viva a Frelimo Nosso Partido de Vanguarda; Abaixo o Imperialismo; A Luta Continua*; etc.<sup>160</sup> Hymn composers, most of whom were trained in the choral groups in Protestant churches, inserted new lyrics into old religious melodies.<sup>161</sup> Nachingwea – the mythic headquarters of Frelimo during the struggle – was the powerhouse of the party’s cultural production. Every Saturday afternoon, people from different regions gathered at the *rassemblement* for *atividades culturais*. They were all encouraged to assimilate and practice the various cultural expressions of Mozambique. In 1972, Samora Machel, a vibrant chorister himself, was convinced that “today a new culture is being developed based on traditional forms with a new content dictated by our new reality.”<sup>162</sup>

The new cultural aesthetics experimented and developed in Nachingwea and other guerrilla bases became the mainstay of reeducation camps’ cultural activities. In the Council of Ministers of July 1976 (which was also extended to provincial governors), President Machel urged the authorities in charge of reeducation camps to promote culture. He even suggested what kind of cultural activities detainees ought to be instructed to produce. “For example,” he said, “prostitutes must do theater about the life that they led [before detention], about what it is to be a prostitute.” He insisted that “theater, music and dance should be a constant part of life in reeducation camps.” For him, culture was “a form of liberation.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> FRELIMO, “Poetry and the Revolution”, in A. Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 3, p. 179.

<sup>158</sup> Paolo Israel, *In Step with Times: Mapiko Masquerades of Mozambique*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014, p. 32, 151-3.

<sup>159</sup> P. Israel, *In Step with the Times*, p. 154.

<sup>160</sup> M-B. Basto, *A Guerra das Escritas*, p. 176; For a complete list of *palavras de ordem*, see “Comunicado da FRELIMO: O Comité Político-Militar Aprovou as Seguintes Palavras de Ordem para o III Congresso”, *Notícias*, 30 Dez. 1976.

<sup>161</sup> See Paolo Israel, “Utopia Live: Singing the Mozambican Struggle for National Liberation”, *Kronos*, 35,1 (2009), p. 109.

<sup>162</sup> FRELIMO, “Revolutionary Education”, in A. Bragança and I. Wallerstein, eds. *The African Liberation Reader*, Vol. 3, p. 195.

<sup>163</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/MINT: 7 Sessão Ordinária do Conselho de Ministros de 9 de Julho de 1976. Síntese XI-Parte – Centros de Reeducação.

Therefore, every Saturday afternoon detainees had to gather at the *rassemblement* to see their GCP perform. The GCPs could present various cultural numbers in just one session. These included choirs singing Frelimo's revolutionary anthems; groups of *makwaela*, *mapiko*, or *ngalanga* dances; individual or collective recitation of poems written by detainees; and drama plays. These sessions were enforced to cultivate a sense of national pride among detainees. Attendance to *actividades culturais* was mandatory in all camps. Failure to do so was severely punished. But it seems that few people were ever punished for missing cultural sessions for they were awaited with much expectation in most camps.

At the current stage of the research, no surviving records of the cultural numbers performed by the GCPs have surfaced from the archives. Simeão Mazuze, who was a professional musician and artistic painter before detention, told me that he directed a play about Ngungunhana, the last emperor of Gaza (the mighty pre-colonial empire that ruled much of southern Mozambique, and destroyed by the Portuguese in 1895).<sup>164</sup> In Frelimo's official historiography, Ngungunhana was a national hero who resisted against Portuguese colonial occupation and was defeated because, among other reasons, he was betrayed. Although Mazuze did not remember the details of the play, it is not difficult to imagine its plot line and the moral lesson it was meant to impart the audience: the heroism of resistance, the necessity of unity against the enemy, and the ubiquitous presence of traitorous enemies from within.

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<sup>164</sup> Interview: Simeão Mazuze, 20 Nov. 2014.



*Fig. 32. A GCP dancing makwaela in M'sawize during President Machel's visit. August 1981. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Noticias.*



*Fig. 33. The same group in M'sawize on a ballet-like dance. The stand-alone man with the hairy hat seems to be singing or reciting a poem. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Noticias.*



*Fig. 34. A Choir group performing in Ruarua, during the presidential visit. October 1981. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.*



*Fig. 35. A GCP performing in Chaimite during the presidential visit, October 1981. The group is presenting a dance from southern Mozambique called ngalanga. Their laying position suggests that the theme of the dance is related to the liberation war. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias*

Although there was no strict censorship to speak of in the camps, cultural production followed a defined script along the lines of official historiography.<sup>165</sup> Like cultural producers in the free world outside the camps, GCP artists had to employ the ready-made vocabulary of revolution in their art. Following Samora Machel's prescription of how revolutionary literary production – particularly poetry – had to look like, detainees composed poems celebrating the deeds of the liberation struggle. Two of the only three poems that I found in the archival record have unsurprising titles: *Poesia 25 de Setembro de 1977* (Poem 25 of September 1977), and *A Luta Armada* (The Liberation Struggle). The third was simply entitled *O Meu Poema* (My Poem). They were written by anonymous detainees in M'telela, to celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of the liberation struggle – a national holiday in Mozambique. The first three stanzas of the poem *A Luta Armada* are illustrative of the kind of unpalatable poetry that Frelimo socialist realism encouraged not only in the camps but nationally.

The Liberation Struggle

I

Nobody can stop the people's decision  
 No, no one can destroy the strength of a united people  
 A determined people is like a storm  
 No one can stop nor destroy it

II

Once colonialism  
 Wanted to test the people's strength and resolution  
 Since 25 of September of 1964 the enemy was smashed and trampled  
 He, well-armed and prepared by his generals

III

But with the determination of the people from Rovuma to Maputo  
 They left without farewell  
 Completely defeated and unmasked<sup>166</sup>

This kind of revolutionary adulation dominated much of the cultural production in the first years of the revolution. Poems like these permeated printed and wall newspapers in the free world. The camps were not different. Here too, cultural creativity was restricted to Frelimo's

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<sup>165</sup> Censorship seem to have been tighter in letters by and to detainees. Although paper was scarce and very few detainees managed to keep correspondence with their relatives, some were able to do so. But they could not indicate the name of the reeducation camp, and the content was thoroughly scrutinized so as to avoid detainees from mentioning any compromising aspect of their detention: the letters were to indicate that the detainee was happily underground rehabilitation with no reference to any sort of difficulties. Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 23 Dec. 2014.

<sup>166</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Centro de Reeducação de M'telela. Poesia, *A Luta Armada*. 12 Setembro 1977.

revolutionary dictums. There was little space for elaborate and abstract expressions. Culture had to be readable and easily accessible. Its message had to be clear. Songs, plays, dances, poetry, they all followed the same script line of exalting the liberation struggle and its heroes, of sing praises to the vanguard party, and of shouting downs to the enemies.<sup>167</sup> The last stanza of *O Meu Poema* is unequivocal in its elation of the heroes and denigration of the enemies:

My poem!  
My poem on the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our struggle for national liberation makes me like!  
My poem!  
I shall never let ants nor flies in my house, that is, the reactionaries and their lackeys.  
My poem!  
It makes me analyze, the Mozambican heroes.  
Down with the ambitious!  
Viva Frelimo, the vanguard party of the socialist revolution! [sic].<sup>168</sup>

Despite the straitjacket restrictions of the official cultural script, and the improvised nature of most productions, the GCP performances were very much appreciated by detainees and their captors. The high point of *atividades culturais* was during official visits by party-state authorities and public holidays, in which case performances were preceded by several rehearsals under the supervision of a *responsável* for culture and by a political commissar. In such occasions, particular during a visit, camp supervisors had to make sure that the scripts, lyrics and poems had no improper word formulations. Official visits were perhaps the only moments that camp supervisors were nervously tense, for the visits were as much a check on detainee's discipline as much as the supervisors' ability to carry out their duties properly. In these occasions, detainees were made to look the best they could. Those with less ragged uniforms were put in front row, seated on the floor or standing in a semi-round circle, while the GCP performers took center stage in front of the wooden balcony where the illustrious visitors sat.

For detainees with artistic inclinations before detention, the GCPs allowed them to improve their craft and develop new ones. For example, Simeão Mazuze composed some of his most popular songs in the three camps where he served his unpronounced sentence (Sacudzo, Bilibiza, and Chaimite). He continued a successful musical career after detention, including a well-

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<sup>167</sup> This does not mean that there were no spaces for subversion of the official cultural script, particularly in the free world. As Paolo Israel demonstrates in his brilliant study of the Makonde masquerades, the party dictates were often appropriated by cultural producers to articulate their own cultural subjectivities and not necessarily the socialist and nationalist identity. P. Israel, *In Step with the Times*.

<sup>168</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Centro de Reeducação de M'telela. Poesia, *O Meu Poema*. 12 Setembro 1977.



acclaimed role in a 1985 film, *O Tempo dos Leopardos* (The Times of Leopards – Mozambique’s first feature film after independence).<sup>169</sup> Surely his success in *O Tempo dos Leopardos* was due to his acting in the plays he wrote and conducted in reeducation camps. His friend Ché Mafuiane, who was an athlete before detention, went on to pursue a modest career in the prestigious theater company *Mutumbela Gogo* and an equally modest musical career in Mazuze’s band *Xigutsa Vuma* (he credited Mazuze for his artistic career, who introduced him to music and acting at Chaimite in Cabo Delgado).<sup>170</sup> For some detainees who joined the GCPs, “culture” was a maker of social bonds that endured well beyond re-education.<sup>171</sup>

However, one should be cautious not to overstate the significance of the GCPs in the country’s cultural life. Mazuze and Mafuiane, and a few others, were exceptional cases.<sup>172</sup> Like everything else in the camps, the GCPs were shaped by the endemic shortages that conditioned the odd nature of the re-education program. Cultural producers had to work in very tight circumstances, not only in terms of the themes and moral lessons of their creations – which were controlled by political commissars – but also the lack of the most basic tools for artistic craft. There were no musical instruments (except for drums in certain camps); paper to write scripts, compositions, and poetry was very scarce – most of the artistic creations had to be memorized.<sup>173</sup> And, most importantly, not all camps had talented artists like Mazuze. In M’sawize and Ilumba, for example, *atividades culturais* were largely boring and detainees were uninterested, which led camp authorities to complain that Niassa’s OMM should be more involved in the two camps’ cultural and social life. In these two female camps, moral decadence was alarming to powerless DPSRN officers, as the camps became open field for sexual encounters (exploitative and

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<sup>169</sup> Curiously, the initial script for the film was written by Licínio de Azevedo, the author of the first feature film on reeducation camps, *Virgem Margarida*. On *O Tempo dos Leopardos*, see Guido Convents, *Os Moçambicanos Perante o Cinema e o Audiovisual: Uma História Político-Cultural do Moçambique Colonial até à República de Moçambique (1896-2010)*. Maputo: Dokanema, 2011, p. 491-6.

<sup>170</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014. Ché Mafuiane did not live to realize his dream of recording his first album, he passed away in October 2016. But some of his singles are well known in the circles of *marrabenta* live-shows in Maputo. His last appearance was an opening for a much-awaited show by his friend and mentor Salimo Mohamed.

<sup>171</sup> Some of my interviewees have been close friends since they served time together in reeducation.

<sup>172</sup> Some of the most iconic names in Mozambique’s cultural arena today spent time in reeducation camps, including songwriter and musical instructor Hortêncio Langa (who was in Sacudzo). At Chaimite, one of the organizers of cultural events was an affluent detainee called Alex Barbosa. He went on to become the most renowned cultural producer and show promoter in Mozambique in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But these were exceptional cases.

<sup>173</sup> The only record of a musical instrument, an acoustic guitar, appears in 1983. The guitar was an offer by President Machel to a talented musician in M’sawize, two years after the president made the promise. AGGPN – DDAC/138/GAB, 11 Abril 1983.

consented). For the *reeducandas*, who were detained for moral offenses and told that they would emerge from the camps as regenerated New Women, the reality of detention was a tragicomic irony. As Ana Maria put it in our conversation, “if the problem was to learn to sing, farm, and march like soldiers, there was no need to take us so far away from home and abandon us in those camps.”<sup>174</sup> The archival record of Niassa, to which I turn in the next chapter, illustrates the state of abandonment of the camps and the impossibility of re-education. Given the austerity in which the camps had to operate, the disciplinary mechanisms that were meant to produce morally reformed citizens were largely counterproductive.

### Conclusion

Life inside Mozambique’s reeducation camps was everything but orderly and regimentally strict. The conditions of austerity in which Frelimo implemented its reformist program produced a particular mode of carceral regime that was not dictated by technologies of disciplinary surveillance. Camp supervisors and detainees themselves defined the kind of internment regimen that prevailed in reeducation camps in ways that subverted the panoptic aspirations of Frelimo leaders. This chapter has demonstrated that reeducations camps were not archipelagos much less totalitarian institutions. The camps were inserted in the rural environment – the wild surroundings and local communities – in which they were located. And it was the combined effect of that environment and the permanent material and human constraints that shaped the internment regimen. Surveillance, discipline, order and social reform require resources that the Mozambican government did not possess. The next chapter expands this argument, by highlighting the gigantic constraints that camp overseers had to contend with to keep the camps running and how the re-education program descended into chaos when the victims of *Operação Produção* arrived by the thousands in Niassa.

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<sup>174</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 23 Dec. 2014.

## Chapter 6

### **Cries of Permanent Abandonment: Austerity and the Administration of Reeducation and Labor Camps in Niassa Province, 1975-1988**

*Niassa will be the great school for vagrants. Vagrants from all provinces shall come here to work, to build their houses, to produce, to learn from you, to transform themselves into citizens, useful workers.*

Samora Machel, 1979<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

In his lengthy article, the reporter from *Notícias* who visited the female camp of M'sawize in August 1976 highlighted the gigantic obstacles that the camp authorities were facing to carry out their task. He marked the words of the chief of the camp, Silência David, in bold letters. They were cries of abandonment. "Difficulties here are plentiful", she told him, "beginning with the lack of food."<sup>2</sup> One feels the weight of desperation in her supplicant words and the sense of urgency with which they were uttered. The reporter was the first person from the capital city to visit the camp since its foundation in late 1975, and Silência David knew that it would be several months until another important figure came around again. She seized the moment, hoping that the reporter would carry her cry for help to authorities in Maputo and to the wider public. She told him how desperate the situation was in her camp. She spoke of hunger:

We go very hungry here. Rations hardly reach us. Trucks break down in the rough roads and the food rot and never reach us here. Many people have anemia. Even now, we only have rations for just one meal in the barn. In addition, the food quality is very poor. Usually we only have beans and maize flour.

Silência David also spoke of the unbearable cold, the lack of clothing, and the rudimentary state of camp lodgings: "We have no clothes to keep ourselves warm", she said, "it gets very cold here and the houses have no protection on the sides. We have no blankets." Her use of the third person – "we" – is very significant. It clearly shows that everybody in the camp, detainees and

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<sup>1</sup> "A Batalha contra o subdesenvolvimento produzirá heróis do trabalho", *Tempo*, Número Especial Dedicado à Viagem Presidencial à Província do Niassa, 26 Dezembro 1979, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> AJN – "Centro de Reeducação de Msauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial", *Notícias*, 18 Ago.1976

camp overseers, bore the same hardships. They all went hungry, they were all cold, they all fell sick, and they all felt abandoned.

Like all her colleagues entrusted with the reeducation of Mozambique's urban anti-socials, Silência David spent much of her time managing not the disciplinary institution that party authorities imagined in the capital, but a decrepit camp in the most austere of circumstances. Hers was a management of a space of abandonment.<sup>3</sup> The authorities in the capital were well aware of the situation. In several reports and coded telegrams, the officers in charge of the DPSRN informed Governor Aurélio Manave and MINT about the lamentable conditions in the camps. One DPSRN officer, Francisco Taibo, reported in May 1976, that the camp of Naisseco “is full of malnourished and weak people due to insufficient food.” He noted of the inmates and camp overseers in Ilumba: “they bemoan the lack of food.” And taking a lecturing tone, he added: “weak bodies are easily dominated by any kind of diseases.”<sup>4</sup>

Between 1976 and 1979, two DPSRN officers, Francisco Taibo and André Trabuco, produced detailed reports about the administration of Niassa's camps. The reports were addressed to the Minister of the Interior, Armando Guebuza, and to Governor Manave. They provide a far wider window into the secluded world of reeducation camps, one that confirms – and in many instances far outpaces – the oral testimonies of former detainees and the laudatory descriptions of journalists. Although life conditions in the camps seem to have improved slightly between 1980 and 1982 – due to the reduction of the camp complex and the number of detainees following the launching of President Machel's *Ofensiva* – the situation deteriorated with the arrival of thousands of urbanites expelled from cities across the country during *Operação Produção* in 1983-4. More than 20,000 people arrived in Niassa during the campaign. This flood of people pushed the logistical capacities of Niassa to its limits. This time the cries for help did not come exclusively from camp overseers, but also and more vigorously so from the new governor, Sérgio Vieira.

Building on the rich archival record of Niassa, this chapter expands the argument introduced in chapter 5 about the role of austerity in conditioning the organic functioning of Mozambique's reeducation camps. The chapter illuminates the ways in which shortages and decrepit infrastructures organized and delimited life in the camps. It illustrates the gigantic

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<sup>3</sup> J. Biehl, *Vita: Life in the Zone of Social Abandonment*, p. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

constraints that camp overseers had to contend with to keep the camps running, and the human cost of a high-minded program of social reform that quickly descended into chaos. The DPSRN reports shed light on the wretched nature of reeducation camps, and how camp dwellers – detainees and camp overseers – were all affected and suffered almost the same privations. The wretchedness of camp life – hunger, cold, and disease – affected everyone almost in the same way. As much as detainees longed to regain their freedom, camp warders and their commanders also hoped to be released for other revolutionary duties. If some inmates found courage to brave the dangerous forests to anticipate their freedom or die trying, so did wardens. All camp dwellers, detainees and overseers, experienced in relatively equal measure the agony of abandonment.

The chapter bears the imprint of DPSRN officers Francisco Taibo and André Trabuco, whose courageous cries of abandonment ring throughout the first part of this text. While DPSRN officers never challenged the reeducation program per se, they constantly called into question the rationale behind it and the ways in which the program was being carried out. Although the socialist mindset is markedly inscribed in their writings, they did not share the same concerns and interests with party-state authorities in the capital, particularly the Ministry of the Interior (from whom they took orders). The DPSRN saw authorities in the capital as being far away and out of touch with the day-to-day challenges of running the camps, and totally inconsiderate of the actual process of reeducation. For them, the “nation” (a designation they used to refer to the capital city and headquarters of the central government) seemed only concerned with ridding the cities of undesirables as an end in of itself. Niassa’s officers took their work seriously. They believed that people needed political education and moral indoctrination to live up to the demands of the revolution, but the conditions had to meet the exigencies of such delicate and important task. They lamented that the “nation” was insensitive to the predicament of camp overseers who had to deal with urban (and often well-educated) citizens in a harsh rural environment that did not meet the minimum conditions for human habitation. Like Silência David, their reports often ended with desperate cries for help and incisive but cautious pleas for party-state authorities in the capital to stop sending people to Niassa. This was not only because the DPSRN was logistically unable to tend to the needs of so many people – as the camps lacked almost everything – but also because most detainees were in fact innocent and not all of them needed reeducation of any kind.

