
Resistance and Collaboration: Conflicting Memories of the Liberation Struggle (1964–1974) in Northern Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

The liberation struggle was fought in Mozambique between 1964 and 1974. The fighting was the longest and most intense in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. I will detail the different experience of the war in this province and the changes it caused. I will trace the path of resistance followed by a large number of the Makonde people. I will also show how fighting was not the only option undertaken by the northern population. While a large number did fight, or assisted FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique – The Mozambique Liberation Front) in their efforts by supporting them with food and information, a significant proportion of the population lived and worked in Portuguese controlled towns. Their experience of the war differed dramatically from that of the people living in liberated areas and fighting the Portuguese. While there is generally one official, heroic, narrative of the liberation struggle (luta de libertação), the experiences of the struggle were much more diverse, and memories of these years form an important part of present day relationships between the Makonde and Mwani peoples.

INTRODUCTION

The liberation struggle fought in Mozambique between 1964 and 1974 opposed FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* – The Mozambique Liberation Front) and the Portuguese

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army and left longstanding memories and introduced lasting changes to the relationships between the groups inhabiting the northernmost Cabo Delgado province. This article traces the dual experience of resistance and collaboration and the ways in which the population presently inhabiting the coastal district of Mocimboa da Praia, in Cabo Delgado experienced the war as well as its lasting memories.

Anthropological studies of resistance became popular in the 1970s and 1980s (Abu-Lughod 1990; Moore 1998), and had a focus on forms of agrarian resistance (*e.g.*, Scott 1985). They became increasingly sophisticated (Abu-Lugod 1990), and provided interpretations of subtle, culturally defined forms of resistance and a questioning of issues of power departing from understandings of outright resistance. These studies departed from an emphasis on peasant resistance, revolution or communal resistance, and bring in nuanced historical accounts (*e.g.*, Swedenburg 2003), and an increased emphasis on the historical, geographical and cultural context of resistance (Moore 1998: 346).

Here I am looking not at the process of resisting to or collaborating with a waning colonial power but with the lingering memories of the liberation struggle and the current understanding of what it meant to take part in the struggle or remain within Portuguese controlled areas, while tracing the blurred lines between resisting and collaborating and the stark contrast that the memories of the struggle evoke. Furthermore, the memories of the period are increasingly sharpening the distinction between the actions of the different groups in place, whereas a closer look at the stories paints a much less stark distinction. Long after the conflict has ended, the understanding of the roles played by different groups still form a part of present day discussions of power and emerge at times of political strife.

I will describe the different experiences of the Makonde and Mwani people living in Mocimboa da Praia and the ways they remember their respective roles in the struggle, as well as the enduring divisions brought forth by this. I will present the context in which the struggle took place and the geographical divisions brought forth by the war, as well as their lasting impact.

BEFORE THE STRUGGLE

The district of Mocimboa da Praia is located in northern Cabo Delgado and has 90,421 inhabitants.¹ The town of the same name, a sleepy, semi-urban centre on the Indian Ocean coast, houses half that population. Along with two other northern districts (Palma and Nangade), it has a population that has been extremely mobile throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries² leading people far from their areas of origin and into places where they have to rebuild networks and establish new relationships.

The Makonde³ and Mwani constitute the two largest groups⁴ living in Mocimboa and this article focuses on them. Along with them, smaller numbers of Swahili, Makwe, and Makua live together in villages and in the town. The Mwani claim to be, and are recognized by others as, the original occupants of the area. The Makonde traditionally occupy in the hinterland, the Mueda plateau, but have been settling in the coast in larger numbers since the peace agreements of 1992.

Though there are records of contact between the Portuguese and the inhabitants of what is now Cabo Delgado since the sixteenth century (Dias 1964), it was only in 1891, during the period of European expansion in Africa that the Portuguese first established a military centre in Mocimboa (Conceição 2006: 77). They did so at the same time that the British were issuing them with an ultimatum to give up territory that is now part of Zimbabwe (Newitt 1995). In the same year the Portuguese government gave a concession to a charter company, the Nyassa company, with a mandate to administer Cabo Delgado and Nyassa (Vail 1976).⁵ The coast came under Portuguese administration early, but the hinterland proved harder to conquer. The Makonde were the last group to be dominated by the Portuguese and among the first to actively rebel and fight against the colonial power, while the Mwani remained in the areas controlled by the Portuguese.⁶

Prior to the anti-colonial struggle, the interior of northern Mozambique that the Makonde traditionally inhabit had a strong tradition of resistance to Portuguese colonial rule: initial policies were met with resistance and avoidance from early on. This resistance initially meant active fighting, later it took the form of 'foot-dragging' (Scott 1985) – avoiding work in the colonial plantations,

refusing the forced cotton cultivation, and migration – and would again entail active fighting from 1964.

On 16 June 1960, in the town of Mueda a demonstration requesting the release of two representatives of a Makonde proto-nationalist movement⁷ turned violent and ended in a massacre, after the police appeared to lose control of the situation, panicked and opened fire on the crowd (Hall and Young 1997; Kingdon 2002; West 2005). The number of casualties is contested: while some accounts claimed more than 600 dead (Hall and Young 1997: 12; Kingdon 2002), others place the number at between 60 and 80 (Henriksen 1983: 19), and others at an even lower 30 to 40 dead (Graça 2005: 274). Regardless of the numbers, the violence remains one of the important moments in the period leading to the struggle. The Mueda massacre⁸ and the Makonde tradition of resistance to the Portuguese administration would later become one of the reasons for choosing Cabo Delgado as the initial theatre of operations for the liberation struggle (Israel 2009). It would also be a cornerstone of the memory and history of the struggle, as told in the post-independence period. Nora (1989) distinguishes between the uses of history, seen as a representation of the past and memory, which he describes as ‘life, [...] in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to long being dormant and periodically revived’ (Nora 1989: 8). It is his distinction I am using here. The memories of the massacre remain powerful – these are still events that mark the early days of active resistance from the Makonde. The massacre is considered a watershed in the relationship between the Makonde and the Portuguese, and features prominently in the histories of the struggle, providing the background for Makonde discourses of active resistance.

Following the massacre of 1960 there was a generalized movement to organize a political and military opposition to the Portuguese. In 1961, Makonde living in Tanzania formed a political union – MANU (Makonde African National Union).⁹ MANU evolved from a Makonde mutual aid association called the Tanganyikan Mozambican Makonde Union which had been created in 1954 by Makonde migrants in Tanganyika, and had received the

support of TANU (Tanganyikan African National Union) and KANU (Kenyan African National Union) (Opello 1973).

In May 1962, MANU and UDENAMO (*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* – National Democratic Union of Mozambique) began negotiating to form a united front. Pressure from CONCP,¹⁰ Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah, two influential early supporters of the Front (Brito 1988) led them also to join forces with UNAMI (*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique Independente* – National Democratic Union for Independent Mozambique). The three organisations had their origins in different parts of the country, and had different ethnic and regional constituencies.¹¹

FRELIMO was created after five days of meetings on 25 June 1962 (Opello 1973). Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane¹² was chosen to be the president of the Front at the first congress held in Dar es Salaam in September 1962.

FRELIMO had problems organising a cohesive force out of a very diverse group. The combination of different movements helped shape the character of the Front, but also contributed to some of the fissures within it (Birmingham 1992). Unity would enable the three groups to campaign more successfully and became an aim that endured through the struggle and into independence. However, the first years of FRELIMO were marked by internal struggles for power and influence, by dissent, expulsions, different visions of what the front should be, and of the ideal course of action (Cahen 1999; West 2005). Unlike Angola where the liberation struggle was fought by three movements at the same time (MPLA, FNLA and UNITA), in which none ever had a good grasp of the territory, or a real chance of winning the war, FRELIMO emerged as the single force fighting the Portuguese for the independence of Mozambique.

Cabo Delgado was the first region where serious fighting took place, and indeed where most of the war was fought.¹³ A number of reasons led FRELIMO to select Cabo Delgado as their primary area of action. Not least was the Mueda massacre mentioned above. Other reasons included the support of the president of newly independent Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. This support enabled FRELIMO to launch military actions from Tanzania and keep training camps in various parts of the country, making military actions considerably easier at this point.