## Niassa and the Work of the DPSRN

Niassa was in a special category as the primary location to transform Mozambique's anti-socials and enemies of the revolution into new men and new women. Of the eight provinces with reeducation camps, Niassa had a record number of 8 camps (see Map 1). When the camps were closed in all provinces affected by the fast-spreading activities of Renamo rebels in 1981-2 during the civil war, Niassa remained the sole heartland of reeducation. The need to populate this extensive and sparsely inhabited territory was above all the main reason why most camps were established in this northernmost part of the country.<sup>5</sup> Niassa is the largest of all provinces in Mozambique and the least inhabited. Years of intensive slave trade, military raids by Nguni Maseko chiefs from Zululand (as consequence of Mfecane), and the wars of conquest by the Portuguese in the nineteenth century, all concurred in reducing the population of present-day Niassa.<sup>6</sup> The thirty-five years of plunder under the chartered Niassa Company (1891-1926) not only worsened the situation, but also placed Niassa as the least developed corner of Mozambique (a ranking that the province holds up to this day). Many people escaped the difficult times by migrating south into Malawi and north into Tanzania. It is estimated that between 1920 and 1930 more than 300,000 people abandoned Niassa.<sup>7</sup> At the time of independence, only 400,000 people inhabited the 129 km<sup>2</sup> (50,000 square miles) of Niassa's extensive territory.<sup>8</sup>

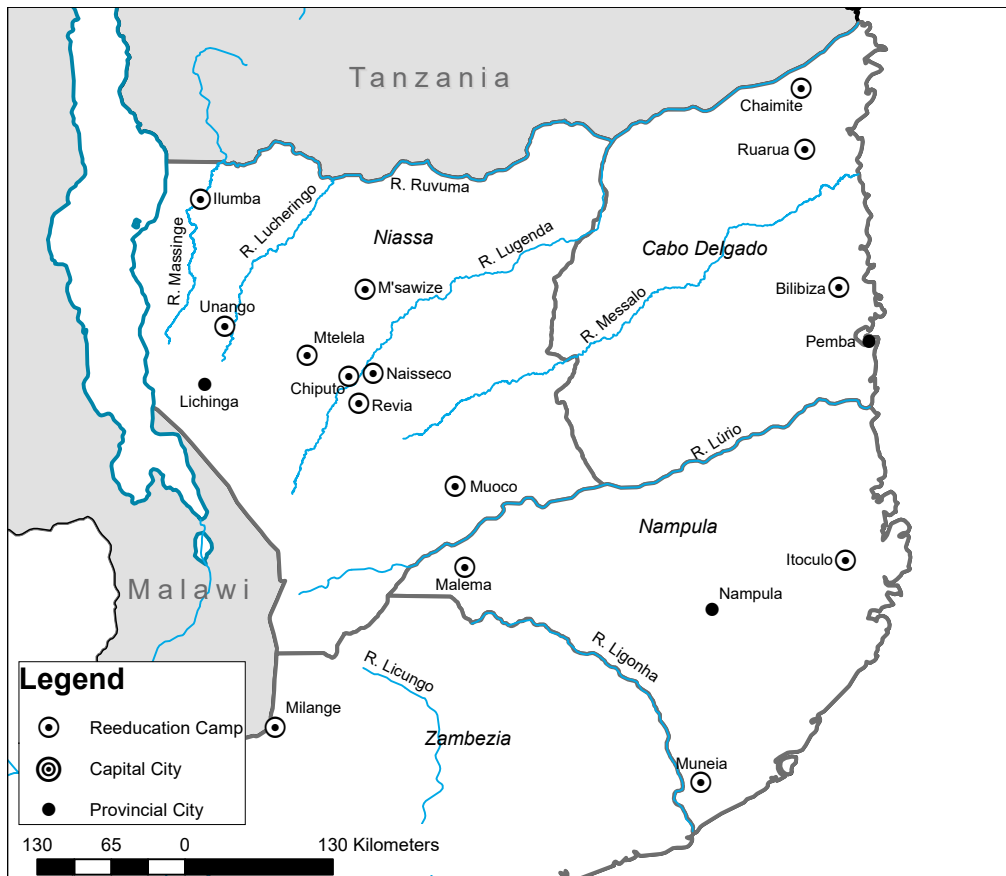
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<sup>5</sup> Interview: João Trindade, Maputo, 10 Sept. 2014; Interview: Teresinha da Silva, Maputo, 22 April 2015. "Niassa: Libertar a riqueza de uma terra fértil", *Tempo, Número Especial*, 26 Dez. 1979, p. 56. In his initial career as a guerrilla commander, Samora Machel oversaw military operations in the eastern part of Niassa. He surely took note of how rich the soils were and how void of people to till them the vast province was – a point he remarked insistently during his first presidential visit to Niassa in October 1979: "Ficarão a trabalhar no Niassa, pois esta provincia precisa de ser povoada." See "Transformação do Niassa exige acção imediata", *Tempo, Número Especial*, 26 Dez. 1979, p. 89

<sup>6</sup> Edward Alpers, "Trade, State and Society among the Yao in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of African History*, 10, 3 (1969), p. 406

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Serra, coord. *História de Moçambique. Volume 1*. 2 ed. Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 2000, p. 238.

<sup>8</sup> RPM, CCR, Projecções Demográficas, Volume 10. 1º Recenseamento Geral da População, 1980



Map 3. Camp complex of northern Mozambique.  
 Credit: Clark Library, SAND, University of Michigan, 2018

At the same time, Niassa had a status of a sanctuary for the ruling party. It was here that Frelimo had its most extensive liberated areas during the armed struggle. Niassa was, therefore, a perfect location to anoint the urban *xiconhocas* with the enlightening environment of the liberation “holy” land. Yet, during Portuguese colonial rule, Niassa was also one of the destinations for banished undesirables due to its remoteness. The reeducation program only reinforced a long-held perception that Niassa was a place of punishment. The governor of Niassa confirmed this assessment during the Eighth Session of the Council of Ministers extended to provincial governors in 1981. After telling his distinguished audience that Niassa was “honorably blessed” with the “responsibility of welcoming and re-educating all the marginal people of the country”, governor Manave lamented that there had been many mistakes in the reeducation program. “It is not by chance”, he said, “that there is a notion that all the cadres in Niassa are in a regime of reeducation.

That when one speaks of illegality in the country, for some, Niassa figures in the foreground.”<sup>9</sup> What governor Manave presented as a perception was a fact. Niassa was indeed the primary ground for the reeducation program and a hotbed of human rights abuses.<sup>10</sup>

Being the most extensive, sparsely inhabited, and the least developed province, Niassa proved to be a great challenge for DPSRN bureaucrats tasked with running the camps. Although the camps did not function exactly in the same manner, as most of the “rules” depended on the character of camp overseers as well as their geographical location, the picture of Niassa’s camps is generally representative of the entire reeducation complex. Given the very low level of infrastructural development, especially the lack of paved roads, it was extremely difficult to provide the camps with basic supplies (food, clothing, adequate shelter and health care).<sup>11</sup> With no paved road linking the province with the rest of the country, save the railroad from the small capital city of Lichinga to Nampula, Niassa was the most remote province of Mozambique.<sup>12</sup> An automobile trip from Lichinga to M’sawize, which could take a couple of hours on a paved road, normally took one to two days.<sup>13</sup> This remoteness and infrastructural underdevelopment had a tremendous effect in the gigantic work entrusted to the DPSRN.

The DPSRN was established in early 1976, as part of the first attempt by the Ministry of the Interior to organize the reeducation program. Given its double subordination, the DPSRN reported directly to MINT and to the governor of Niassa. The administration of reeducation camps was kept secret even for members of Niassa’s government and the provincial assembly. Only the governor and the local security units (the police and the army) knew about the situation inside the camps. This fact was made clear when, in May 1976, governor Manave chaired the first meeting with district administrators, political commissars and *Grupos Dinamizadores*. Each administrator presented a situation report about his district, after which members of the Provincial assembly

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<sup>9</sup> AGGPN – RPM/Conselho de Ministros, 8a Sessão Ordinária alargada aos Senhores Governadores/A Questão da Legalidade/Alguns Aspectos Inseridos no Âmbito da Aplicação da Justiça, Particularmente em Niassa. Maputo, 11 Ago. 1981

<sup>10</sup> Several civil servants accused of being *comprometidos* or found short in the moral rectitude that Frelimo required, were “moved” to Niassa.

<sup>11</sup> For example, camps closer to the capital city or to any urban area tended to have relatively better supplies and available medical care. Given the high-altitude climate of Niassa, the problem of adequate lodgings was more serious here than in any other province.

<sup>12</sup> For my field research, it took me three days of driving from Maputo to Lichinga (some 1,430km or 890 miles), one of which was entirely spent in the last unpaved and rough stretch from Malema (Nampula) to Lichinga (280km or 174 miles, a little less than the distance from New York to Baltimore).

<sup>13</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976



asked questions. The latter wanted to know about the overall situation of reeducation camps; the kinds of people interned and the forms of surveillance to which they were subjected. They also wanted to know how district administrators were dealing with the challenges of supplying provisions to the camps. In his reply, the administrator of Majune – the district with the most camps in Niassa (three in total) – said that for security reasons he could not provide more detailed information about the camps beyond what was presented in the report. Any further questions would have to be directed to the “Nation and to the Province” where “orientations” about the administration of the camps came from. He also insisted that the district knew nothing about the reasons and the kind of people in detention, and that their only instructions were to re-educate the people sent to them by the “Nation” and by the “Province.” Governor Manave backed the administrator by saying: “it is not for the district to talk about the exact situation” of reeducation camps.<sup>14</sup>

According to MINT directives, reports about the situation of the camps had to be produced on a monthly basis. While camp commanders supplied the DPSRN with information for the reports, as chief camp overseers, DPSRN directors made constant journeys into the far reaches of the province to see the situation of each camp. As we shall see, sometimes this diligent work came at huge cost due to the rough terrain on which most camps were located.

Initially, the DPSRN was responsible for overseeing five reeducation camps: Naisseco (Revia), Chiputo, M’sawize-1, Ilumba, and M’telela. Although M’telela was formally under the exclusive responsibility of SNASP, the DPSRN was in fact in charge. In 1976, all the five camps had over 2,000 inmates. Just as the number of inmates oscillated – as people entered and left – the number of camps also changed constantly. In November 1978, a second camp for male detainees was opened in M’sawize-2, very close to the female camp.<sup>15</sup> The detainees of Naisseco were initially in Revia, from where they were moved due to the unhealthy location of the first camp. They were again moved in early 1979 to Unango, a camp opened at the site of an old military garrison and penitentiary 30km from Lichinga. After the *Presidential Offensive* of 1979 and 1981 and the resulting wave of amnesties, Chiputo, Unango and M’sawize were shut down, and the

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<sup>14</sup> AGGPN – Primeira Reunião de Administradores, Comissários Políticos e Grupos Dinamizadores dos Distritos da Província do Niassa. Majune, 13<sup>a</sup> Sessão. Lichinga, 21 Maio 1976

<sup>15</sup> José Pinto de Sá, “A História inédita dos ‘centros de reeducação’ em Moçambique: Os campos da vergonha”, *Público Magazine*, 277, 25 Jun. 1995, p. 23.

inmates – most forbidden from returning to their original homes – were forced to stay and transform the former camps into cities of the future, *ciudades do futuro*. Yet, as some camps were closed, others were opened. Muoco, for example, was established possibly in 1981 for expelled police officers, but it never made into the reports of the DPSRN.

The DPSRN functioned in a small office in the single government building in Lichinga. Much of its bureaucratic work was recorded by two of its most diligent and prolific directors, Francisco Taibo and André Trabuco, who frequently complained about the difficulties of administering the camps. It is from them that we learn that the DPSRN lacked the most basic equipment for its operations. In May 1976, the department had only 7 staff members and no typewriter. To produce its reports and the hard work of bookkeeping to attend to the gigantic needs of the camps, the DPSRN had to borrow the typewriter from other departments, which only happened when the owners of the precious machine were out of work or during weekends. The department possessed a total of 7 vehicles, of which there were 5 trucks used to transport the much-needed rations and to bring detainees. But only 2 trucks were operational, and the rest were reported damaged “due to the rough roads” of Niassa.<sup>16</sup> Most DPSRN vehicles were abandoned along the roads leading to the camps, while the office waited for spare parts to fix them. In his request missive, Francisco Taibo reminded MINT that the situation was urgent so that “the camps do not feel abandoned.”<sup>17</sup> Until the end of his tenure in late 1976, Francisco Taibo’s requests for spare parts from the capital had not received a reply. The nation responded to very few of his requests for equipment and rations, even when the report bore the signature of governor Manave.

Niassa’s camps were alarmingly understaffed. Each camp was supposed to have five *responsáveis*, namely a camp commander, a chief deputy, a political commissar, a *responsável* for production, and a *responsável* for education and culture. Only Chiputo had all five posts filled. M’sawize and Ilumba had only a chief of the camp and a deputy. This administrative ineffectiveness – a feature of Mozambique’s state apparatus at all levels – had immense implications in the administration of reeducation camps and the disastrous outcome of the reeducation program at large. Studies of socialist Mozambique have pointed out that fabricated or inaccurate reports by rank-and-file bureaucrats eager to show good service or too afraid to reveal

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<sup>16</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, N° 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

<sup>17</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, 249/SR/76. Pedido de Peças para viaturas ao Ministério do Interior, Lichinga, 25 Maio 1976

the true state of affairs in their departments was one of the reasons why Frelimo authorities often set very ambitious goals – be they for public administration or state-run enterprises – the ultimate outcome of which was the disarray and collapse of the socialist experiment.<sup>18</sup> This implies that Frelimo leaders were not aware of the actual conditions and capabilities at the local level where centrally planned policies were implemented. While this is certainly true for most economic and social sectors, it is hardly the case in relation to reeducation camps. From the outset, the “nation” was aware of the reality and shortcomings of the reeducation program.

DPSRN rank-and-file officers courageously informed Frelimo leaders about the ineffective nature of the reeducation program. In his final report of May 1977, André Trabuco called his superiors to pay more attention to the challenges and needs of the camps, as well as the flaws of the entire reeducation program. He claimed that with shortages in appropriate equipment and qualified personnel, the high-minded reeducation program was a mere façade. Considering the politically charged environment of a highly pyramidal and authoritarian regime, in which party-state officials (even at the highest level) restrained from making comments that could jeopardize their delicate political careers, it is remarkable how Trabuco challenged the jurisprudential decisions from the top with outright boldness.<sup>19</sup> “With the present report”, he wrote, “besides observing the monthly routine duty, we want to try to sensitize those to whom it may concern, about certain aspects that embarrass the Reeducation Services of this province, and we want to take our points of view and suggestions to your highest consideration.”<sup>20</sup> After repeating quite briefly the usual complaints – some of which were copied and pasted from previous reports – Trabuco dedicated two pages (out of four) to a section with the header *Pontos de Vista* (points of view). In it, he lectured his superiors about the irregularities of the program and the delicate position of camp overseers, especially when it came to explaining to *reeducandos* why they were being re-educated and what reeducation meant in such wretched conditions. He claimed that the situation was made worse by the fact that many detainees were in fact innocent, and at most, only suspects.

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<sup>18</sup> See B. Egero, *Moçambique*, p.119; M. Hall and T. Young. *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> This fact was acknowledged by Frelimo vice-president and Minister of Planning, Marcelino dos Santos. On a personal note to President Machel during a session of the Council of Ministers, dos Santos informed the president that “the members of the Council have things to say about our economy and our working methods but they have not said them.” He suggested to the present that “we need to create the conditions for everybody to speak their minds.” CDSM/Documentos/Pasta SN – Correspondência de e para o presidente. sd.

<sup>20</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Maio de 1977. Lichinga, 31 May 1977

We have received in this Province many *reeducandos* whose causes of detention, as stated in their respective *guias de marcha* [transit pass] and biographical files, create in us a sense of wonder. It is stated as a motive of detention *suspected of theft, suspected of use of drugs, suspected of prostitution or simply corruption*, and there are even files without any kind of annotation. Now, this creates a certain embarrassment for us, because we are left not knowing the truth when we hear *reeducandos* complain about the ways in which they were arrested. We do not know if, in fact, a simple suspicion constitutes enough cause for one to be detained. We are presented with elderly people with ages between 50 and 60 years old, who are implicated in issues that can easily be resolved with a constructive criticism in their communities. We think that this method of work does not contribute in any way to combat crime. Quite the opposite; it foments terror and discontentment among the people. And for those politically less enlightened, it discredits the revolution, thus misconstruing the Party and Government's objectives in creating Reeducation Centers.<sup>21</sup>

André Trabuco closed his courageous and impressive report by suggesting that the party-state structures responsible for detentions should carry out their work meticulously, that they should investigate the personal denunciations with forensic care to avoid sending innocent people to reeducation camps. He insisted that only people who committed serious crimes with proven guilt should be subjected to reeducation. The old – who were already frail – should not be sent to camps. And the young, most of whom had their school time interrupted and were now idly prowling in the camps without learning anything new – thus compromising “their tomorrow and the future of our Land and People” – should be sent to schools in the province. “If we are allowed”, he added, “we would like to assert that the success of a reeducation camp depends particularly on the acceptance of the process by the *reeducandos*, yet that acceptance is only possible if they recognize the reason for their detention.”<sup>22</sup>

As chief of DPSRN, André Trabuco was building on the work of his predecessor, Francisco Taibo. They are both good examples that not all rank-and-file officers in charge of reeducation camps were insensitive to the fate of detainees and silent about the flaws of the program. They took their work seriously, even if that could have cost them their privileged positions in the government. Several of their reports contained lists of citizens detained arbitrarily, with requests for authorization to release them.<sup>23</sup> Despite the silence of authorities in the capital – who often insisted that people had to be self-reliant and inventive to find solutions for local challenges – these

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<sup>21</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Maio de 1977. Lichinga, 31 May 1977

<sup>22</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Maio de 1977. Lichinga, 31 May 1977

<sup>23</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais detidos arbitrariamente. Lichinga, 24 Março 1978; AGGPN – DPSRN/Relação nominal de nacionais que por terem sido detidos arbitrariamente se propõe o seu regresso à procedência. Lichinga, 4 Abril 1978 (in this list, governor Manave wrote: “I agree with their restitution”)

two officers persisted in reminding the “nation” of the inhuman conditions that inmates and wardens had to bear in the camps, and how many aspects of the reeducation program were an embarrassing stain on the country’s justice system.

The silence of party-state authorities in the capital is visible in the reports. DPSRN directors did not bother to elaborate more on the very same problems. They simply copied and pasted the same sections from previous reports. We know little about Trabuco and his predecessor Taibo, much less what happened to them after being discharged. We also do not know how the interior minister reacted to their copious missives. We know, however, that they had the full support of governor Manave, who often signed the copies that were wired to Maputo, and sometimes added a little note of his own, supporting the complaints of the DPSRN.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, from 1977 onwards, after Trabuco left the office, the exhaustion of the DPSRN bureaucracy settled in. This is visible from the archival record. From then on there were no longer monthly reports. One report accounted for three months, sometimes more. Although subsequent directors seem to have been less invested in their work, the main reason for the waning reporting was the lack of material (paper and ink). This exhaustion deepened in the following years, until no single report was produced. Yet, this was only the tip of the iceberg in an extremely challenging state of abandonment that the DPSRN had to manage.

DPSRN’s reports illustrate the state of abandonment of Niassa’s reeducation camps. With so much resting on the backs of the young government – as Frelimo had to learn the job of governing with few qualified cadres while trying to stabilize the country amid the chaos of the transition and the constant threat of military invasion by Rhodesia and South Africa – reeducation camps were at the very bottom of the party-state’s priorities in terms of allocation of resources. Niassa was already at the bottom compared to the other ten provinces. Most resources had to be shipped from the capital in the southern tip of the country, from the most basic items such as clothing, soap, cooking oil and sugar, to paper, pencils, ink for typewriters, and so on. This meant that all residents in the extensive and largely wild province suffered from constant shortages. The country at large was not better off, for the economic crisis affected everyone. But Niassa was hit the hardest, and reeducation camps were at the lowest extreme of the thin chain.

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<sup>24</sup> All of Trabuco’s reports also bore the signature of governor Manave.

## The Price of Remoteness: Hunger and Cold

In their diligent and often desperate reports, Francisco Taibo and André Trabuco informed MINT and Governor Manave that the geographical location and the infrastructural state of Niassa's camps posed life threatening challenges not only for inmates, but for camp overseers as well. M'sawize-1, Taibo wrote in May 1976, only "possesses wooden provisional lodgings, with walls and ceiling covered with grass. The camp environment is bad and unhealthy because the rain and the cold come easily in the barracks, thus causing many diseases due to humidity." In M'telela, where some stone-works existed given that it was a former colonial military base, lodgings were not enough for all detainees. "Some detainees live in huts that do not offer conditions for a camp destined for reactionaries who, for their qualification, deserve a special vigilance." Trabuco was very cautious in the words he chose. By *special vigilance* he really meant that M'telela detainees, among them the former vice-president of Frelimo, Reverend Uria Simango (who was still alive in 1976), deserved a better treatment. The camp of Revia, for example, was closed in February 1976 and all inmates were moved to Naisseco because Revia "did not offer any sanitary conditions, and there was high mortality among detainees."<sup>25</sup>

By Mozambican standards, Niassa is very cold during the dry season (May-September). With much of its territory more than 1000 meters (3,280 feet) above sea level, the medium temperature in Niassa is 16° Celsius (60° F). During the peak of the dry season temperatures usually drop to 8° C. (46° F) or lower.<sup>26</sup> The rudimentary nature of camp lodging facilities – huts unskillfully built with wooden poles, which left wide-open chinks, exposing the inmates to the chilling temperatures – rendered nighttime a nightmarish experience. The situation was made worse by the fact that inmates and wardens slept on the bare floor for lack of bed frames and mattresses.

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<sup>25</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

<sup>26</sup> *Atlas de Moçambique*. Maputo: ENM, 2008, p. 25.



Fig. 36. Interior of a camp lodging in Unango, Niassa. Note the open sides as the unskillfully plastered mud dried out and fell off. Photo by Naita Ussene. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

Exasperated by the lack of support from the authorities, Taibo often took on a lecturing tone in his reports to call attention to the serious challenges that he and his colleagues were facing to provide for the people they were entrusted to re-educate. “In all camps, there are no beds for *responsáveis* nor *reeducandos*”, he wrote. “It is assumed that the abundance of diseases, apart from exposure, is the result of sleeping on the bare floor, for humidity is a great enemy of men.”<sup>27</sup> The lack of blankets made an already alarming situation unbearable. Most detainees were arrested in summer attire in the warm streets of Maputo, Beira and Nampula. No winter clothes were provided for, other than the black khaki uniforms, which were no more than rags after much wear. As M’sawize-1 political commissar Silência David lamented to the *Notícias* journalist who visited

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<sup>27</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

her camp in 1976, “we do not have clothes to wrap up. The cold is unbearable and the houses have no protection on the sides. We have no blankets. We only give out blankets to those who had nothing to cover up.”<sup>28</sup> Yet, cold was one among many other challenges. Hunger and disease loomed large in the camps.

The very rough and dusty paths that led to the camps in the vast and mountainous territory of Niassa presented huge difficulties for the distribution of rations and other provisions. Vehicles could not reach the camps not only because they were located beyond rivers deprived of bridges, but also because the unpaved roads opened when the camps were first established were rapidly reclaimed by the forest. In M’sawize-1, the detainees had to carry the loads of rations on their heads from the village to the camp, “a path that is very time consuming and difficult for it is a very long walk”, wrote Taibo in his May 1976 report.<sup>29</sup> At the time this report was produced the detainees were still working on the road to link M’sawize to the village. In Ilumba and Naisseco the situation was desperate because the two camps were located beyond the riverbanks adjacent to the only unpaved road. To bring food rations to Ilumba from *Base Central Ngungunhana*, the *reeducandas* had to walk cross two rivers, Lindi and Messinge. “The River Messinge is very large, and crossing is done by a pneumatic canoe”, noted Taibo. The road from *Base Central*, he wrote, “does not guarantee a normal course, that is why vehicles take many days to reach the camp.” The effort to provide for Naisseco was herculean. “Since the beginning of the rainy season up to April”, insisted the tireless DPSRN chief, “our vehicles unload the ration in the village near the river, 22 km away from the country-town of Majune. From here the ration is carried by *reeducandos* to the camp, in a journey that takes two days. This is the reason why the camp was forced to go without food for several days.”<sup>30</sup> A SOS radio-message from Ilumba to Lichinga in April 20, 1976, informed the governor that after going six days without food, everybody in the camp was confined to bed. Two days later, the same radio operator delivered a desperate message, in which the camp

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<sup>28</sup> “Centro de Reeducação de M’sauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Notícias*, 18 Aug. 1976. During my field research in Niassa, which I intentionally undertook during the dry season, I could hardly stand outside at night, even with a coat conceived for the Michigan winter. The pain of cold entering the bones was one thing I was constantly reminded of by my interviewees in Niassa, former detainees who have not made back to their homes from forced exile, more than thirty years after the end of the reeducation program. One of them, Manuel Cossa, now a 79 years old senior, arrested in the 1983 *operação produção*, told me that he saw many women sleep with men because some men had coats. In his words, “those who managed to bring a blanket were kings.” Interview: Manuel Felix Cossa, Lichinga-Niassa, 13 May 2015

<sup>29</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976

<sup>30</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976



commander asked why the authorities were not replying to their cry for help, for people were already “losing consciousness” because of hunger:

*Informe não sabemos porque razão não responder mensagem que falamos sobre fome Stop Muitos perdem sentidos Stop Pedimos resposta relâmpago Stop*

We don't know why you don't respond to our message about hunger. Many lose consciousness. Please answer urgently.<sup>31</sup>

The difficulties in providing supplies meant that camps often went for weeks without rations, causing crisis of hunger, outbreak of disease and unrest among detainees and among wardens. In September 1976, Taibo did not write a new report. He simply retyped the one from August, which in turn was the same from May. The only new information was a note of outcry in which he alerted authorities that with the approaching rainy season the rivers would not be crossable and camps would be isolated for months. In SOS mode, he re-listed several items that were urgently needed, including bed frames, mattresses, blankets and sheets, pots of 20 to 25 liters for cooking, and a huge quantity of hoes (which means that even the most basic farming implements were in short supply).<sup>32</sup> It is unclear whether such items were ever provided. Until the late 1970s, the DPSRN continued to be bombarded by desperate SOS messages from the camps with pleas for immediate help to alleviate hunger and also to rescue those whose bodies were already giving in and were succumbing to malnutrition and other health problems.

## Health

Starvation and the inhospitable conditions of reeducation camps correlate with outbreaks of diseases that affected detainees and camp overseers. Each camp was equipped with a very rudimentary health post and a first-aid attendant. However, with very limited medical expertise and a shortage of medicines, there was little that camp medics could do to alleviate the torment of the sick, and easily curable diseases often led to death. The major health problems were directly related to hunger, exposition to cold and the poor sanitary conditions of the camps. Starvation caused stomach problems, including acute diarrhea, swelling of the body (especially legs).

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<sup>31</sup> The grammatical mistakes in Portuguese in this citation are original. AGGPN – Departamento de Defesa Provincial, Serviços de Transmissões. Impresso de Mensagem de Ilumba para DSR. Lichinga, 22 Abril 1976

<sup>32</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Agosto de 1976. Lichinga, 3 Set. 1976

Dizziness was a constant problem, especially for those in advanced stages of malnutrition. Camp obituaries pointed to cases of tuberculosis, asthma, trypanosomiasis, malaria, bilharziasis, elephantiasis, amebiasis, and scabies.<sup>33</sup> In the female camps of M'sawize-1 and Ilumba there were several cases of syphilis.<sup>34</sup>

The most widespread diseases directly related to poor sanitation and hygiene was tungiasis, locally known as *matequenha*. This sinister malady is caused by a small sand flea that penetrates the skin – normally toes and fingers, and in severe cases, any part of the body – causing intense itching and inflammation of the skin. The parasite lays eggs inside the skin, which mature in a short period of time, quickly spreading throughout the body if not properly treated. Victims in advanced stages of infection have painful ulcers and deformation of the affected area (often nails or entire toes), leading to difficulties in walking. Several unpublished photographs in the archives of *Notícias* and *Tempo* show emaciated *reeducandos* with *matequenha* walking on heels with the aid of a walking stick (fig 37). “Many people died of *matequenha* here”, told me a former nurse of Unango.<sup>35</sup> Snakebites were frequent occurrences, particularly in the working fields.<sup>36</sup> Several detainees sustained festering untreated wounds for months on end.

In May 1976, Francisco Taibo reminded his superiors that “all reeducation camps need health care.” He went on to suggest that “in the absence of comrades with training in nursing, at least health workers of the Rural Assistance Health Service, who have skills to replace a nurse, should attend the camps.” He closed his report by saying that “it is also convenient that the camps receive medical visits once in a month.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência Expedita/230.D.21.2/Médico Chefe do Hospital Provincial do Niassa, Lichinga, 8 Abril 1981. These were the same maladies that affected the rural population of Niassa.

<sup>34</sup> Although some detainees were engaged in prostitution before their arrest, others could have well caught the venereal disease during the trip to the camps. Sexual abuse and rape perpetrated by camp overseers were common practices. As one former security agent tasked with transporting detainees to reeducation camps told me, many women were sexually abused on the several days long trip to Niassa (Interview: Silva Santana, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015) Reeducation authorities often took advantage of female detainees, either forcing them into sexual relations or alluring them with much needed goods such as soap, food and clothing (Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Interview: Sra. Felicitas, Associação Progresso, Lichinga, 22 June 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>37</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 262/SR/76. Relatório do Mês de Abril de 1976. Lichinga, 28 Maio 1976



*Fig. 37. Ex-Reeducando walking with the help of a stick because of matequenha. Unango, Niassa, June 1984. Photo by Naita Ussene. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

Reeducation camps stretched the already fragile capacity of Niassa's government to provide free health care for all. Although this was an enormous challenge throughout the country, the situation in Niassa was far more extreme. The flight of the Portuguese left Mozambique with only thirty medical doctors and a few hundred nurses for a population of 12 million. Concentrated in major cities, the health services inherited from the colonial regime only covered seven percent of the population.<sup>38</sup> It took Frelimo a bold policy to reverse the scenario. During the armed struggle, Frelimo had initiated a free primary health service that became the cornerstone of

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<sup>38</sup> Carol Barker, "Bringing Health Care to the People", in J. Saul, *A Difficult Road*, p. 323.

Mozambique's health policy. Hospitals and clinics were nationalized and a network of rural health posts was established in areas that never benefited from such services before. Compared to the colonial period, the nationalization and rapid expansion of health care was indeed a significant improvement and a major gain of independence.<sup>39</sup> However, the expansion of health facilities came at the cost of the quality of the care that the services provided. As the Council of Ministers recognized in 1980, "we have been preoccupied with quantity rather than quality."<sup>40</sup> In rural areas, the peasant population relied on paramedics of the Rural Assistance Health Service. These were voluntary, part-time individuals with only four years of primary-school education and a six-month course in first aid. As the Provincial Health Directorate of Niassa reported in 1980, "in a total of 75 health units [in rural Niassa], 44 were governed by non-qualified personnel (*serventes* and military aiders)."<sup>41</sup> The same report remarked that shortage of medicines was a huge problem in the province. It was from these good-will medics that camp overseers often sought relief when detainees and their own comrades were assaulted by maladies that camp medics rarely succeeded in diagnosing much less cure. Yet, getting assistance from these paramedics was unwarranted. Not only were they poorly prepared and unequipped, but because of their status as voluntary part-times, they often left the posts unattended to take care of their domestic affairs. In June 1976, Francisco Taibo, who had gone on a work visit to the camp of Naisseco, reported:

Many people are sick and there are no medicines. The health post in the near village of Revia has no nurse and the camp's aid station is empty. In our way back we had to bring with us those who are seriously sick. We left them in the district hospital of Majune.<sup>42</sup>

Critically sick *reeducandos* and camp overseers often had to be taken to district hospitals, which were very far away from the camps. Since camps had no vehicles, this required a request for a transport arrangement from the DPSRN office in Lichinga. Such requests often took several days to be attended. During the rainy season (November-February), when the rough roads become muddy and impervious, the sick could only be rescued by helicopter. In such cases, camp overseers were driven to despair. Several desperate SOS radio messages from various camps, particularly Chiputo, Naisseco and Ilumba, reached the desk of the DPSRN director and of Niassa's governor

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<sup>39</sup> C. Barker, "Bringing Health Care to the People", p. 325; J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 55.

<sup>40</sup> C. Barker, "Bringing Health Care to the People", p. 331.

<sup>41</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Direção Provincial de Saúde do Niassa – Relatório Anual Relativo ao Período 1 de Janeiro a 31 de Dezembro de 1980. Lichinga, Dezembro 1980, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976.

asking for urgent transport to rescue the sick. One message from Naisseco, dated April 21, 1978, asked for a helicopter to take a seriously ill camp commissar in Chiputo to the hospital. When the DPSRN failed to respond positively, claiming that Niassa did not have any available helicopter, the exasperated camp commander sent another radio message this time to the governor, to complain about the DPSRN's shortcomings:

*Ex<sup>a</sup>. Senhor Governador informo que o centro Naisseco e Chiputo estamos sofrer de fome Pt Os dois centros estão lamentar com a direcção dos Serviços de Reeducação Pt Mandamos mensagem no 44/CRC/78 de 18/ABR78 vindo de Chiputo que informa sobre camarada comissário que encontra-se gravemente doente Pt A resposta foi que em Niassa não existe helicóptero Vg acrescentando disse vamos tentar destacar um Land-Rover Pt Nos postos sanitários não temos medicamentos suficientes Vg Nem transporte não temos para evacuar doentes Pt Saudações revolucionárias.*<sup>43</sup>

Your Excellency Mr. Governor, I inform that the center Naisseco and Chiputo are suffering from hunger. The two centers are wailing with the direction of the Reeducation Services. We sent message number 44/CRC/78 of 18/ABR78 coming from Chiputo informing about comrade Commissioner who is seriously ill. The answer was that in Niassa there is no helicopter, adding said let's try to send a Land-Rover. In the sanitary posts we do not have enough medicines, nor transport we do not have to evacuate patients. Revolutionary greetings.

These gigantic logistical demands went far beyond the powers of the unequipped, understaffed, and underfunded DPSRN. Although in other times a helicopter was arranged to rescue sick detainees, such effort required the good cooperation of the army department in the neighboring province of Nampula.<sup>44</sup>

The ineffective health service in Niassa's reeducation camps was put under even greater pressure during epidemic crisis. In September 1980, an outbreak of measles affected all the districts with camps, namely Majune and Mavago. The epidemic had an immediate casualty of 145 obits.<sup>45</sup> Most victims were children. The village of M'sawize, including the two reeducation camps in the area, were the most affected.<sup>46</sup> Such hygiene- and sanitary-related epidemics spread rapidly inside the camps. Scabies, for example, was a common malaise that quickly passed from one detainee to another. Cases of scabies were prevalent during the dry season. The chilly

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<sup>43</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Mensagem urgente do Centro de Reeducação de Naisseco para o Gabinete do Governador, 21 Abril 1978.

<sup>44</sup> In November 1976, for example, a helicopter rescued two sick detainees in M'telela. AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem do Centro de Reeducação de M'telela para o Governador do Niassa, 24 Nov. 1976.

<sup>45</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Direcção Provincial de Saúde do Niassa. Assunto: Situação de Surto de Sarampo no Distrito de Mavago-Informação, Lichinga, 11 Novembro 1980.

<sup>46</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Direcção Provincial de Saúde do Niassa – Relatório Anual Relativo ao Período 1 de Janeiro a 31 de Dezembro de 1980. Lichinga, Dezembro 1980, p. 5.

temperature of Niassa's winter discouraged detainees from going down to the river to bath (although this was more the case in male camps).<sup>47</sup> The scarcity of food also made personal hygiene come second, as detainees often sold out or exchanged their provisions of soap for food. "We distribute soap here", said Silência David in her conversation with the *Notícias* newsman in M'sawize-1, "but they often exchange it for food. The same happens with clothing."<sup>48</sup> Consequently, many detainees suffered from scabies. The situation was even more dreadful in female camps. Given the total inexistence of sanitary pads, female detainees had to be inventive to attend to their delicate hygienic needs. When I asked Ana Maria about this, she said bluntly "we invented." They made makeshift pads from old clothes. In extreme situations, said Ana Maria, "we used corn leaves for pads."<sup>49</sup>

Given the DPRSN's incapacity to provide health care and the shortage of staff to fill the vacant positions as camp medics, in most camps selected detainees were entrusted to serve as nurses. They administered vaccines (when vaccines were available) and prescribed drugs (often the aspirin, the most common medicine in the infirmary) for all kinds of ailments without any diagnosis.<sup>50</sup> The medical skills of these spontaneous health technicians were questionable and sometimes shocking. One of my interviewees gave me a remarkable account of how, from being a drug user, he became the chief nurse of M'sawize-2.