The initial success of FRELIMO also depended on the support of the northern population, especially the Makonde. The Makonde, who along with the Chewa and Nyanja, were some of the first to be involved, formed the backbone of the army throughout the liberation struggle. At the start of its campaign in rural Cabo Delgado FRELIMO found willing ears for their arguments and strong supporters for their actions among the Makonde population (Newitt 1995: 524). The majority of Makonde supported FRELIMO, and when not actively fighting would find other means to help: through contributing food, assisting FRELIMO recruiters, hiding the soldiers, helping with the transport of material, and passing on information. Their familiarity with the terrain proved invaluable. Mobility and constant travel provided the Makonde with extensive knowledge of the general travel routes and of the best places to cross the river which were extremely useful (and often used) during the struggle.¹⁴ This knowledge was unavailable to the Portuguese army, and the Portuguese administration officers who lived in the country longer than the soldiers, but largely lived in urban and semi-urban areas, and had limited knowledge of the terrain. Large parts of the countryside, referred to as the bush (*mato*), did not have roads, what made them inaccessible without local guides. These proved difficult to find, especially for people from the coast. The same is true for the social networks which could be tapped into and to which the Portuguese military and intelligence had no access.

As support for FRELIMO grew, more and more of the rural population was informed of its demands for independence and self-determination, as well as the need to fight to liberate the country. There was increasing awareness by the Portuguese of the movement in rural Mozambique, and a greater effort was made to gather information on FRELIMO's activities. The Portuguese were no less violent in their approach than FRELIMO, imprisoning people they believed to be supporters of the Front and torturing them for information on its activities and supporters.

Some of the early supporters of FRELIMO managed to maintain an ambiguous role, working for the colonial state while carrying out other functions for FRELIMO, such as the sale of party membership cards which would identify loyalty to the Front, and the gathering and passing on of information. Eduardo Chambone told me about the massacre of Mueda, and also what had happened after the events

of that day. He continued to work with the Portuguese administration voluntarily, mostly in road construction, while also working with the proto-nationalist movements and later with FRELIMO selling party cards. He was arrested and stayed in custody for the duration of the struggle. Eduardo's experience was not unusual. Quite the opposite: it was not exceptional to work with the Portuguese, either in direct connection with the administration, or as part of the administrative hierarchy, and at the same time work with the proto-nationalist movements and later with FRELIMO.

There were others like Eduardo, who spent the war in prison. The number of political prisoners from Cabo Delgado was high, but their experience of the struggle often passes unacknowledged by the postcolonial administration (West 2003).

Miguel Ntumbati was a political prisoner for most of the struggle, and his story is one of the first I listened to one morning as we were sitting in the yard of his house. He described where he had been and what had happened to him during the years he had been imprisoned by the Portuguese. Miguel was arrested early on and held in Mueda for some time, where he was beaten and made to tell to whom he had sold FRELIMO cards. He had to show where he kept the documents.¹⁵ He almost escaped from his captors once thanks to the kindness of one of the soldiers. Shortly after that when one of the soldiers was beating him, the Commander made him stop, claiming that the mission was not to kill Makonde people. His account of his ordeal was extremely detailed, full of information on dates and places. He seemed to remember every detail of his arrest and time spent in jail.

On 12 October, the plane for the Ibo [Ibo Island, where he was to be held in prison] came. At Ibo I was not beaten because they had organized the process. But many died: we ate dried cassava and did not work. We would put dried cassava, beans and water to boil in the sun. Many died because of the food.

Miguel spent some time in prison on Ibo Island, before being transferred to Maputo and then Gaza and spending the rest of the struggle in different prisons. He was only freed at the end of the struggle.