José Júlio Pereira aka Zaquinho was eighteen when he arrived at M'sawize-2 in 1982 with an indefinite sentence. His tender age saved him from the firing squad that met his older companions who were tried and sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Military Tribunal for Renamo-related activities.<sup>51</sup> In 1980 Zequinho had escaped from Chia, a reeducation camp for

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<sup>47</sup> Interview: Che Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014.

<sup>48</sup> "Centro de Reeducação de M'sauíze: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial", *Notícias*, 18 Aug. 1976. In many aspects life in Mozambique's reeducation camps resembled descriptions of the Soviet Gulag or similar internment camps elsewhere, where transactions based on the exchange of scarce goods such as soap and clothing for food were commonplace. Although it was forbidden, local peasants occasionally prowled around the camps with a piece of dried fish or grilled chicken, with the prospects of trading them for soap and clothing. And detainees often violated camp rules and ventured into nearby villages to trade their provisions with local villagers. Yet, most trade took place inside the camp among detainees. In M'sawize and Ilumba, cases of sex payment for a piece of bush meat from male guards were not rare (Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014

<sup>50</sup> J. Pinto de Sá, "A História inédita dos 'centros de reeducação'", p. 28; Interview: Felizardo Chaguala, Matola, 4 Dec. 2014

<sup>51</sup> Like most of TMR's sentences, Zequinho's was published in *Notícias*, under his original name: José Júlio Domingos Pereira. I read his case after my interview with him. His memory is remarkably accurate. See "Comunicado do Tribunal Militar Revolucionário", *Notícias*, 18 Jun. 1982

“undisciplined” pupils in Matutuine (Maputo province). He had been confined there for nearly a year for smoking cigars in his school yard and for peering at his teacher’s panties in class. A camp escapee, he sought better prospects in South Africa. Undocumented and inexperienced, he was shortly arrested and deported back to Mozambique. At the border post, while waiting to cross back to Maputo, Zequinho fell into the hands of recruiters for Renamo. Zequinho was trained in firearms and espionage in Johannesburg and sent back to Maputo to distribute anti-Frelimo propaganda and recruit malcontents to the rebel movement. It was during this activity that a friend of his – a dutiful vigilante – denounced him to SNASP and the entire clandestine network of Renamo activists connected to him were arrested and tried by the TMR in 1982. Zequinho was one of the three defendants from a group of thirteen not condemned for death by firing squad.<sup>52</sup> In M’sawize, his frailness and good looks won the heart of the Maconde camp commander and his wife, who gave him the pet-name *Americano* (because of his “whiteness”). “I used to sit and chat with the commander while his wife prepared something for us to eat”, he told me, “when I fell sick his wife took care of me.”<sup>53</sup> After recovering from a malarial fever that nearly killed him, Zequinho began working in the infirmary where the commander’s wife nursed him. “I treated people, dressed the wounds, and administered vaccines. Even the commander’s wife got several vaccine injections from me when she had malaria. I had a good notion of injections”, he said, with a hint of proud in his sad eyes. When I asked him how and where he learned his good skills, he brushed the question with a “here and there.” At my doubtful steady look, he came to the truth. “To be honest”, he said, “I learned from the drugs. I used to inject myself with cocaine, after having experimented with all kinds of drugs. From that experience, I learned to look for veins and apply injections.”<sup>54</sup>

Zequinho’s was an extraordinary case. However, sick detainees and camp overseers had no other option but to trust their lives on medical expertise acquired in similarly odd circumstances. To escape the dreadful conditions of labor fields, many detainees sought employment in camps’ infirmaries. And camp commissars were quick to accept convincing claims of medical expertise from *reeducandos*, especially those with a past of work in health units, regardless of their occupation.<sup>55</sup> It is not surprising that most of the cases of sick people that reached the Lichinga

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<sup>52</sup> See “Comunicado do Tribunal Militar Revolucionário”, *Notícias*, 18 Jun. 1982

<sup>53</sup> Interview: José Araújo (Zequinho), Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015

<sup>54</sup> Interview: José Araújo (Zequinho), Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015

<sup>55</sup> Interview: António Matusse, Maputo, 14 Jan. 2015

hospital from reeducation camps were always in grave if not terminal condition. In most cases, the hospital suggested that such patients – after recovering (and if they survived) – should not be sent back to the camp. In September 1981, general practitioner and chief medic of Lichinga hospital, Rogério Cunha recommended that one Benedito Chivambo, a *reeducando* from M’sawize-2 with “diabetes mellitus and an incurable diabetic ulcer in the leg”, be sent home because the camp’s infirmary “has no conditions for his treatment.”<sup>56</sup> It is unclear from the archival record whether such recommendations were positively taken or rejected, since orders to release detainees had to come from the Ministry of the Interior or the governor.

### **Women and the Price of “Love”**

Although most *reeducandas* in M’sawize-1 and Ilumba were accused of prostitution, there were also Jehovah’s Witnesses and women accused of sorcery, adultery, brewing and selling of alcohol, and other moral offenses. The *Notícias* journalist who visited M’sawize-1 in 1976 was shocked by the range of ages among detainees in the camp. “There were children of tender age and elderly women”, he wrote.<sup>57</sup> Either because he was not allowed to see them all or he chose to omit the fact, the journalist did not mention any pregnant women or their newborn babies. However, a report from Niassa’s DPSRN to governor Aurélio Manave dated June 1976 noted that 46 children were born in M’sawize in May 1976, and 31 children were born in Ilumba in the same month. In the most guarded camp of M’telela there were 4 births.<sup>58</sup> By October 1976 there were 52 babies in M’sawize and 39 in Ilumba.<sup>59</sup> This means that 81 women – at least in those three camps – were already pregnant when they were arrested in November 1975, and 14 either got pregnant in the camps or became pregnant in the subsequent arrests that took place after the first massive cleanup operations of 1975. Another report indicated that 76 women in both M’sawize and Ilumba were interned with their children ranging from ages 0 to 13. The list includes the names of the children,

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<sup>56</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Correspondência. Direção Provincial do Niassa para o Programa de Desenvolvimento do Niassa (PDN). Lichinga, 1 Set. 1981.

<sup>57</sup> “Centro de Reeducação de M’sauize: Transformar pelo trabalho marginais da sociedade colonial”, *Notícias*, 18 Aug. 1976

<sup>58</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976

<sup>59</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao mês de Outubro de 1976. Lichinga, 16 Nov. 1976



their ages, and the name of their mothers. Flora Moisés Machel – the younger sister of President Machel – was among the mother detainees with a one-year old child.<sup>60</sup>

Ana Maria and several other former detainees told me that sexual abuse of *reeducandas* by male wardens, local authorities and contract masons in M'sawize and Ilumba was rampant.<sup>61</sup> On occasions when selected groups of detainees had to go to Lichinga (either for health check-ups for them or their babies, or on a mission for the camp), some authorities in the city “sent their wives away for some time and took *reeducandas* in.”<sup>62</sup> In several occasions Governor Manave had to intervene to remonstrate camp overseers who took advantage of female detainees. In many cases, sexual encounters resulted in pregnancy. Female wardens were not immune to the “temptation.” As Ana Maria recalled, DF wardens also had “lovers” among the male detainees in the neighboring camp of M'sawize-2 or among the male security personnel. And like *reeducandas*, several DF overseers also got pregnant in the camp. In such cases, they were immediately removed from the camp.<sup>63</sup> This explains – at least partially – why DF wardens, including camp commanders and political commissars, were constantly replaced in M'sawize and Ilumba.<sup>64</sup>

For female detainees, the consequences of sexual encounters (forced or consented) were often disastrous. As one of the leading inmates in her group, Ana Maria recalled being selected to go to Lichinga to help identify dead babies and their respective mothers in the provincial hospital. “In the center where I was”, she told me, “250 newborn children died. It was the first time that I entered a morgue.”<sup>65</sup> Although I could not confirm these numbers in the archival record, several reports to Niassa's governor from reeducation camps as well as from Lichinga's hospital indicate that many *reeducandas* delivered stillborn infants or that their newborn babies did not survive the first days.<sup>66</sup> Some detainees delivered in the camp or at the health unit in the nearby village. But most had to be evacuated to the hospital in Lichinga given the delicate condition of their gestations.

Although high rate child mortality was a national problem – and more so in the extremely underdeveloped Niassa – a pregnancy in a reeducation camp was more likely to be an ill-fated

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<sup>60</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Relação das crianças que se encontram nos campos com as suas mães. s.d

<sup>61</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014; Interview: Silva Santana, Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015

<sup>62</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014

<sup>63</sup> Ana Maria: Interview, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>64</sup> The other reason for constant replacement of DFs is that many asked to be released from their duties in the camps; others got marital license; and some were permanently released for health considerations.

<sup>65</sup> Ana Maria: Interview, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014.

<sup>66</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Direcção Provincial de Saúde do Niassa – Relatório Anual Relativo ao Período 1 de Janeiro a 31 de Dezembro de 1980. Lichinga, Dezembro 1980

case. The lack of appropriate medical assistance, untreated diseases, the harsh living conditions (especially malnutrition and intensive manual labor), as well as the inexperience of inmates – who were in most cases first-time mothers with nobody to assist them – all these factors combined to produce disastrous calamities.<sup>67</sup> As Ana Maria told me, “everything was missing for someone who was pregnant. We had no medical appointments.”<sup>68</sup> The 1980 annual report from Niassa’s Provincial Health Directorate observed with alarm the inappropriate conditions in which women gave birth in the province. Even when women gave birth in health units, the report lamented that “most of the deliveries are assisted by unqualified health workers.”<sup>69</sup> As Ana Maria recalled, “I saw little girls give birth and unable even to hold the babies, and the babies died. Even if that person has recovered today, she would not be able to talk about that, but she lives with it.”<sup>70</sup>

For the lucky mothers, whose babies survived the often-complicated deliveries, nursing and raising a child in a reeducation camp was extremely difficult. In its planning – if there was ever one – MINT did not contemplate the needs of detainees with babies. Malnourished mothers produced little milk, and were forced to feed their children with whatever they could find as soon as their breasts ran dry. To wrap their babies, they often tore their *capulanas* or their own tattered clothes. Sometimes not even a needle was available to sew the clothes, leading women to rudimentary but very creative solutions to dress their children. As André Trabuco reported in April 1977, in M’sawize-1 “women use bamboo needles to sew children clothes due to lack of appropriate needles.”<sup>71</sup> Given that children in local villages had more or less the same ragged appearance, in the eyes of camp overseers – including authorities from the provincial government – the situation was considered “normal.” That a one-year old nephew of the President was among the camp’s ragged children is beyond my imagination.

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<sup>67</sup> In Mozambique, women normally graduate to full motherhood with their second child, when they are experienced enough to take care of a baby without the assistance of her mother, mother-in-law or close relative. See H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Vol. 1*, p. 188-9.

<sup>68</sup> Ana Maria: Interview, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014

<sup>69</sup> AGGPN – Correspondência/Direção Provincial de Saúde do Niassa – Relatório Anual Relativo ao Período 1 de Janeiro a 31 de Dezembro de 1980. Lichinga, Dezembro 1980, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> Ana Maria: Interview, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014

<sup>71</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/78. Relatório referente ao mês de Fevereiro, Março, e Abril de 1977. Lichinga, 30 Abril 1977

## Death

Although Mozambique's reeducation camps were not designed to physically eliminate life – except the high-profile cases of covert executions of political dissidents in M'telela and possibly Ruarua – hundreds of detainees perished from starvation, disease, mental breakdown, and physical punishments. Others found gruesome deaths in the jaws of lions and leopards while trying to escape the camps. Yet, no postmortem investigations were ever carried out (even when the unfortunate souls died in a hospital), and no responsibility was ever attributed to anyone. The defining condition of the *homo sacer*, argues Agamben, is that he or she can be killed without the commission of a crime; nobody is held responsible for his or her death.<sup>72</sup> This is not to say that detainees were entirely consumed by the shadow of death upon them. In fact, as I demonstrated in chapter 6, there was more to camp life than suffering. Yet, death was a permanent reality inside the camps, hence the number of pages that DPSRN officers and camp overseers dedicated to record them, and the vivid memories of my interviewees.

One aspect that surfaces from the sources is that once the unfortunate detainees breathed their last, no hint of dignity was rendered to their bodies. Perished *reeducandos* were buried unceremoniously in the bushes, sometimes in unmarked common graves. Rarely their relatives were notified of their passing.<sup>73</sup> As much as quantifying the number of detainees in Mozambique's camps is still an impossibility, knowing how many *reeducandos* perished is also difficult. Although camp overseers informed the DPSRN about cases of death in their camps, no mortality statistics were provided and it is very likely that many deaths went unrecorded either for negligence or fear of reprimand (particularly in obits that resulted from punishment). From the spotty archival record between 1976 and 1977 the DPSRN was informed about the death of close to 100 *reeducandos*.<sup>74</sup> Given the inconsistency of reporting and the incomplete state of Niassa's archives, this is at most a minimum figure. Yet, it stands for just one year. Although no records were kept for the critical years of the civil war (1983-1988), in which deaths were counted as part of the

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<sup>72</sup> G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>73</sup> AGGPN/MINT-SR, Circular 44-GSREED-978, Maputo, 11 Abril 1978

<sup>74</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Documentos Dispersos, 1976-1977, Lichinga

casualties of the conflict, it is fair to estimate the number of perished detainees at well over a thousand.<sup>75</sup>

There were many ways to die in the camps. As DPSRN officers frequently and desperately reported, camps were under constant crisis of hunger and starvation. Weakened by hunger, detainees easily succumbed to diseases, most of which were caused by the inhospitable conditions of their lodgings. Although some reports included the cause of death, most were plain statements from camp commissars. When reports of death reached the desk of the DPSRN, the deceased had already been buried. A radio message from Base Central, dated August 24, 1976, informed Lichinga that Naisseco *reeducando* Nuno Maumede “died of pneumonia” and was buried the following day (August 21). The same message indicated that *reeducanda* Marta de Lurdes died in M’sawize on August 24 and was buried shortly after. The cause of her death was not mentioned.<sup>76</sup> Most of the death communiques denote complete insensitivity, as in the following one dated June 30, 1976, which informed of the death of a *reeducanda* in Ilumba:

*Informo a esse que faleceu nesta base uma reeducanda de nome Rosa Agostinho. A referida marginal era filha de Agostinho Armando e de Beatriz Manuel, natural de Buzi, distrito de Buzi, Província de Sofala. Saudações Revolucionárias. Unidade, Trabalho, Vigilância.*

We hereby inform the passing in this camp of a *reeducanda* named Rosa Agostinho. The said marginal was the daughter of Agostinho Armando and Beatriz Manuel, from Buzi district, Sofala province. Revolutionary greetings. Unity, Work, Vigilance.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from starvation and disease, the remote location of reeducation camps was a factor in the camps’ death toll. Reaching the camps during the rainy season was a life-threatening endeavor, particularly those camps located beyond riverbanks (Ilumba, M’sawize and Naisseco). During the rainy season, the Lugenda becomes a very powerful river, carrying loads of water downstream. It was not uncommon for food carriers trying to cross the river through improvised trunk bridges or barks to be washed away by the strong currents to never be seen again. A situation report from Naisseco to DPSRN, dated August 1977, informed that *reeducando* Wiliamo Nguenha was taken by the water current while trying to cross the river. His body was only found the

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<sup>75</sup> These estimative numbers might include all other camps and will only be confirmed when more post-colonial archives become available, particularly the archives from MINT’s extinct National Directorate of Reeducation Service.

<sup>76</sup> AGGPN – Documentos Dispersos 1976-1984. SISTREP da Base Central para GPN, 24 Agosto 1976

<sup>77</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 361/SR/76, do Camp de Reeducação de Ilumba, 30 Julho de 1976

following day.<sup>78</sup> Camp overseers did not escape the dangers of Niassa's wilderness. On May 23, 1976, Naisseco typist Bonifácio Lesta Tomás was taken away by the river current. He had been charged to supervise the opening of the road linking Naisseco to a new sawmill where *reeducandos* produced timber. Accompanied by the camp commander, the two men used a bark to cross the mighty Lugenda. "The bark turned in midstream", reported Francisco Taibo, "and the typist disappeared. His body was never found."<sup>79</sup>

Detainees also found death in their desperate search for freedom. Although escape attempts were daunting adventures given the wild surroundings of the camps and the long and traitorous distance to the city, many detainees took advantage of the camps' loose security and braved the forests.<sup>80</sup> It is difficult to know from the archival record how many escapees succeeded. The reports about runaways in the DPSRN files indicate that some detainees were either recaptured or devoured by predators. Remains of runaways were occasionally found along the roads of rural Niassa, with clear signs of attacks by lions or other wild cats (see chapter 6).

The dead were buried in unmarked ditches in the bushes. Unlike the Soviet Gulag where at least a numbered plate marked the location of one's grave, in Mozambique's camps not even a wooden pole was placed to mark the last resting place of *reeducandos*.<sup>81</sup> In cases of mass deaths (some of which occurred in the inhospitable camp of Revia in early 1976 or the 250 children that Ana Maria saw in Lichinga's mortuary), bodies were ditched in unmarked mass graves. As Ana Maria told me, the mothers were not allowed to participate in the burial of their babies.<sup>82</sup> While few cases of mass death were reported, the practice of unmarked mass graves was widespread throughout the reeducation camp complex.

Although few reports talk about suicide, some detainees attempted to shorten their plight in the camps. One such report referred to a failed suicide attempt by Joana Simeão in M'telela, on June 9, 1976. Simeão was one of the prominent political prisoners in M'telela, along with Uria Simango. According to the camp's report, Simeão asked the guards to be moved to a different

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<sup>78</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN, No 494/SR/77, Lichinga, 16 Ago. 1977

<sup>79</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/76. Relatório Referente ao Mês de Maio de 1976. Lichinga, 26 Junho 1976

<sup>80</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem No 418/Sr/76, ao MINT-SR, Lichinga, 4 Setembro 1976. In this report, Francisco Taibo wrote: "*quase todos os Campos de Reeducação apresentam nos problemas de fugas de marginais e em contrapartida propõe a necessidade de duas bicicletas para cada campo, para fins de perseguição em caminhos que não dão acesso às viaturas.*"

<sup>81</sup> A. Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. 343.

<sup>82</sup> Interview: Ana Maria, Matola-Kongoloti, 12 Dec. 2014

room, calling on guards several times during the night. Her request was not attended. She was found unconscious in the morning with a ribbon on her neck.<sup>83</sup> With no medics and unsure what to do, the camp commander asked Francisco Taibo to “come to the camp urgently.”<sup>84</sup> In his turn, governor Manave dispatched the provincial chief medic, who was on duty in Mecula district, to go see her.<sup>85</sup> Given the high profile status of Joana Simeão, this urgent movement of staff to take care of her shows that, at least until 1976, the political prisoners were still held in high consideration. There is nothing in the archival record that helps understand how the situation reached the point in which Simeão and her companions were executed in 1978 or 1979. Nevertheless, as Tvetan Todorov once observed, suicide in internment camps was “an opportunity to exercise free will”, it was an act of “defiance, not desperation.”<sup>86</sup>

Detainees were not the only ones risking their lives to “exercise free will” and escape the harsh conditions of reeducation camps. Camp guards, though not assaulted by suicidal thoughts, took to the forests and crossed the border to neighboring countries. In November 12, 1977, four wardens from M’telela fled to Malawi.<sup>87</sup> There are little details as to what prompted the guards to flee. Their requests to be transferred to less challenging duties might have driven them to such audacious act. The fact that these flights took place in M’telela may also suggest that some wardens were appalled by the excesses committed against political prisoners, some of whom had been their colleagues-in-arms and superiors during the liberation struggle.

In several occasions, authorities from other provinces requested that certain detainees be released after evidence of their innocence had been produced by the police (most often under the pressure of resourceful relatives). However, in most cases, due to the chaotic bureaucracy of MINT, and the lack of registration in local reeducation service departments, detainees could not be located. In Niassa, such requests often took several days until the DPSRN called each camp asking them to find someone with a given name. Niassa’s archive has several such requests that reached the desk of DPSRN directors and returned with a negative response. Sometimes the

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<sup>83</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 281/SR/76, do Campo de Reeducação de M’telela, 10 Junho 1976

<sup>84</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Serviços Técnicos de Mensagem, Urgente, do Campo de Reeducação de M’telela, 10 Junho 1976

<sup>85</sup> AGGPN – Rede Privativa de Radiocomunicações. Mensagem Expedida no 175/A/16/GAB/76, para ADM Mecula, 10 Junho 1976

<sup>86</sup> Tvetan Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, cited in A. Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. 340. It should be note that Todorov was speaking of the death camps.

<sup>87</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 735/SR/977, Confidencial, do Centro de Reeducação de Chiputo ao GPN, 21 Novembro 1977.

response was like this: “the individual could not be located in this province. He might be in another province.”<sup>88</sup> But the most frequent response was that “the individual is dead or escaped.”<sup>89</sup> In August 1976, the Governor of Manica province, José Moiane, asked for the release of one António Mendes Costa, who had been sent to a reeducation camp in Niassa for smoking marijuana.<sup>90</sup> It took Niassa’s authorities two months to find out the whereabouts of the said individual. This is what the camp overseer of Naisseco, in a very broken Portuguese, had to say in response: “*Reeducando que precisavam de vir apresentar vg já não está Stop Faleceu quando este campo era Munungo Pf*” (the *reeducando* you asked for is no more. He passed away when this camp was still Munungo).<sup>91</sup> It turned out that the poor fellow had died from an unmentioned disease back in January 1976 (as the reports indicate, he died when the camp was still in the unbearably inhospitable camp of Revia in Munungo, which was closed and moved to a “better” location, after several detainees perished).<sup>92</sup>

Upon receiving death reports, the DPSRN often sent them to the governor’s cabinet, who in turn informed the government of the province of origin of the deceased. The idea was that the administration of the place of origin of the deceased would notify the relatives. However, as the communiqués above indicate, the only information about the deceased were their paternal filiation and district of origin. No address was provided. Even in the rare cases in which the name of the neighborhood of the deceased was provided, finding the relatives was difficult. As acknowledged in a 1980 situation report from the commission tasked with finding relatives of *ex-reeducandos* who were freed but forced to stay in Niassa, finding the relatives of detainees was a challenging task, and often led to negative results.<sup>93</sup> Detainees arrested in 1974 and 1975 arrived in Niassa before the reorganization of peri-urban settlements into *bairros comunais* or the resettlement of rural communities in communal villages. By 1977 much of the composition of rural and peri-urban settlements had changed. Unable to communicate (for writing letters was a privilege granted only for few people), detainees often lost track of the whereabouts of their relatives. Neither MINT nor camp overseers had complete files of detainees with detailed information about their origins. The

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<sup>88</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 492/SR/76, ao GPN, Lichinga, 7 Outubro 1976.

<sup>89</sup> AGGPN/Governo da Província de Manica, no 182/GOV/976, ao GPN, Chimio, 27 Agosto de 1976.

<sup>90</sup> AGGPN/Governo da Província de Manica, no 182/GOV/976, ao GPN, Chimio, 27 Agosto de 1976.

<sup>91</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 448/SR/76, do Campo de Reeducação de Naisseco-Revia, 20 Setembro 1976.

<sup>92</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 492/SR/76, ao GPN, Lichinga, 7 Outubro 1976.

<sup>93</sup> AGGPN – PDN/Balanço do Cumprimento do Plano e Programa Provincial e Actividades/Relatório: Programa do Desenvolvimento do Niassa, Lichinga, 1980.

spotty files organized by the DPSRN were based on the testimonies of detainees themselves. Organized in columns, the files include the name, a generic place of origin (often the district or Province, with no indication of home address), the age, and the cause of detention.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, relatives were not – and could not be – informed about the passing of their loved ones in detention.

The Ministry of the Interior was aware of the chaotic situation and attempted to address it. In April 1978, MINT distributed a circular to departments of reeducation services in all provinces with camps, urging them to inform authorities about cases of death no more than 48 hours after the occurrence. The minister complained that despite superior orders already passed to provincial DPSRs, there still existed many irregularities in the ways in which camps communicated about obits. The circular observed disapprovingly that camps either informed about cases of death irregularly or informed excessively too late. “This causes, as it is obvious, embarrassing situations for the *estruturas* that have to inform the concerned relatives”, the circular remarked.<sup>95</sup> Besides informing authorities about deaths with urgency, camps were instructed to include information about the origins of the deceased to facilitate the location of their relatives. Camps were also instructed “as much as possible, to report on the causes of death”, as well as “the exact date of death.”<sup>96</sup>

However, the circular said nothing about returning the corpses to the relatives and allow them to give a proper funeral to their loved ones. The corpses were not returned because of the distance, the cost of transport, and more importantly the lack of a refrigerated morgue to keep the bodies until transport was available.<sup>97</sup> However, this was only partially true. The remains of detainees originally from Niassa were also not returned to relatives, but buried immediately after death. Abiti Maunde Issufo, a reeducanda at M’sawize-1, died in the hospital in Lichinga from an undisclosed disease on February 2, 1977. She was originally from Chitambe in Massangulo, a few miles away from the city. Yet, she was buried immediately, after which authorities sent an “urgent”

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<sup>94</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/SR/Lista Nominal de Cidadãos Reeducandos dos Campos de Naisseco e M’sawize. Sd.

<sup>95</sup> AGGPN/Documentos Dispersos 1976-1984/MINT-SR, Circular 44-GSREED-978/Maputo, 11 Abril 1978.

<sup>96</sup> AGGPN/Documentos Dispersos 1976-1984/MINT-SR, Circular 44-GSREED-978/Maputo, 11 Abril 1978.

Information about camp deaths was to be sent to the party and governmental structures of the deceased place of origin. But given that many detainees were migrants from rural areas, locating their relatives was often difficult. The lack of appropriate addresses in the labyrinthine *bairros de caniço* where most people live in all of Mozambique’s cities also made the task of finding inmates’ relatives a difficult one.

<sup>97</sup> AGGPN – DPSRN/Mensagem N° 344/SR/79, ao GPN, Informação, Lichinga, 13 Junho 1979.



message to the district of Mandimba, urging the district administration to locate and inform the relatives.<sup>98</sup>

Not returning the corpses was, therefore, a deliberate policy that aimed at keeping society ignorant of the human cost of the reeducation program, a program that was often lauded as an act of clemency by the revolutionary party. Up to this day, no dignity has been restored to those who paid a very high price for the socialist dream. And many families are still in the dark as to the whereabouts of their relatives who were abducted from the cities and sent to camps to be transformed into new men and new women. This disturbing, unrecognized, and silenced reality – which historian Dipesh Chakrabarty calls historical wound – is a vivid reminder of the cost of high-minded schemes of social engineering.<sup>99</sup>

### **From Hope to Despair: Everyday Life in Labor Camps during Operação Produção**

Between 1979 and 1982 detainees and overseers in Niassa's reeducation camps experienced a period of relative hope and a slight improvement of living conditions. The number of detainees reduced considerably as most detainees were set free and some camps were shut down. The driving force behind this dramatic change was the *Ofensiva* campaign. As I pointed out in chapter 2, the *Ofensiva* was spurred by condemnations of civil rights violations in reeducation camps after a number of letters from the Catholic Church reached President Machel. But the main motivation was the expectation that the end of the war with Rhodesia and the independence of Zimbabwe would usher a new era of rapid economic development with the implementation of PPI. Frelimo was confident that the 1980s would be a very good decade economically.<sup>100</sup> The reformation of the reeducation program and the policy of amnesty that President Machel initiated in 1979 resulted from that sentiment of optimism.

Although the visit to reeducation camps was the highlight of the process, the President also went to see the locations where the ambitious *Niassa Development Program* was to be implemented. The project involved 400,000 hectares of arable land and the creation of at least

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<sup>98</sup> AGGPN – GPN/Mensagem 77/A/16/GAB/77, para ADM Mandimba, 5 Fevereiro 1977.

<sup>99</sup> D. Chakrabarty, "History and the politics of recognition."

<sup>100</sup> AGGPM/RPM. Assembleia Popular. Linhas Fundamentais do Plano Prospectivo Indicativo para 1981-1990. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional, 1981; "A Materialização das Decisões do CC é Condição para a Vitória sobre o Desenvolvimento", *A Voz da Revolução*, Número Especial, Janeiro 1981, pp. 2-6.

three state farms in Matama, Unango, and M'sawize, and several other smaller projects across the vast and sparsely inhabited province. In several speeches during his visit, President Machel reiterated the idea of populating Niassa as one way of speeding the province's development. Yet, the province would not be populated by the most capable citizens of the rest of the country, much less the best of the party cadres. It would be populated by the country's marginal, prostitutes, and criminals. Their task was to transform Niassa's wilderness into new socialist cities, and in the process transform themselves into new men and new women. Niassa would be "the great school of the marginal."<sup>101</sup> All the country's unwanted urbanites were to be brought to Niassa to build new cities for them and for their families. This was the part of the PPI designed for Niassa.<sup>102</sup>

At the end of his visit, the President gave amnesty to detainees in selected camps. All detainees in Chiputo were set free. The inmates from the insalubrious camp of Naisseco were moved to a better location in Unango (from where they were "set free" a year later). The female camps of Ilumba and M'sawize were shut down in the following months.<sup>103</sup> However, the now ex-detainees were not free to go home. They were instructed to stay and transform their former detention camps into socialist towns or *idades do futuro* (cities of the future).<sup>104</sup> Those who had families in Maputo and other cities, their wives, husbands, and children were to come to Niassa to join them. Those with no families, wives would be "procured" for them in local communities. "We are here, aren't we? Among Mozambicans, what is the problem?", the President jeered, as he spoke to the cohort of bachelor ex-detainees whom he was commanding to stay in Niassa. If they were not happy with local women, Machel remarked, prostitutes from urban areas would soon join them and they could pick and choose. "Women who persist with prostitution, drugs, will come here too.

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<sup>101</sup> "A Batalha contra o subdesenvolvimento produzirá heróis do trabalho", *Tempo*, 26 Dez. 1979, p. 52.

<sup>102</sup> The program was not based on investing on the land to improve the quality of life of local communities – either by supporting their family machambas or hiring them in state farms – and improve the provision of health service and education. Rather, it was based on dumping unwanted city dwellers who would put more pressure on the fragile economy of the province and make it even harder for the people of Niassa to benefit from their own scarce resources. This was a program that prioritized alleviating the cities of the pressures of shortages, not the problems of Niassa's extreme underdevelopment. It is yet another example of a policy designed in the whim of excitement with little regard to its objective outcomes. For a critic of Frelimo's agricultural policies in relation to rural transformation, see, among many others, M. Bowen, *The State against the Peasantry*.

<sup>103</sup> AGGPM/Direção Provincial de Apoio e Controlo – Comissão de Reintegração Social, 1981-1987. It is unclear what happened to female detainees.

<sup>104</sup> "Unango constrói o socialismo", *Notícias*, 16 Nov. 1981; "Está a nascer uma nova cidade", *Notícias*, 8 Julho 1983; "Unango: Construir uma cidade communal", *Tempo*, 666, 17 Julho 1983.

They will marry with drug addicted men. This is a serious decision that the government will take”, he said.<sup>105</sup>

Machel’s visit to Niassa was the build-up to *Operação Produção*, which, as I noted in chapter 3, was meant to take place in 1980. In a way, by giving detainees amnesty, President Machel intended them to prepare the terrain for the thousands of unwanted urbanites who were soon to be rounded up in Maputo and other cities. At the same time, by denying ex-detainees from returning to their homes, the President was consenting that reeducation was not necessarily transformative, but a means to rid the cities of unwanted citizens. Despite the many years of internment, detainees were not seen as reformed new man and new women. They continued to be anti-socials and unworthy of urban citizenship.

Between 1980 and 1982, the ex-detainees worked with some enthusiasm to transform their former detention camps into villages. M’sawize and Unango were selected to be the first cities of the future, and a small team of party cadres was given the status of Municipal authorities to coordinate the process.<sup>106</sup> A *comissão* or task force was created to locate and ‘mobilize’ the families of ex-detainees to come to Niassa.<sup>107</sup> According to Mr. Cuinica, who was appointed mayor of the future city of Unango in 1980, on paper the relocation of detainees’ families was not compulsory, but in reality party officials employed coercive measures to force the women and children to pack up and move to the North.<sup>108</sup> By mid 1982 more than 300 families had been reunited with their relatives in Unango.<sup>109</sup> Here, a state farming company under the directorship of Paulo Zucula provided waged work for all ex-detainees. The farm produced mainly corn and beans, and it had a good harvest season in 1981/2.<sup>110</sup> For a short period of time life seemed possible in Niassa for ex-detainees and their families.

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<sup>105</sup> “A Batalha contra o subdesenvolvimento produzirá heróis do trabalho”, *Tempo*, 26 Dez. 1979, p. 53.

<sup>106</sup> MHN – “Niassa: Unango não é um sonho”, *Tempo*, 549, 19 Abril 1981.

<sup>107</sup> MHN – “Familiares de ex-reeducandos brevemente no Niassa”, *Notícias*, 17 Dez. 1981.

<sup>108</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 June 2015. The relocation of families of ex-detainees was exclusively for men, given that female detainees were considered prostitutes. It is unclear what happened to most of them, whether they were set free or distributed in different villages in Niassa is not clear from the archival record. Not all families of ex-detainees accepted to move to Niassa. The process often depended on the level of education, occupation, seniority, marital status, and property ownership. For families already affected by the disappearance of their members, fear of party-state authorities was very high. Most might have consented to relocate out of fear. e

<sup>109</sup> “Com grande emoção e alegria: Ex-reeducandos no Niassa recebem as suas famílias”, *Notícias*, 18 Ago. 1980; “Nos ex-centros de reeducação: Trezentos lares reconstruídos no Niassa”, *Notícias*, 11 Junho 1982.

<sup>110</sup> AGGPN/Empresa Agrícola de Unango. Relatório. Balanço da Campanha 82-83, Unango, 10 Fev. 1984; MHN – “Programa do Niassa começa a dar frutos: Boa Campanha Agrícola em M’sawize e Unango”, *Notícias*, 15 Junho 1982.

In 1981, President Machel returned to Niassa and Cabo Delgado to assess the progress of the program. In Cabo Delgado, the President extended the amnesty to 684 detainees in Chaimite reeducation camp. Camp authorities were instructed to send back home the sick and the elderly. The young and fit were to be integrated in state farms. Mots went to the sisal plantation in N'guri.<sup>111</sup> The President promised government support. Electricity, schools, hospitals, and farming implements would be provided. New socialist cities would rise and the ex-detainees would be hailed as heroes of labor, the very socialist new men.<sup>112</sup> Most ex-detainees believed and agreed to bring their families.<sup>113</sup>

For the first time since 1974, the DPSRN had few camps and few detainees to oversee. Although reeducatees continued to arrive, particularly in M'sawize-2, the numbers were manageable. Now, only with a sentence pronounced by a judge could individuals be set to reeducation.<sup>114</sup> The *Ofensiva* seemed to have fixed the problem of indiscriminate detentions. However, it was the calm before the storm. The launching of *Operação Produção* in June 1983 rolled back all the little gains of the *Ofensiva*. Niassa became one large reeducation camp, a massive penal colony where tens of thousands of expelled urbanites were abandoned, left to fend for themselves.

### *Operação Produção in Niassa*

As I noted in chapter 3, *Operação Produção* was in the buildup since 1979, and was meant to be implemented in 1980. However, the party-state never elaborated a concrete plan on how to carry it out. Although President Machel announced that such campaign would be launched as early as March 1980, the particulars of the operation remained a secret in the high echelons of power. And when the campaign was finally announced in May 1983, officials in the provincial and district administrations, including the security forces, knew as much as the general population about its details. The central government never notified the rest of the branches of government about the

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<sup>111</sup> MHN – “Libertados 684 reeducandos: Medida de clemência ordenada pelo Presidente Samora em Cabo Delgado”, *Notícias*, 28 Set. 1981.

<sup>112</sup> “A Batalha contra o subdesenvolvimento produzirá heróis do trabalho”, *Tempo*, 26 Dez. 1979, p. 51.

<sup>113</sup> Interview: Silvestre Mulhanga, Unango, 13 June 2015; Interview: Ché Mafuiane, Maputo, 4 Dec. 2014

<sup>114</sup> “Para o centro de reeducação só se vai depois de julgado e condenado”, *Notícias*, 4 Jan. 1985.

particulars of the operation. Everybody was unprepared for the campaign, particularly in the provinces and districts where the “unproductive” were to be relocated.