He told his story in a way that made it clear that he was used to telling it, and felt like this was an important story to tell: 'It is very

good to collect these stories, because we are getting old and will die soon, and these stories will die with us'. Unlike other interviewees, he seemed to find it important to tell and record his story, and he told it at length. Given that these stories sit uncomfortably within the official history of the struggle (West 2003: 356), it was not peculiar for him to believe so. The former political prisoners are in a strange and difficult position in present-day Mozambique. While they worked for FRELIMO early on, and were arrested for it, they still did not fight the war, and as a consequence some of them do not receive the pension the war veterans are entitled to. West (2003) describes a similar situation when discussing the memories of political prisoners and their post-war experiences. These people were, as West says, *comprometidos* (compromised) (2003: 353), and therefore not the template of the heroic FRELIMO fighter who should be celebrated and remembered. Although the present government recognizes their importance, there is no overt celebration of their role as there is of the soldiers in the struggle (Santos 2010; Israel 2010). Miguel also notes the need of political prisoners to tell their story, and that they had been telling their story since independence. In part this constant re-telling of the story accounts for the rich detail, and for the maintenance of the differing elements. It also sets the narrative and detracts from questioning the events and the interpretation of those who tell the story.¹⁶ Whenever I interviewed political prisoners I was struck by the rich detail, and by the fact that these stories were never vague. While other interviewees would say things like: 'it was all good', or 'we lived well', or 'there was a lot of suffering' without going into detail unless they were prompted with more specific questions, the political prisoners would generally give long, elaborate answers, full of details which included names, places and dates and which would reflect on specific events, conversations and responses. However, research on memory has remarked on the way these narratives become 'set' (Smith 2004) and form a story in themselves, denying, like the accepted narrative of the liberation struggle, competing histories.

Below I will present the experience and memories of Makonde and Mwani caught on opposite sides during the struggle.

VILLAGES AND TOWNS IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE – SITES OF RESISTANCE OR COLLABORATION

During the liberation struggle Cabo Delgado became spatially divided into areas controlled by the Portuguese and areas controlled by FRELIMO.¹⁷ The actions of both armies contributed to redesigning the landscape and introduced long-lasting changes to social relationships. In this section I will address the different changes introduced by FRELIMO in the areas it came to control, and by the Portuguese administration in the areas kept under colonial rule throughout the course of the struggle. Although people would sometimes describe these areas as completely separate, others would recall moving between liberated areas and fenced towns depending on perceived danger, family connections or political opinions. An informant who had lived in both areas described it as follows:

I worked in Mocímboa at the start of the war. My mother's uncle called me and told me to get out of the city because I could die if the war reached there. I went to the bush. On that same day I saw troops from Mocímboa [Portuguese], and the troops from the bush [FRELIMO] caught me. I was arrested because I was wearing a watch and nice clothes, and the soldiers suspected I was *tuga* [Portuguese soldier] and I spoke Portuguese what made them more suspicious. I was sent back to Mocímboa and told to build houses in the area of Nautchemene [on the outskirts of the town]. Some time after that FRELIMO got in contact with us and we left for the bush on Saturday. This was before they made their controls tighter (Safia Sinepo).

LIBERATED ZONES

As the war progressed and FRELIMO established some territorial control, an administration was put in place in the hinterland of Cabo Delgado (Henriksen 1983; West 2005) and Niassa, and was able to establish military bases and civilian areas under its administration where the population on which they drew support lived. The rationale for doing so was similar to the reasons that led the Portuguese to group people in large villages: it was easier to control the population and also easier to provide services for them. In these areas they provided social services, organized production and political

administration (Meyns 1981: 46). Rudimentary schools and health centres, staffed by FRELIMO members, were created in these areas, as were agricultural fields which would provide food for both the population and the guerrilla. Providing these services also allowed FRELIMO to make claims as to what the Portuguese were not providing the Mozambican population, and claim that all the Portuguese had done in all the centuries of colonial rule was exploiting the Mozambican people. Throughout the war these bases became bigger and gave rise to what were to be known as the *zonas libertadas* (liberated zones). FRELIMO claims to the importance of maintaining and administering the liberated zones did not necessarily correlate with the extension of the areas wholly under FRELIMO control. The future first President of Mozambique, Samora Machel explained what the liberated zones were in these terms:

‘Liberated zones’ does not mean the complete expulsion of the physical presence of the colonialists. There are still Portuguese there but they are isolated in a few small garrisons. The basic question is: who do the people follow? [...] In our zones the work is open. [...] That means freedom from exploitation, from forced labour. That is a liberated zone (quoted in Hall and Young 1997: 31).