Niassa received the largest contingent of expelled urbanites. According to Niassa’s police department, between June 1983 and May 1984, the province “welcomed” 15,000 “unproductive”.<sup>115</sup> This figure does not include the number of families who arrived to join their relatives (mostly wives and children – Rui Zunguza estimated that for each evacuee at least 3 family members joined).<sup>116</sup> We may never know how many people exactly went to Niassa, but the number was way above 15,000.

In September 1983, only two months since the beginning of the compulsive phase of *Operação Produção*, the new provincial governor, Coronel Sérgio Vieira, sent a wire to Minister Guebuza – the head of the COC – requesting more working implements because the province had received more than 10,000 “unproductive” and it only had 3,000 hoes. He warned that if the situation was not addressed urgently, the “unproductive will continue to be unproductive due to lack of instruments of labor.”<sup>117</sup> This wire tells us two things. First, it confirms that more people were sent to Niassa than the figure presented by the local police department. And the intensive phase of the campaign continued until May 1984. More people arrived coming from Sofala and Zambézia, where the campaign began two months later.<sup>118</sup> Second, the wire confirms that no preparations were made in advance to receive the expelled urbanites. The 3,000 hoes that the province had in store were not enough for the mass of people arriving by the thousands every week. And those hoes were not necessarily meant for the newcomers, but for local peasants. This means that the few resources that the local government possessed – which could hardly meet the demands of local populations – now had to be shared with new people. The cries of abandonment, the frequent desperate wires to the nation for support returned. But this time they did not come from the isolated – and largely ignored – camp overseers and DPSRN officers. This time they

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<sup>115</sup> AGGPN/PRM – Balanço Historial do Desenvolvimento do Trabalho Policial no Niassa, Lichinga, 18 Janeiro 1988. This figure is not to be trusted because the police did not keep records of the people when they arrived in the province. This is a guess number that the police department produced for the sake of reporting – a general practice in socialist Mozambique (see chapter 4).

<sup>116</sup> Rui Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p.12.

<sup>117</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 106/GPN/C/6, para Tenente General Armando Guebuza Ministro do Interior, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira, Governador de Niassa. Relâmpago. 3/9/83

<sup>118</sup> MHN – “Prepara-se 2ª Fase da ‘Operação Produção’ em Sofala”, *Notícias*, 9 Ago. 1983.

came from the provincial governor himself. He too, felt abandoned (and in some way, betrayed) during *Operação Produção*.

After serving in various branches of the government in Maputo – Chief of Staff; President of the National Bank, among others – Coronel Vieira expected *Operação Produção* to be like the previous campaigns: brief. In his mind, only a few hundreds of urbanites would be sent to Niassa. He also expected them to come with working tools, a minimum of preparation in farming techniques, tents for temporary shelter and appropriate clothing. He was revolted by what he saw. A minimum of four planes arrived every day unloading nearly 1,000 people at the airport in Lichinga. Most people arrived only with the clothes they were wearing at the time of detention. It was July, and the cold in Niassa was unforgiving. The logistics that the local Provincial Operative Commando had prepared for the campaign were insufficient for the dimension of the task. It became clear that Niassa was not prepared to receive the number of people sent from Maputo and other cities.

If the logistical conditions to run the reeducation camps and the “cities of the future” were already slender, *Operação Produção* only made things worse. The tremendous demand to process, accommodate, and distribute 900 people every day in the various labor camps consumed all the administrative efforts of the province. For two months everything else stopped. The COP had been allocated only six trucks. Put together, the six cars could only transport 200 people per day. With 900 people arriving daily at the airport, the administration had to mobilize more vehicles from other points of the province. This meant that other important activities had to stop. The period between June and August is harvest season in Mozambique. With vehicles being deployed to transport people from the airport to the city, and from here to the various labor camps, crops were left unattended and rotted. In addition, the number of vehicles mobilized to transport the newcomers was consuming the very scarce fuel, which was also used to run the generators that provided light for Lichinga and much of Niassa’s towns. And, with no electricity there was no water. Governor Vieira was desperate and enraged. This is what he wrote to Minister Guebuza on July 16, 1983, only ten days into the compulsive stage of the campaign, in a super urgent telegram:

One, the province [of] Niassa does not have capacity, I repeat, it has no capacity [to] receive, shelter and [evacuate] close to [900] people per day. Two, we lack fuel which even deprives the city of electric power and consequently water. Three, [the] number of vehicles in the province do not allow the daily evacuation of this quantity [of] people because the few vehicles are engaged in [the] harvest [and] outflow [of the agricultural crops]. The Command for Operation Production only has

6 trucks that at most allow a daily evacuation [of] about 200 people. Four, we fear that the accumulation in Lichinga of these elements without being able to evacuate [them] could seriously disturb the conditions of hygiene, health and order in the city. Five, we therefore request [you] to reconsider your decision [of sending] flights [on] Sundays and Mondays with about 1,700 people.<sup>119</sup>

In fact, the conditions in which most evacuees were kept before relocating them in labor camps were inhuman. As soon as they landed at the airport, the evacuees were concentrated in Lichinga's trade fair (*Feira de Exposição do Niassa - FEN*).<sup>120</sup> Because there were few cars to distribute the people, FEN became a *ghetto*, with people staying there for months until transport was available. Francisco Cuinica, the mayor of the future city of Unango, recalled that at FEN "people were lodged like animals." The fair had a few exposition buildings. Cuinica told me that rooms with capacity for five people lodged hundreds. The hygienic conditions were "repulsive." No food was provided.<sup>121</sup> Celina Nhantumbo, who spent one month there before evacuation to a labor camp, remembered the place as "deplorable."<sup>122</sup> José Ngovene told me that, when food was available, people plucked banana leaves to receive their share.<sup>123</sup> Hunger, cold, and disease reduced the number of evacuees before relocation, as some people died in the place.

For some – specially the most vulnerable – the conditions at FEN were unbearable. Many sick people had been arrested in front of hospitals in Maputo. Manuela Nascimento, a local resident in Lichinga, remembered seeing dead bodies on the street near FEN. "Many people came here already sick, many died on the streets", she told me, "it was common to see cadavers there."<sup>124</sup> Governor Vieira's telegram to Minister Guebuza was a desperate attempt to stop the influx of more people. His political discipline and respect for hierarchy restricted him from being more aggressive in his message. But he was profoundly irritated. Francisco Cuinica recalled that the governor exploded once at the airport during another reception of several planes bringing hundreds of people from Maputo: "this is worst than Nazism" (*isto é pior que Nazismo*), he heard the governor say.<sup>125</sup> To make things worse, the line of communications with Maputo was interrupted for four days in

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<sup>119</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 301/GAB/SC/C/5, para Tenente General Armando Guebuza Ministro do Interior, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira, Governador de Niassa. Relâmpago. 16/7/83 10H50.

<sup>120</sup> Every city in Mozambique had a trade fair for the exposition of local economic activities. Today FEN is the largest informal market in Lichinga, and the city's red light district.

<sup>121</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 June 2015; Interview: José Ngovene, Unango, 25 June 2015.

<sup>122</sup> Interview: Celina Nhantumbo, Lichinga, 13 May 2015.

<sup>123</sup> Interview: José Ngovene, Unango, 25 June 2015.

<sup>124</sup> Interview: Manuela Nascimento, Lichinga, 11 June 2015.

<sup>125</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 June 2015.

early July 1983. Unable to communicate with the capital, the governor could not coordinate or request support from the capital, or even intervene to prevent more people from coming to the province.<sup>126</sup> In September he sent another telegram, in which he asked the head of the COC to at least improve the organization of the evacuation. This is what he wrote:

Concerning Operation Production, we would like [to] suggest [to] Your Excellency some points that would help improve [the] efficiency [of the operation]. First, we must know at least 4 days [in] advance [the] movement [of] airplanes with two objectives [:] to send cargo [in their] return and to have here arranged the means [of] immediate evacuation of the [unproductive]. Second, notify us with 4 days [in] advance of the list of those being sent and their cases so [that] we can draw up a plan for [their] distribution and immediate evacuation as indicated in point one. Third, given that in winter time, and our winter is relatively cold, [the] evacuees should bring with them [at] least clothes and blankets, as well as tents for immediate shelter. Fourth, the province faces permanent difficulties [such as] lack of soap and medicines. Agglomerations [of] people can create serious problems for us. So in our suggestion: A) Make prior medical inspection of evacuees to prevent cases of cholera, hepatitis, tuberculosis and other contagious diseases. B) Send [at] least soap with [the] evacuees to ensure [the] indispensable hygiene that prevents unfortunate situations.<sup>127</sup>

What the governor was asking for was an ideal process of coordination that Minister Guebuza could not deliver. The campaign had been out of control from day one. Verification and evacuation centers in Maputo, Beira, Nampula, and other cities faced the same logistical problems. They were understaffed, working non-stop to verify the cases of thousands of arrested citizens per day. There was little time to produce lists of people before sending them away. Evacuation centers had also become *ghettos* due to shortages of transportation. Here, authorities were only concerned with getting as many people out as quickly as possible. There was little time to inform the locations of destination four days in advance, because the planes were not working under a coordinated schedule.

The entire campaign cost the province of Niassa 63,856,756 Meticaís, equivalent to 1,596,418.9 USD (at a rate of 40 meticaís per dollar).<sup>128</sup> This money was used mostly to cover the cost of fuel, to distribute the “unproductive” to the various labor camps across the province, to feed them, to provide them with seeds and hoes, and for other minor logistical expenses. This

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<sup>126</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 278/GPN/C/15, para Ministro dos Correios e Telecomunicações, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira, Governador de Niassa. M. Urgente. 11/7/83.

<sup>127</sup> AGGPN/OP/Mensagem 106/GPN/C/6, para Tenente General Armando Guebuza Ministro do Interior, de Coronel Sérgio Vieira, Governador de Niassa. Relâmpago. 3/9/83.

<sup>128</sup> AGGPN/Encerramento do Ano Económico. Balanço, Lichinga, 7 Maio 1985. For the exchange rate, see J. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 280.



amount was many times more than the entire budget for reeducation camps between 1975 and 1983.<sup>129</sup> Yet, it was not sufficient to attend the needs of tens of thousands of people.



Fig. 38. A truck loading evacuees to labor camps in Niassa. Courtesy: AGGPN

Despite the logistical difficulties, most evacuees were distributed to various places across the vast province of Niassa. They were distributed in 10 of the 15 districts, namely Cuamba, Lago, Lichinga, Majune, Mandinga, Marrupa, Maúa, Mavago, Muembe, and Sanga.<sup>130</sup> The distribution was random. Some people went to state farms, others to the cities of the future in Unango and M'sawize. Some went to reeducation camps (particularly M'sawize-2). But the majority were sent to uninhabited areas in the middle of the forest – in a process that reproduced the initial phase of the establishment of reeducation camps. With a hoe or an axe, and in most cases with no working tools at all, the “unproductive” were given a few grains of beans and corn, and told to clear the land for their *machamba* and build the huts for the night and for the years to come. This was their new home.

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<sup>129</sup> Between December 20, 1975 and July 1976, the DPSRN received Esc. 3,695,676 Escudos (\$ 111,990.2) for camp maintenance. See AGGPN – DPSRN/Gratificação abonada mensalmente aos funcionários em serviço na Secretaria Provincial em Lichinga enquanto não for definida a sua situação. Lichinga, 14 Agosto 1977; AGGPN – Direcção Provincial de Finanças do Niassa, Lichinga, 27 Agosto 1979.

<sup>130</sup> AGGPN/Encerramento do Ano Económico. Balanço, Lichinga, 7 Maio 1985.

### *Unango, Matama, and M'sawize: What Kind of Home?*

In July 1984, Rui Zunguza, a reporter of *Tempo*, went to Niassa to document the integration of the “unproductive.” He wrote the most moving report about life conditions in Unango and Matama. A sensitive journalist, he collected several testimonies of the evacuees and local authorities. They were all cries of abandonment and despair.<sup>131</sup>

The distribution of the “unproductive” was left to the discretion of local COPs. In Niassa, the lucky evacuees went to villages and state farms where minimal conditions existed to accommodate them. But hosting communities were rarely informed about the process. Most were surprised with trucks arriving with loads of visibly confused people.<sup>132</sup> The ways in which the evacuees were integrated in villages resembled a slave fair. But here there was no buying, and taking slave labor was no free choice. As soon as the truck unloaded the unfortunate evacuees in a given village, the local villagers were summoned and instructed to choose one person. The term authorities used was “adopt a child.” Each head of a household was given time to appreciate the newcomers, who were disposed in line in the center of the village, and choose a sympathetic face. There was no time for introductions. This was an encounter of strangers who spoke different languages and were being forced to live together. Most villagers knew no single word in Portuguese. The newcomers had no idea which language was spoken in Niassa. The idea was that each village household would take in one evacuee to help them in the fields for at least a year. As José Ngovene recalled, “in my group we were 500 people, more than the villagers. When all villagers had chosen their ‘children’, the less respected among them were forced to take one more because we were too many. The villagers were forced to take us in, because everything was coercive in that time.”<sup>133</sup> This was the solution that Niassa’s COP found to allocate people who had come with no means to survive on their own. Villagers had no say in the process.

In state farms the situation was relatively better, but not without its problems. Unango and Matama had extensive agricultural fields managed in the same way that all state farms were in Mozambique. These were highly mechanized enterprises which did not need to employ many workers. In fact, the hundreds of ex-detainees were more than enough to run the two farms. They

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<sup>131</sup> Rui Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 16.

<sup>132</sup> Interview: Manuel Jumba, Lichinga, 18 June 2015; Interview: José Ngovene, Unango, 25 June 2015; Interview: Cacilda Sithole, Unango, 6 June 2015.

<sup>133</sup> Interview: José Ngovene, Unango, 25 June 2015.

spent most of time without work. The only period where labor was necessary was during harvest. Many studies of Frelimo's agricultural policy – most of which conducted in the Center for African Studies at University Eduardo Mondlane – indicated that this was one of the factors behind the massive migration of people to the cities. Frelimo's emphasis on highly mechanized agriculture exacerbated the problem of unemployment.<sup>134</sup> The premise of *Operação Produção* was that peasants were fleeing the hoe, creating a surplus of unused workforce in the cities and depriving the countryside of labor. Nothing could be further from reality. When the campaign began, the director of Unango, Paulo Zucula, requested 100 people to help with the harvest. The COP sent 250. Interviewed about the process in July 1984, Zucula said that “*Operação Produção* transferred its problems to us, and its problems exacerbated ours.”<sup>135</sup> The company did not have enough housing to accommodate the newcomers. The campaign began in the busiest time for the company because all workers were involved in the harvest. They had no time to build huts for the evacuees. The consequences were devastating. Many people were sick and hungry. The company did not have fuel to take the sick to the hospital in Lichinga.

The COP sent 600 people to the agro-company of Matama. But this was way more than the company could manage for there was no work for so many people. In the end, the company sent 200 workers to a construction company “as a loan” (*a título de empréstimo*). Like Unango, Matama did not have enough lodgings nor food for the newcomers. A desperate testimony of an evacuee named Eduardo Nhamusua in July 1984 summed up the dire situation:

Many [people] here are sick. Since I was born I did not know that a sack serves as a blanket. Here each person struggles to get five to six sacks. We rip them and we use them as a blanket. The result of this is that the dust that the person absorbs every night accumulates in the lungs and causes mortal diseases. The authorities here have never met with us to know about our concerns and to help us solve them.<sup>136</sup>

Unsanitary lodgings, hunger, cold, and disease claimed many lives. Pedro Vanombe told Zunguza of a colleague who died as soon as he arrived in Matama. Gabriel Julião was more bruising in his testimony:

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<sup>134</sup> See C.N. Castel-Branco, “Problemas estruturais do desenvolvimento Agrário”; Helena Dolny, “The Challenge of Agriculture.” in J. Saul (ed.) *A Difficult Road*, pp. 211-252;

<sup>135</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 16.

<sup>136</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 14.

We sleep like bags, we eat like pigs, and when [we fall] sick we are considered a piece of a machine. Not long ago our colleague died. He fell ill and was not taken to the hospital. He stayed with us in those barracks. They only removed the body the following afternoon.<sup>137</sup>

Life was tough in Niassa. People longed to go back home. “I had a better life in Maputo, here we have no plate, no pan, no blanket, nothing”, said Argentina Macuacua, who went to Unango with her six children to join her husband. She left behind four more children, but could not think of having them sent to join her. Now she knew that the party’s promises were all empty of truth. Her six children were starving and cold. When the COP sent second-hand clothes for the company to sell to the evacuees, there was no single item for children. “When the cloths arrived they did not count on our children”, she said.<sup>138</sup> “In Maputo at least we had something, chicken, a plate, wife”, this was Eduardo Nhamusua again. “We came here thinking that we would contribute in the development of our country according to the instructions of the Fourth Congress. But the life we lead here discourages us from working with our maximum strength and will.” His colleague, Pedro Vembene, spoke with a pan of rotten maize flower to show the reporter how desolate the situation was. He pointed the finger to a group of old and young people who had nothing to do in Matama. He asked: “that old man there, he can’t even walk, isn’t he unproductive here in Niassa? What about these sixteen and seventeen-year-old boys, what future do they have here?”<sup>139</sup>

For the women and children who went to Niassa to join their husbands and fathers the situation was more complicated. With such messy organization of the campaign, the families that came from behind needed luck to be united with their relatives. There were several cases of families that were sent to one district while the relative was in another district or a different province. Or families that arrived at the same time but were sent to different locations. Delfina Chaúke went to Niassa with her five children. She was sent to the Agro-Company of Matama, but her husband had fled and nobody knew his whereabouts. “I don’t know what to do”, she told the reporter, “I am alone with the children. I have no relatives here. The company refuses to sell me food to feed my children. They say I’m not an employee. But what am I to do with the children?” 1984 was the pick of the economic crisis, and hunger loomed large everywhere. With crops left to

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<sup>137</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p.15.

<sup>138</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 14.

rot while trucks were busy distributing people, Niassa had little food in 1984. Companies received more workers than they really needed, and they were forced to tighten the rationing of food. With no contract with the company, Delfina Chaúke was left to fend for her children. Vulnerable, she was free game for local militias seeking to take advantage. “Every night the militias come to my house, they accuse me of being *candongueira* and other things, but what will I do with my children? If I were alone there was no problem, but the children?”<sup>140</sup>



*Fig. 39. A group of evacuees interviewed by Rui Zunguza in Matama, June 1984. Pedro Vembane shows the rotten maize flour that the company distributes to workers. Photo by Naita Ussene. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.*

Zunguza found and photographed hundreds of people who were lost in Lichinga, unable to locate their relatives. Most found shelter at FEN, at the police station, and at the hospital, all abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Local authorities told them to go back to Maputo, but they would have to gather the money for airfare on their own. In order to purchase a ticket, most sold all the belongings that they brought to Niassa with the hope to begin a new life.<sup>141</sup> They still

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<sup>140</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p.