This is a common appreciation of the importance of the liberated zones as an initial experience of administration for FRELIMO. The liberated zones were seen as a laboratory where FRELIMO gathered experience which would be used in ruling independent Mozambique (Meyns 1981: 55). The experience of administering these areas was used as a template after independence for some of the policies followed in the administration of the country. This was, however, a rather limited experience, since it was mostly confined to the north of the country, and the situation and historical development elsewhere were rather different. Samora Machel had this to say about the liberated zones:

The establishment of liberated zones creates the material bases for the transformation of the anti-colonial liberation struggle into a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for the establishment of a new political, economic, social and cultural structures which give expression to the complete

power of the masses over society in its totality (quoted in Meyns 1981: 49).

In early 1965, entire settlements were moved to the areas of Cabo Delgado under the control of FRELIMO (West 2005) and the first military school in a liberated zone was created (Opello 1973). In some cases the heads of settlement moved as well (West 2005). The power structures of the abandoned villages would be thus maintained. The groups of people who moved would remain in the liberated zones until the end of the war. When the new settlements grouped people from various smaller settlements, people would group together according to the areas they originated from. However, in these areas, even when the heads of settlement accompanied the people, they seldom continued to rule them. Instead this would be done by the younger generation who had started work with FRELIMO early on, many of who rose to the control and organization of the liberated zones (West 2005: 139–141). This would continue the change in power and authority that had been occurring in the plateau for several decades in connection with migration (internal and international), religious conversion and changes introduced during the colonial period (*cf.* West 2005). At the same time, the people living there provided FRELIMO with food, shelter and information. At the beginning, life in these areas was extremely difficult. Some accounts tell of suffering and fear while living in the *mato* (bush):

In the bush there was a lot of suffering, people had lice, couldn't wash, or look for clothes, they would wear the same clothes for days. At night if there was an attack they would have to run [...] and could only return after learning that there were no soldiers. When they came back sometimes they would start to cook and would have to run away again. It was very bad. There were many attacks. They [the Portuguese] would come by helicopter, on foot. There would be no food and no salt. They could not look for salt or for clothes (Eugenia Bwanda).¹⁸

The initial years of the war were a constant game of hide-and-seek (West 2005) with people moving continually and staying attentive to the movements and actions of the Portuguese:

The Portuguese would come but the population had signals and would play the horn or shout and warn of the arrival of

the *tropa* [*tropa* – troops – was the term used for the Portuguese; FRELIMO fighters were called *camaradas* – comrades] and the population would run into the bush to different places. After the ambush the helicopter would come to collect the Portuguese troops and the people would return to their houses (Albano Amissi).¹⁹

While talking about the lack of food and basic goods, some of my interviewees would also remember the excitement of building a free area within Mozambique which was to be controlled and administered by FRELIMO. However, other interviewees had a very different recollection of life in the liberated areas, one which appears to be impossibly rosy, and in which everything was perfect.

The liberated zones were by and large remote for the Portuguese army, which was concentrated in towns and in garrisons at smaller administrative posts. The Portuguese soldiers would travel within the province in convoys on the main roads, but would not stray much from these areas: the lack of knowledge of the terrain and the unpredictability of the guerrilla presence were reasons for not moving far from the places where the garrisons had been established (Henriksen 1983).

FENCED TOWNS

The population in the areas where the Portuguese were stationed was usually under surveillance and concentrated in fenced towns and villages. The semi-urban centres of the north were fenced and guarded. Larger villages were also created gathering population from smaller settlements and they were subjected to the same degree of control.