<sup>141</sup> R. Zunguza, “Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?”, *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 19.

ran the risk of being arrested again in Maputo as vagrants.<sup>142</sup> Zunguza summed up the situation by claiming that the campaign against the urban unproductive produced the rural unproductive with serious psychological problems:

The evacuees who have become unproductive in Niassa are made up of two groups of people: women unable to locate their husbands and former workers and students unjustly evacuated. Today these people suffer from serious psychological problems<sup>143</sup>

Zunguza did not go to the uninhabited areas where most evacuees were sent to build their own villages. Nor did he go to reeducation camps, where detainees and evacuees lived together in what became an imprecise and odd form of internment. The overwhelming majority of evacuees went to the district of Mavago and settled near and within the reeducation camp of M'sawize. According to Zequinho, in 1983 the camp had 50 *reeducandos*. In a few months after the beginning of *Operação Produção* the camp population reached 3,000. "People died every day", he told me, "they arrived very weak and were put to work immediately. I buried some of them myself."<sup>144</sup> All my interviewees in Niassa narrated cases of people who walked back to Lichinga from Mavago for days to find relief from hunger. Although the COP stationed militias to prevent people from leaving their designated areas, most militia units did not stay for more than a month, returning to Lichinga due to lack of support and hunger.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See MHN – "Improdutivos tentam regressar à cidade", *Notícias*, 9, 1983.

<sup>143</sup> R. Zunguza, "Niassa: Que integração para os ex-improdutivos?", *Tempo*, 1 Julho 1984, p. 17.

<sup>144</sup> Interview: José Araújo (Zequinho), Maputo, 18 Jan. 2015. Zequinho might have added the number of those relocated inside the camp and those who were scattered nearby. His number should be taken as an estimation – and a post-fact recollection informed by a traumatic past.

<sup>145</sup> Interview: Manuel Jumba, Lichinga, 18 June 2015.



Fig. 40. Sick evacuees and ex-detainees waiting for medical help in Lichinga, June 1984. Photo by Naita Ussene. Courtesy: Arquivo da Revista Tempo.

But hunger was not the only enemy. *Matequenha*, this sinister malady, claimed the lives of many people.<sup>146</sup> Soap for personal hygiene was not available. Despite Governor Vieira's insistent requests, no single box of soap was sent to Niassa until he was relieved of his position in late 1984. His substitute, Mariano Matsinha, was unable of doing better. Abandoned and desperate, most people went back to Lichinga with the hope of finding their way back to Maputo or Beira. But danger lived in the bush paths. Stories of people eaten by lions in their journey back to Lichinga are so widespread in Niassa today that they may sound fantastic. But much of Mavago is part of the game reserve, and no one was there to prevent desperate people from venturing through the jungle. Again, we may never know how many people perished in Niassa during *Operação Produção*. The state of numeracy began and ended in the capital city. In the vast expanse of abandonment that Niassa became, most of those who died are unaccounted for.

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<sup>146</sup> Interview: Manuel Jumba, Lichinga, 18 June 2015; Interview: Cacilda Sithole, Unango, 6 June 2015; Interview: Manuela Nascimento, Lichinga, 11 June 2015.

Despite the dangers of the journey, by 1985 many people had abandoned the rural areas where they were “dumped” and sought refuge in Lichinga. Some gathered at the air force base inside the airport with the hope to catch a flight back home. Given the huge number of evacuees in the air force base, governor Matsinha, instructed the provincial tribunal to “collect” and “submit the people to trial.” People were to be condemned for reeducation and sent to Sanga district, one of the few districts that still had reeducation camps in operation in Niassa.<sup>147</sup> Under the “law of exception” imposed since the launching of *Operação Produção*, those people were still “unproductive” and had committed a crime of desertion from work. As the directive of the campaign determined, “unauthorized presence [in the cities] leads to immediate detention and evacuation to a destination of the convenience of the authorities.”<sup>148</sup> For governor Matsinhe, that place was the reeducation camp. It did not matter to the governor that those unfortunate souls were not only fleeing from hunger and *matequenha*, but most importantly from war, which was already ravaging all villages and labor camps by 1985. As President Machel declared a few years before, those who fled the hoe were “moral deserters” and had to be re-educated.

### *War*

Renamo rebels began operating in Niassa in September 1983, three months after the beginning of *Operação Produção*.<sup>149</sup> Much work is needed to understand the motivations for the rebel movement to advance northward exactly at that time to avoid quick associations. But it is beyond doubt that the campaign fueled the war in Niassa and in northern Mozambique in general. The thousands of destitute and justifiably angry urbanites in forced exile were certainly an attractive source for the recruitment of rebels. However, it is yet uncertain whether Renamo was able to recruit many people among the evacuees. Eventually some people joined the rebels, either voluntarily or coercively. My interviewee José Ngovene told me that he recognized some of his former colleagues among the rebels when they attacked the future city of Unango in early 1985.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> AGGPN/OP/Programa de tarefas e prazos da III Sessão Ordinária, 28 Maio 1985.

<sup>148</sup> “Directiva ministerial sobre evacuação das cidades”, *Notícias*, 20 Junho 1983.

<sup>149</sup> J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 219.

<sup>150</sup> Interview: José Ngovene, Unango, 25 June 2015. Ngovene narrated the same story to my colleague C. Quembro, *Poder to Poder*, p. 86.



In any case, Renamo based its strategy less on recruiting rebels and more on controlling areas in Niassa. In the hypothetical categorization of Renamo's operational strategy advanced by Robert Gersony – namely taxation, control, and destruction – Niassa was a “control zone.”<sup>151</sup> According to Hall and Young, it was in control areas that Renamo established its bases and local people “experienced extreme degrees of forced labor, especially involving portage duties and other abuses.”<sup>152</sup> This is precisely what happened to most evacuees who fell into the hands of Renamo rebels. Beginning in late 1984, Renamo launched several attacks in villages where evacuees were relocated. Unango, with the largest state farm in the province, was one of Renamo's major targets. Most of my interviewees in Unango were kidnapped and taken to Renamo bases. Their main stronghold during the entire course of the war was located in the district of Maúá. Although many people died in several attacks, those kidnapped were taken to Maúá and subjected to the same regime of exile and forced labor. Most were set free in 1992 after the Rome Peace Accord.<sup>153</sup>

Based on my interviewees' narratives, Renamo was particularly not interested in winning them over to their cause. The rebel movement's actions were geared towards disrupting any governmental program and populate their strongholds to secure food provision for their troops. For many male evacuees, particularly in Unango, the effects of the war were ironic to say the least. Most received military training and joined the militia corps. Although the militias were trained for defensive combat, most were deployed in military operations in the battlefield. Francisco Cuinica, the former mayor of Unango, told me that the war-effort in Niassa was “sustained by *ex-reeducandos* and *improdutivos*.”<sup>154</sup> To protect the city of the future, Mr. Cuinica formed a militia unit made up of ex-detainees and “unproductive” evacuees. These were people armed to defend their own imprisonment.

It is not germane here to narrate the details of individual and collective suffering that the war brought to a people that had sustained too much pain. The victims of *Operação Produção* suffered as much as the more than five million Mozambicans who were directly affected by the

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<sup>151</sup> Robert Gersony cited in M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 167.

<sup>152</sup> M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, p. 167.

<sup>153</sup> Interview: Celina Nhantumbo, Lichinga, 13 May 2015; Interview: Cacilda Sithole, Unango, 6 June 2015; Interview: Celina Nhambe, Unango, 6 June 2015; Interview: Herbert Sithole, Unango, 6 June 2015.

<sup>154</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 26 June 2015.

war across the country.<sup>155</sup> Those who perished are counted within the estimated one million death toll of the entire conflict.<sup>156</sup> What makes their suffering particularly heavier is the fact that the government which was supposed to protect them forced them into the middle of a conflict which they had escaped. But neither the war nor the permanent state of abandonment destroyed the human spirit of most evacuees. And in some of the most hopeless places, acts of kindness and love took place. Carlos Sevene and Adelaide Matsolo are an extraordinarily moving case. Both were kidnapped by Renamo and taken to Maúa in 1985. Carlos Sevene was an industrious fisherman in Maputo before the campaign. His wife, who had also come from Maputo to join him in Unango, had abandoned him to live with a man in the army. Adelaide Matsolo was sent to Unango from Maputo to join her evacuated husband. During the attack, her husband disappeared (possibly taken to a different base). Alone and destitute, Adelaide wandered aimlessly in the village controlled by Renamo rebels. For months she lived as an indigent. Everybody took her for mad. Carlos Sevene found her completely naked and unconscious in the middle of the village and took her to his shack. He tore part of his only pants to cover her body. They returned to Unango in 1992, where they live as a couple until now. In their mid-seventies, their only concern is that their marital union had never been officiated through *lobolo* before Adelaide's relatives who, they believe, still live in Maputo.<sup>157</sup>

### Conclusion

Mozambique's reeducation and labor camps were spaces of abandonment.<sup>158</sup> In relatively equal degree, the austere conditions in which reeducation camps operated affected all camp dwellers, detainees and overseers. More than reeducating the so-called anti-socials and introduce them to the morality of revolution, the work of camp overseers was to manage abandonment. Wretched lodgings, hunger, cold, and disease drove many people to desperation. Their cries for help often fell on deaf ears. During *Operação Produção*, the wretched conditions of life in Niassa's camps deteriorated to unprecedented levels. In comparative terms, the harsh conditions of reeducation camps were far much better than the labor camps under *Operação Produção*. While *reeducandos*

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<sup>155</sup> See William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992; Alex Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

<sup>156</sup> D. Robinson, "Curse on the Land", p. 338.

<sup>157</sup> Interview: Carlos Sevene and Adelaide Matsolo, Unango, 13 June 2015.

<sup>158</sup> J. Biehl, *Vita: Life in the Zone of Social Abandonment*.

had camp authorities to look to when hunger and disease struck, the “unproductive” had but themselves. Abandoned to their own devices, many succumbed to the ravages of one of the worst civil wars in Africa.

## Conclusion

*Somebody has to tell me why I came here. I need to know why I came here.*

Celina Nhantumbo, Lichinga, 2015

In 2015 I met Celina Nhantumbo in the municipal bazar of Lichinga in Niassa. The bazar stands adjacent to the trade fair (FEN), where Niassa's Operative Commando collected the victims of *Operação Produção* before distributing them to various labor camps across the province in 1983. Celina was visibly elated to speak in her mother language with somebody who had come all the way from Maputo simply to hear her story and those of other people in her situation. A successful vendor of vegetables, she was a single mother of eight. She proudly told me that she built a house on her own and that all her children were at school. Her social life revolves around *xitiki* (a savings club)<sup>1</sup> with a group of women from southern Mozambique who went to Niassa either for reeducation, or to follow their husbands, or because they were victims of the 1983 cleanup campaign like her. Celina was sixteen years old when, despite having papers that showed they were in school, she and a group of students were rounded up in Xai-Xai for being "unproductive", put on a plane, and brought to Niassa. She told me her story while struggling to stop the tears from rolling down her face. In the end of our two-hour conversation at her vending table, she said: "Somebody has to tell me why I came here. I need to know why I came here."<sup>2</sup>

This study tries to answer Celina's question and make sense of one aspect of Mozambique's socialist experiment that has remained silent. Simple and straightforward as Celina's question is, the answer is more complicated. I have argued that Celina and thousands of people like her were victims of an ambitious project of social reform animated by a salvationist ideology that disregarded for the material constraints imposed by the context of austerity in which it was implemented. Celina was caught at the crossroads of a global phenomenon to produce social transformation in the name of revolution. Mozambican politicians borrowed from various models of mass confinement, particularly the Chinese centers of reeducation through labor. However,

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<sup>1</sup> *Xitiki* is a kind of cash pool with which members of a group contribute to the benefit of one of the members in a rotating manner. It is a popular form of informal social organization and self-help in Mozambique.

<sup>2</sup> Interview: Celina Nhantumbo, Lichinga, 13 May 2015.

these models of mass internment and the ideological motivations behind them were not inscribed on a blank slate. Rather, Frelimo leaders adopted a template that predated their embrace of socialism to enforce a vision of social reform in a specific historical context.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Mozambique's mission-educated African elites sought to build a respectable civil society as part of their aspiration to gain civil recognition within the realm of the Portuguese assimilationist system. Building on discursive archetypes from their Christian orientation, they exhorted members of their community to uphold moral norms, to educate themselves and their children, and to conduct themselves according to the dictates of worldly asceticism (temperance, frugality, industriousness, and self-denial). They believed that civil recognition and political emancipation – regardless of its shape – would ensue from this work of respectable self-presentation. The cohort of mission-educated cadres who assumed the leadership of Frelimo in 1968-70 were products of this political imaginary and they carried these ideas with them into the liberation struggle. Rather than erase or supplant, the version of socialism they embraced during the struggle – Maoism – amplified their vision of Mozambican society. Maoism gave them an unyielding conviction that the process leading to Mozambique independence had to produce a society of temperate, frugal, industrious, and morally upstanding citizens. Unlike their predecessors, who sought to produce social change through religion, education, and moral exhortation, ideological conviction and political power gave Frelimo leaders the leverage not only to urge people to uphold moral standards, but also to compel them to do so. They were convinced that political self-determination would be incomplete without the emergence of a new society along with a new man. The reeducation camps were born out of this conviction. They were meant to transform those members of society whose moral outlook ran contrary to the vision of society that the revolutionaries had in mind. This ambitious project of social reform took a salvationist tone: Frelimo leaders regarded their role not as public administrators, but as saviors who had gone through the perils of exile and struggle to deliver Mozambique from centuries of oppression, cultural alienation, and social degeneracy.

Eager to carry out their reformist agenda, Frelimo officials did not wait for the national declaration of independence and budgetary calculations. In less than a month after assuming power in 1974, they launched police round ups to cleanse the cities of degeneracy and immorality and confined thousands of citizens in reeducation camps throughout the country. The context of economic austerity and regional instability were unable to deter Frelimo from pursuing their

agenda. Mozambique became independent during the critical years of global economic depression following the oil crisis of 1973. The tumultuous transition and the hasty departure of white settlers added to the economic fragility of Mozambique, as the country was left without its most experienced human resources in all sectors of the economy and public administration. Frelimo's commitment to anti-colonial struggles in southern Africa – the sanctions against Rhodesia, and the support for ZANU and the ANC – not only deprived Mozambique of important revenues, it also earned the country powerful enemies who used their economic and military might to destabilize the new country.

Frelimo leaders were unable to see these challenges as an impediment to their reformist agenda. Blinded by their salvationist ideology, they clung to the idea that the socialist revolution had to produce a new society along with a new man. The cities – the dens of immorality – had to be cleansed of social degeneracy and purified. The reeducation camps were an important component of this effort to effect change in society, by allowing the party to separate the “dangerous mixtures” and isolate them in the far reaches of the country, where their impurities would be washed away through manual labor, political education, and moral rehabilitation. The amorphous nature of the social ills targeted by the reeducation program and the arbitrariness of the cleanup campaigns drove thousands of innocent people like Celina to the camps.

From its very inception, the reformist project ran counter to the party's ambitions. Understaffed and poorly supplied, the reeducation program mirrored the context of austerity in which the entire society found itself. But the remote location of the camps and their decrepit infrastructures made life unbearable. Hunger, exposure to nature's elements, disease and desperate attempts to escape took the lives of many people. The austere conditions of the camps did not affect detainees only. The unforgiving wretchedness of the camps and the state of abandonment in which they operated punished camp supervisors as well, who had to share the burden of running the camps with detainees – from food production, political education to camp surveillance. The situation was critical in the northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. These provinces were thousands of kilometers from the capital city in the south, where the government centralized most of the logistical support for the administration of the camps, including food rations, medications, and clothing.

Although Frelimo leaders were well aware that many detainees were held unjustly and that the camps were not suited for any kind of human rehabilitation, they continued to consider their

reformist project a righteous and “holy” undertaking, one that demonstrated the party’s genuine concern for those who fell from grace and needed salvation. When President Samora Machel visited the reeducation camps of Niassa and Cabo Delgado for the second time in October and November 1981 (to supervise the implementation of the instructions that he left in the first visit in 1979), he praised the advancements made in the reeducation of “anti-socials” and reinforced his conviction in the transformative power of internment. In Chaimite reeducation camp in Cabo Delgado, the President described reeducation as a form of Christian *caritas*, a method of bringing those who had lost their way back into the fold of national brotherhood.<sup>3</sup> He reminded his listeners – among them hundreds of anxious reeducatees awaiting amnesty – that they “would have simply been shot in other revolutions.”<sup>4</sup> But Frelimo was a “magnanimous” party, he claimed, whose benevolence was equal to that of Jesus Christ. “As Jesus never realized he had a halo”, he said, “we too, crushed by everyday concerns, we are not aware of the changes we have operated.”<sup>5</sup> That Machel associated Frelimo’s deeds in saving the deviant with those of Christ is not surprising. All his speeches from 1970 denote a self-entitled mandate to guide the people of Mozambique toward a worldly paradise of prosperity and social harmony.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding his outward anti-religious rhetoric, Christianity – as practice, symbol or theme – was never far from his political work. As Machel’s former minister of information, José Cabaço, told me, “Samora was very protestant in his attitude and he cited the Old Testament constantly.”<sup>7</sup> The former head of the Presbyterian Church, pastor Isaías Funzamo, who at times served as Machel’s confidant and “moral advisor”, was more audacious in his characterization of the late president. He resolutely claimed that the

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<sup>3</sup> “Chiputo: De traidores a heróis da reconstrução”, *Tempo*, Número Especial Dedicado à Viagem Presidencial à Província do Niassa, 26 Dez. 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Speech by Samora Machel in Cabo Delgado, in António Souto, “Reeducação e legalidade fabricam Homen Novo”, *Notícias*, 29 Ago. 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Samora Machel in Cabo Delgado, in António Souto, “Reeducação e legalidade fabricam Homen Novo”, *Notícias*, 29 Ago. 1981.

<sup>6</sup> As President Machel often reminded the masses in his rallies, “It was FRELIMO who organized the people; it was FRELIMO who directed the liberation struggle; it was FRELIMO who expelled Portuguese colonialism from Mozambique. It was FRELIMO and no other force. It was FRELIMO who proclaimed the independence of Mozambique.” The repetitive reference to the party as an entity with human attributes was a placeholder to the concrete individual(s) who were synonymous with the party, and the audience knew exactly who they were. “Discurso sobre as nacionalizações no Estádio da Machava”, in *Samora Machel na Memória do Povo e do Mundo: Discursos Volume I*. Maputo: CPHLLN, 2011, p. 120. For a different analysis of Machel’s discursive rhetoric, see Colin Darch and David Hedges, “Political Rethoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975”, *Kronos*, 39 (2014):32-65.