The liberation struggle introduced major changes in the patterns of settlement. Some of these changes were introduced by the colonial government, with the creation of *aldeamentos* (village settlements), where people would be contained and monitored, especially in a way which would prevent their contact and cooperation with FRELIMO fighters. Large areas were emptied of people who were then relocated to bigger villages by the Portuguese. One of my informants, a Mwani man, described the process in the following way:

When the war started I was making a *machamba* (field) in N'totwe and we ran to Nanchemele. The government or-

dered that people were gathered and taken to the town. Trucks came and took the people to the area where the administration buildings were, even if people did not want to do that. There was food, but we were all cramped around the administration, until they finished surrounding the town with barbed wire. I stayed here until independence, but my brother didn't because he was selling cards, and sold cards here too. He was arrested and sent to Machava.²⁰ Inside we had a signal to know who had bought cards and who hadn't, and we would go at night to talk to those who hadn't bought cards and sold them to them (Issa Jabili).

In towns and fenced villages the population was subjected to a curfew, and the town was surrounded by barbed wire in order to better control the population. Most of the people who stayed and lived here – and sometimes became a part of the Portuguese administration – were Mwani. They were the ones who, while I was conducting fieldwork, remembered the colonial administrators better and described life in a Portuguese-controlled town at the time of the liberation struggle.

One of my interviewees in Diaca had been a part of the militia created by the Portuguese to assist the army in the villages and towns under Portuguese control. This man had been in the Portuguese army, having undergone military training before the start of the liberation struggle. He described what the militia was supposed to do:

Our job was to go out in the morning and make the rounds in the *machambas* (fields) around the village. If the situation was good [meaning that they had not encountered FRELIMO guerrillas] we would shoot into the air and the population would get to work. We would control the population, and would also work in our *machambas*. We would return from the fields at noon. The village was surrounded by barbed wire and had three well guarded gates: one on the side of Mocímboa, one on the side of Mueda and another gate which the population used to go to the fields (Rashid Momade).

Rashid stressed the lack of a relationship with the Portuguese military, claiming that: 'we'd go to get leftover food from them, but there was no conversation'. However, the situation was still difficult for these men once the war was over, and FRELIMO rose to power.

The soldiers went with the population to the fields, so that they would not escape. They suspected that we might give information to FRELIMO, or that we might be captured, and let them know what was happening here. [...] Often those guarding the gates were not the whites. All the older people were militia and they controlled the gates. Because they had family or personal relations, it was easy to ask to go to the bush. There were ways to communicate with those in the bush (Fatima Suleimane).²¹

Concentrating the population in order to better exercise control was widely used in Cabo Delgado (Henriksen 1983). The traditional villages which had been relatively small, with only a few families under the leadership of a lineage head (Dias 1964; West 2005), grew much bigger, gathering hundreds, sometimes thousands of people. The concentration of people in larger villages had an impact on the way the villages were organized and changed the traditional patterns of land use and power (West 1998, 2005), as well as population distribution and group relationships. The villages would most often concentrate population from similar ethnic backgrounds, but in some areas they would have a mix of people, particularly in the areas of transition between territories occupied by different ethnic groups.

The confinement of people by the Portuguese and FRELIMO had another consequence: it contributed to an increase in divisions between various ethnic groups of the north, separating them along opposing lines of those who supported the Portuguese and those who fought against them. The coastal populations became more closely associated with the Portuguese, fostering resentment between them and the population from the hinterland, which were actively fighting the Portuguese in larger numbers or living in the liberated areas. The rift between coastal and inland societies increased. Although the Muslim population had been active in their support for the liberation movement up until 1968, after that their support seemed to wane. The repressive actions of the PIDE-DGS (Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado – Direcção Geral de Segurança) (for details see Gallagher 1979; Costa Pinto 2006, 2008) against the Muslim populations in northern Mozambique, with large numbers of arrests, torture, murder and exile of Muslim leaders between 1965–68, may have stopped people from being as active in the liberation movements as before. As well as other political prisoners,

these people would be considered *comprometidos* (compromised) (West 2003) by FRELIMO in the post-independence period (Bonate 2009: 290–291). Between 1968 and 1972, the Portuguese administration undertook a campaign for the support of the coastal population (Bonate 2009).

Mocímboa was one of the towns where fencing was implemented. Being one of the largest semi-urban centres in the northernmost part of the province, it was under Portuguese control. It was a place where the Portuguese had, if not support from the coastal population, at least not open hostility as was the case in more contested areas such as Mueda or the hinterland where the control of the territory was scant (Henriksen 1983). The presence of the Portuguese army is still marked in the town landscape today. Remains of the main barracks occupy a large area beside one of the main streets and are used as a primary school, though the buildings are in a state of decay. This was a strategic town for the Portuguese because of the port which provided relatively easy and safe access by sea to the south of the province compared to the greater possibility of attacks faced by overland convoys.

Those who stayed in town remember the war as a difficult time. Fatima and her daughter Tonga, two Mwani women who lived there most of their lives, described the life in Mocímboa during the war:

Life here was also running. FRELIMO would bomb here while the Portuguese bombed there [in the interior, where the FRELIMO had their military bases] and we took refuge at the beach. It was all surrounded by barbed wire. We went to the fields with the soldiers. They shot in the air and that was the signal to return. We had cards with our name and picture which we left when we went to the fields. They were returned when we got back. If someone didn't return, it was because they had been captured by FRELIMO. Some ran away but many were caught.

Far from being an easy option, the life of those who stayed in town, was dangerous and full of fear. Fatima described this as well:

When the war came, I was here. FRELIMO came until Nkomangane [a village near the town] and started bombing. Those in Milamba could see the houses burning and heard the shots. A bomb hit a store and it burnt down. A rocket launched at the market hit a woman who was going to the

bathroom and she was cut in two. In the garrison a soldier and his wife died. They [FRELIMO] couldn't come in, but bombed from afar. There was war here and there. Nowhere was safe. We had PIDE [the Portuguese secret police]. Many people were denounced, and were arrested, beaten, and killed.

Those living in town faced suspicion from the Portuguese and FRELIMO equally and were placed in an increasingly difficult position. A Mwani woman who had lived in the town for the duration of the struggle described the level of distrust the Mwani population endured from Portuguese and FRELIMO alike:

We suffered from the Portuguese here, because they suspected we were supporting FRELIMO, and FRELIMO suspected that we supported the Portuguese. My family was kidnapped [by FRELIMO]. Sometimes the Portuguese troops would beat us. We were in a very difficult situation (Lukia Ali).

The stories of those who stayed behind are not those of people who chose to stay away from the war, but stories of people who had little choice. Their experience of the period of the struggle was in many ways similar to the experience of those living in the liberated zones. These experiences are seldom mentioned in the official accounts.

MEMORIES OF THE STRUGGLE

During the liberation struggle the Mwani and the Makonde had a very different experience. Their accounts of this period and of the ensuing years are consequently distinct. Mocimboa da Praia had been a base for the Portuguese army during the struggle in the province and this meant that its inhabitants had a very different experience of the struggle from that of the people who lived in the liberated areas and who had fought.

While conducting interviews and trying to learn about the history of the region and the dynamics in group relationships, I was often presented with a seamless, polished version of history of the struggle, almost one straight out of a history book. When I first discussed national history with N'janjaula, a Makonde veteran, he said he would explain it to me. N'janjaula proceeded by detailing the timeline of the formation of FRELIMO and the choice of Mond-

lane as its first leader, explaining at the same time the relationship between the Mozambican leadership and the Tanganyikan leaders and how these influenced the choices made. Aware of the general political situation in Mozambique and of the Portuguese responses to demands of independence, he nevertheless failed to account for much of the internal tension of FRELIMO during those years. However, despite having fought for the duration of the struggle, his initial account did not provide any personal details of his experience. It was only after being asked for specific examples that he provided them. Veterans, who had had first-hand experience of the events of the struggle, but who nevertheless passed on the official rhetoric, recounted similar versions. A short account of the struggle, and of how FRELIMO liberated the country, naming the most prominent leaders, would not include the complexity, contradictions and entanglements of events. It was only after recounting the official version that they would describe their more personal experiences of the period. However, their stories would never describe the other side of the story, that of the people who had stayed in the Portuguese controlled towns and villages.