<sup>7</sup> Interview: José Cabaço, Maputo, 25 Feb. 2015

leader of Mozambique's socialist revolution "was not Marxist but a devout Christian."<sup>8</sup> Like some of his closest comrades, Machel may have outwardly rejected Christianity, but his political discourse – the corpus of which was canonized as *Marxismo de Samora* or *Samorismo* – was punctuated with salvationist harangues and puritanical exhortations that reflected his Christian upbringing.<sup>9</sup> His ideological fervor stemmed from the combination of his Christian background and Maoism. Here lies his genuine belief that the reeducation program was the fulfilment of the most Christian of the acts of benevolence and human salvation. The following is part of what he told detainees in Chaimite:

Religious people talk of love for our neighbors. But our love cannot be abstract. It has to be concrete, because it results from shared concerns, from the work we carry out together, and from the appreciation of the outcome of our effort. One can only love what he knows in substance. [...] However, if some of us are vagabonds, are lazy, how can we love each other? Some people lived as instruments of the oppressive colonial machine and they committed heinous crimes against the people. Others were marginalized and learned to live from theft and other forms of crime. There are men whose intellectual instruction prevents them from accepting transformation and so they react against it. *In sum, there are men destroyed and blocked by a recent past and they need to be reconstructed and liberated. To abandon them to their fate is to continue with their destruction and marginalization.* To jail indiscriminately those who fell under the purview of the law is to disbelieve that some of them can, here and now, be transformed. Our power to impose order and peace, to defend our Revolution must be exercised, but with creativity. *This is where reeducation takes place. It is about fulfilling the principle that we never reject a man.* It is a great achievement of our Party: a policy of clemency and believing in the transformation of man. (...) *Just like Christ, we have this halo that sometimes we are not aware of.* [My emphasis].<sup>10</sup>

This long statement indicates the utopian foundation from which Samora Machel often preached his messianic message. It also summarizes the kind of people who, in his understanding, needed salvation. As I argued in the first part of this study, Machel's salvationist stance informed much of Frelimo's political work not only in the ways in which the party implemented the reeducation program regardless of the structural impediments to such an ambitious project, but also in the ways in which they defined Mozambican citizenship. Unlike other socialist regimes, which used Marxist class analysis or cited ideological differences to identify those who did not have the right to citizenship, Frelimo leaders used moral behavior to demarcate the line between

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<sup>8</sup> Interview: Pastor Isaias Funzamo, Maputo, 11 March 2015. Pastor Funzamo made a similar claim to Sarah LeFanu, *S is For Samora*, p.246.

<sup>9</sup> A. de Bragança, "O Marxismo de Samora", p. 43-50; I. Christie, *Samora Machel*, p. 245; M. Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique*, p. 156-7.

<sup>10</sup> MHN – "Machel's speech on unjust detentions in reeducation camps", *Summary of World Broadcasts*, London. 6.10.1981. Part 4, The Middle East and Africa: B. Africa, page ME/6846/B/1. See also António Souto, "Reeducação e legalidade fabricam Homem Novo", *Notícias*, 29 Aug. 1981.



citizens and non-citizens. Although in this long statement Machel made reference to the *comprometidos* or “collaborators” with the colonial regime, most of his speech in Chaimite and other reeducation camps during his visit was filled with remonstrations of those who did not uphold moral standards and behaved shamefully. The demography of the inmate population in reeducation camps reflect precisely the kind of people whose putative dissolute behavior placed them beyond the line that, for Machel and his closest comrades, demarcated the boundary of social cohabitation in the new society they envisioned. Although he gave amnesty to hundreds of detainees and ordered the closure of several camps by 1982, President Machel and his idealist allies did not abandon the ambition to clean the cities of social degeneracy. While the campaign that victimized Celina was presented as one of the resolutions of the party’s Fourth Congress and an effort to boost food production, President Machel had decided on the campaign after his first visit to Niassa’s reeducation camps in 1979. He had reasoned that most camps would have to be closed given internal and external condemnations of the reeducation program.<sup>11</sup> But he decided that all wayward members of urban society would join the ex-detainees in Niassa and Cabo Delgado. That the socialist revolution would triumph and a new man would emerge in Mozambique was a powerful belief that Machel continued to cling to even when, by the mid 1980s, some of his closest comrades had begun to question the viability of the socialist dream.<sup>12</sup>

### *What Kind of New Man? Which Way Home?*

In June 1986, Salomão Moiana, a correspondent for Mozambique Information Agency (AIM) in Nampula, published a report on a group of “indigents” living in the vicinity of the air force base in Nampula airport.<sup>13</sup> Most of the “indigents” had been living there for more than two years. Their brutalized and ragged bodies, which the reporter’s photographer captured with gentle detail, were canvases painted with a life of sorrow. They slept in the open on the bar floor, with no blanket to cover them. Jobless, hungry, sick, and desperate, they resorted to petty robbery, odd jobs, and scavenging to survive. Moiane selected a few narratives from them for his long report. Five cases caught his attention. I will mention only two here. The first was twenty one year old Jonas

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<sup>11</sup> MHN – Jay Ross, “Mozambican re-education camps raise rights questions”, *The Washington Post*, 7 May 1980.

<sup>12</sup> See Marcelo Mosse, “Os Últimos Dias de Samora”, in A. Sopa, ed. *Samora, Homem do Povo*, p. 179-189.

<sup>13</sup> AJN – Salomão Moiana, “Intervenção resolve problemas de ex-reeducandos em Nampula”, *Notícias*, 10 Junho 1986.

Nhabalane, who had the skin of the two hands “semi-putrid” due to infected, untreated wounds, and flies were all over his stinky body. On his way from Malema to Nampula, Jonas had a fateful encounter with the police. He was accused of robbery and was tied with salt-soaked ropes for twenty-four hours. When the police concluded that he was innocent and set him free, the ropes “had eaten part of his flesh.” At the local hospital he was told that he could not be treated. He finally found his way to Nampula and joined the group of “indigents” at the airport. His hands were now useless, and his companions were kind enough to mouth-feed him. The second case was thirty six year old Armando Mateus, who had an inflamed face and liquids poured from his ears. He too had a tragic encounter with law enforcement. Armando was on his way to a village in Rapale district to trade a few bananas and some kilos of beans and manioc when a group of militias stopped him. They asked for a *guia de marcha* that authorized him to carry such products. After showing them his *guia*, the militiamen beat him with the butts of their rifles until he lost his senses. They took his meager products and all the little money that he had. He arrived in the city penniless, and found refuge in the airport.

Jonas Nhabalane and Armando Mateus, like all other “indigents” living in the airport, were former detainees in the reeducation camps of Niassa and Nampula. They were released in 1984 and told to find their way back home in Maputo and Beira on their own. They wandered from place to place in search for work to get the money to purchase a ticket. Unsuccessful and with nowhere else to go, they stayed at the air force base, with the vague hope that one day they could be taken back home. This was the situation in which many former detainees found themselves after being released in the mid 1980s. Sent to reeducation camps to be transformed into new men and new women, they came out as indigents, abandoned to their fate. This time they were no putative vagrants. The reeducation program had transformed them into true vagrants who were subject to all kinds of abuse and humiliation.



Fig. 41. Armando Mateus (left) and Lourenço José (right), two of the many “indigents” living in the air force base in Nampula. Lourenço José still wears the black uniform or what remained of it. Photo by Joel Cossa, March 1986. Courtesy: Arquivo do Jornal Notícias.

The reeducation program began chaotically; it was carried out chaotically and its end was even more chaotic. When President Machel launched the *Ofensiva* in 1980 and gave amnesty to thousands of detainees, he instructed them to remain and transform their former detention camps into socialist towns. Those ex-detainees unfit for work either for illness or disability were authorized to go home. Until 1983-4, the reeducation services of Niassa, Nampula, and Cabo Delgado were able to provide transport for released reeducatees with authorization to go home. But in 1984, following *Operação Produção*, the financial resources of provincial governments had been drained. To make matters worse, the civil war had engulfed the entire country, and most of government resources went to the war effort. The role of provincial DPSRs was now reduced to issuing *guias de marcha* to released ex-detainees. The situation reached a critical point when Renamo began attacking reeducation camps and the labor camps where the victims of *Operação Produção* were relocated. In 1985, Renamo attacked the reeducation camps of Muoco and M'sawize -2, and the *future city* of Unango in Niassa. In Nampula, the rebels razed the camps of

Malema and Itoculo.<sup>14</sup> In some cases, camp authorities handed rifles to detainees to help push the rebels back. But in general, at the sound of the alarm, detainees and camp supervisors packed in haste and fled.<sup>15</sup> If the wretched conditions of camp life had always made the distinction between captives and captors nominal (chapter 5 and 6), the war almost erased the line between them. By 1986, almost all reeducation camps had been abandoned. The few that continued to operate were established around 1984-5 near major army bases in Niassa. One camp was established in the city of Lichinga, where protection from Renamo attacks could be guaranteed.<sup>16</sup>

When Salomão Moiana visited the wretched dwellers of Nampula's airport, the entire reeducation program was in tatters. Most people had escaped from Renamo attacks and received *guias* to go home. A trip by road, though more affordable, was almost impossible due to the armed conflict, and plane tickets were expensive. If some people managed to contact their relatives and got them to buy their fare, the overwhelming majority were trapped in the war and famine stricken zone in the north. Desperate, most camped in airports in Lichinga, Nampula, and Pemba, hoping that the planes would take them for free. But the government and the Party were now too busy with the war to consider another operation to reverse the disaster of the cleanup campaigns. During this confusing period, the legal status of ex-detainees and the victims of *Operação Produção* in northern Mozambique was undefined. While the police arrested some of them as vagrants and sent them back to the countryside – especially if they found them roaming the streets as indigents – the army compelled many of them to join the militias and fight Renamo.<sup>17</sup> As Francisco Cuinica told me in Niassa, the war effort in that province “was secured by the unproductive” who formed the militia and were deployed in combat operations.<sup>18</sup> But joining the militia was no free pass to true freedom. Many still needed to accumulate money to buy a ticket because neither the army nor the government provided free transportation to Maputo and Beira.<sup>19</sup> All my informants who managed

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<sup>14</sup> AJN – Salomão Moiana, “Intervenção resolve problemas de ex-reeducandos em Nampula”, *Notícias*, 10 Junho 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Interview: André Rafael Mavoco (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014.

<sup>16</sup> AGGPN/MINT-Comando Provincial da PPM-Niassa, Ocorrências Policiais, Relatório no 10/DIP/92, de 9 de Jan. 1992. Until 1992 the rebels continued to launch raids near reeducation camps, which continued to operate in Niassa until then.

<sup>17</sup> See MHN – “Melhorar Operação Produção”, *Domingo*, 6 Julho 1986.

<sup>18</sup> Interview: Francisco Cuinica, Lichinga, 25 June 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Interview: André Rafael Mavoco (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014.

to go home after 1985 did it on their own, and sometimes with the help of kind hosts in Lichinga, Nampula and Pemba.<sup>20</sup>

Another tragic end to Frelimo's reformist project which impacted ex-detainees and the victims of *Operação Produção* was the implementation of the Economic Recovery Program (PRE) or structural adjustment in 1987. Under PRE, state companies had to reduce excessive labor and balance their payment sheets. State farms like Matama in Niassa and Muaguide in Cabo Delgado laid off hundreds of workers. They were all ex-detainees and victims of *Operação Produção*. The companies gave them a *guia de marcha* and told them to move out of their facilities. Hungry and penniless, most flocked to the cities desperate to go home.<sup>21</sup> This was the case of the "indigents" that Salomão Moiana interviewed in Nampula.

Frelimo's reformist project was in complete chaos at the time of President Machel's death in October 1986. The entire socialist experiment had been ravaged by the war – a war that Frelimo leaders continued to dismiss as an act of banditry directed from abroad to destabilize Mozambique.<sup>22</sup> The negative impact that the reformist project had is far greater than we can account for given the fragmentary state of the source material at this stage of the research. If the one hundred thousand people directly affected by *Operação Produção* is already a huge number, the number of people who lost their parents, husbands, wives, children, friends and loved ones during the campaign can be placed in the hundreds of thousands.

On May 7, 1988, Joaquim Chissano visited Niassa. The new President was confronted with the reality of thousands of "indigents" roaming aimlessly in the streets of Lichinga, and he declared that *Operação Produção* was officially over and people were now free to go home.<sup>23</sup> Although a salvationist himself – like the new men forged in the struggle – Chissano differentiated his presidency from Machel's by surrounding himself with- and giving more power to professional

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<sup>20</sup> Interview: Leontina Tauzene, Matola, 25 Oct. 2014; Interview: André Rafael Mavoco (Picuane), Maputo, 22 Dec. 2014; Interview: Rosália Nhantumbo, Maputo, 14 Abril 2015.

<sup>21</sup> See MHN – "Ex-Improdutivos: O Regresso às famílias cerca de 5 anos depois", *Notícias*, 15 Dez. 1988.

<sup>22</sup> Scholars are yet to evaluate how much the reeducation camps and the cleanup campaigns such as *Operação Produção* contributed to fuel the armed conflict and ultimately to bring down the socialist revolution. This study has not pursued this important question. But I have gestured towards the fact that André Matsangaissa – the founding leader of Renamo – escaped from a reeducation camp and that some of Renamo's commanders were camp escapees. It is an undisputed fact that Matsangaissa received support from Rhodesians, but his revolt began in Sacudzo where he was interned for unfounded accusations of robbery and self-indulgence. For details on Matsangaissa and the founding of Renamo, see J. Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 144-8.

<sup>23</sup> MHN – "Government Halts Controversial Labor Program", MB0905170388 London BBC World Service in English 1615 GMT 9 May 1988.

technocrats to direct the process of “transformative preservation”, as Anne Pitcher terms Mozambique’s transition from socialism to neoliberal capitalism. As Pitcher notes, the new leadership quickly dropped the language of revolution without any attempt to explain why the socialist experiment failed.<sup>24</sup> Although Chissano did not distance himself from Machel, his philosophy was based on forgetting the past and moving towards a better future. The victims of the socialist utopia, just like the victims of the civil war, were to bury their sorrows, lick their wounds and move forward.<sup>25</sup> This is what the president said in Lichinga. Although international newspapers reported that the party “acknowledged the mistake” in launching *Operação Produção*, President Chissano made no apologies and said nothing about compensations or help for the victims.<sup>26</sup> People were to find their way home on their own.

The Catholic Church stepped in and mobilized resources to help people go back home. Internally, the Catholic Church had always been the most vocal critic of the reeducation program and the cleanup campaigns. By 1988 it was already playing a central role in pushing the government and Renamo for a peace treaty to end the civil war. Through Caritas – a relief organization whose mission is to help the needy and vulnerable – the Church mobilized resources in Germany and in England.<sup>27</sup> They started repatriating people in 1988 by air and by boat (from the port-city of Pemba). Because the war was far from over and many people were still dispersed in the vast expanse of rural northern Mozambique, few people benefited from these initial “rides.” It was not until the peace treaty between Frelimo and Renamo at the end of the civil conflict in 1992 that Caritas was able to “collect” the people and ship them home. This work of repatriation continued well into the early 2000s.

The social fractures that the reformist project created among those directly affected were no easy fix. While the way back home was a festive occasion for some, it was also a time of pain for others. The urban cleanup campaigns tore families apart. But they also created new communities and social bonds. The repatriation could not right the wrongs of the past without wronging the present. Many people had formed new families in northern Mozambique. Former

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<sup>24</sup> A. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, p. 239-40.

<sup>25</sup> See A. Pitcher, “Forgetting from above”; V. Igreja, *Memories as Weapons*, and Elisio Macamo and Dieter Neubert, “The Politics of Negative Peace: Mozambique in the Aftermath of the Rome Cease-Fire Agreement”, *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies*, 10 (2003): 23-47.

<sup>26</sup> MHN – “Frelimo acknowledges error”, *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 332, 14 May 1988, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Interview: Emílio Etelvino (Director of Caritas in Niassa), Lichinga, 25 May 2015; Interview: Manuela Nascimento (former Director of Caritas in Niassa), Lichinga, 11 June 2015.

detainees had in fact been compelled to find spouses among local communities. Now that Caritas was offering rides to Maputo, many people abandoned their wives and children and went home.<sup>28</sup> But not everyone risked losing twice, and many, like Celina, Cacilda Sithole of Unango and Alfredo Langa of Matama, bid farewell to their companions and stayed to take care of their children in Niassa. As a leading officer at Caritas in Niassa, Manuela Nascimento witnessed most of these tragic events unfold. With six children already, she adopted four abandoned children whose parents either died during Renamo attacks or simply disappeared in the seesaw of repatriation.<sup>29</sup>

Caritas was unable to locate and repatriate everyone. While some people opted to stay, others returned to the north after failing to settle in their original homes. After several years of exile, many people were unable to locate their relatives. This was particularly the case for those who returned to their rural homes in Inhambane, Gaza or Maputo provinces. The war had destroyed many villages and dispersed many communities. After learning that no one from his family survived the war in Vilanculos (Inhambane), Sebastião Manhique went to Maputo and then decided to return to Lichinga.<sup>30</sup> During the austere times of structural adjustment in the early 1990s, life in Maputo was as tough as in Niassa. After longing to return home for many years, José Ngovene finally went to Maputo in the mid 2000s. But he could not deal with the fact that his old friends (who were behind him in school when he was arrested in 1983) now led comfortable, middle-class lives, and he was a destitute and rustic peasant. “I saw that they all lived in beautiful houses”, he told me, “yet I was smarter than them. I would have had a heart attack if I stayed in Maputo and thought about the life that was stolen from me. I would rather stay here as a poor peasant.” This was the price that many people paid for the utopia of revolution. In Mozambique, like elsewhere, the seductive discourse of liberation came with new chains. It promised to liberate, yet it created new prisoners.

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<sup>28</sup> MHN – “Ex-Improdutivos: O Regresso às famílias cerca de 5 anos depois”, *Notícias*, 15 Dez. 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Interview: Manuela Nascimento (former Director of Caritas in Niassa), Lichinga, 11 June 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Interview: Sebastião Manhique, Lichinga, 12 May 2015.

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### *Note on Newspapers*

I consulted most of the newspaper articles cited here in the online database *Mozambique History Net*, which is organized and administered by Colin Darch. I also consulted newspapers at the *Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique* (AHM), at the Documentation Department of the Ministry of Public Administration (DDMP), as well as at the private archives of *Jornal Notícias* (AJN) and *Revista Tempo* (ART). I accessed older newspapers (*O Africano* and *O Brado Africano*) from the Center of Research Libraries (CRL). I indicate the source of each newspaper article before the title, except when I am citing from my own collection of newspapers.

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