The official history of the struggle is mostly told from the perspective of those who took an active part in it, and who are, still, very much aligned with FRELIMO. It is the version of the victors. What is missing from this history is the experience of those who did not fight with FRELIMO. In Mocímboa da Praia (district and town) there were many who did not share the experience of the veterans of the struggle. Those who had remained in Portuguese controlled areas during the struggle, and did not actively take part in it alluded to different versions of the history. When telling their personal history, they would describe what it was like to live in a fenced town, what their everyday life consisted of, how their movement and options were confined by the presence of the Portuguese army. They would stress especially what the implications of having been considered aligned with the Portuguese were.

When told with the inclusions of these perspectives, the history of the struggle gains different overtones and becomes a much richer picture. It allows us to understand the situation with all the subtleties and avoid stark distinctions between those who resisted and those who collaborated with the Portuguese. It also provides

a basis for understanding some of the present-day relationships between groups in this part of Mozambique, since the experiences and memories of the period inform people's relationships and understandings of present-day politics. The memories and representation of the past are not a truth set in stone (*cf.* Das 2000); on the contrary, they are constantly formed and reinforced through the telling of past stories, representations of the struggle and commemorations of the role FRELIMO played in those years.



Fig. Celebrations of national holidays, like the Women's Day, are often marked by celebrations of the role played in the struggle (in this case the part the *Destacamento Feminino* – Female Battalion – played). The women wear their old uniforms for a commemoration of their effort in the struggle. (Photograph by the author)

I argue that memories of the armed struggle contribute to the persistence and worsening of identity divisions. The relationships between the Makonde and Mwani were manipulated to serve colonial interests (Henriksen 1983). The coastal population took a more passive stance during the period of the struggle, and stayed within the confines of the Portuguese controlled areas eschewing a more active part in the events. The divisions during the war replayed old relationships between the coastal population and the people from the hinterland (Conceição 2006: 195).

The period of the liberation struggle, as any other in the history of this area, cannot be defined by one single narrative: it was a time for defining alliances and fighting for the liberation of the country, but also a time when some people allied with the Portuguese. People moved within the territory, and had very different experiences of the struggle. What comes out of many reports, and especially of the official history (Cahen 1999), is a homogenous treatment of the population and their approaches to the struggle. However there was a fair amount of internal tension and the allegiances chosen during the struggle reflect this (Bonate 2009). The experience of colonial rule was different for different groups and even within a group for different categories of the population, and this determined choices between forms of resistance and collaboration. The representation of the past struggle is very much appropriated by the ruling party of the state, which has excluded/silenced the alternative perspectives and experiences of all those who, while living in the province, did not take part in the struggle or fought with the Portuguese.

CONCLUSION

The liberation struggle brought vast change to Cabo Delgado. I do not mean by this that the previous decades had not seen important changes and that the social structure and organization of this province had remained the same through time. What I mean is that the war brought ruptures and very rapid change to this area.

Location of residence, and personal and group alliances was then to have an impact on the experience of the struggle. Being placed on the side of the Portuguese or on the side of FRELIMO meant different things and led to the establishment of allegiances and more importantly resentments, which have developed into cleavages and political and ethnic divisions with unforeseen consequences. For an area where different ethnic groups come together and share the same living space, the heightened awareness of this division makes coexistence difficult. This becomes increasingly relevant when the Makonde who have arrived and are occupying spaces in town in recent years are perceived as occupying a higher social position and as having access to more (in economic and political terms).

Similarly to the experience of the political prisoners alluded to above, the experiences of those who stayed in the towns con-

trolled by the Portuguese are not considered part of the same heroic history of resistance. Their memories of the liberation struggle are ignored, like a past that never happened. The memories of the struggle deemed worthy became part of the uniform, official narrative of the past and the only politically and socially sanctioned history. When asked about this history at present, the former fighters would present, along with their personal history, a very uniform history of FRELIMO and the struggle to liberate the country. Most of them would not go beyond the official version of the story. Even when their personal history was contradicting some elements of the official version, they would still not change it or acknowledge the different, sometimes contradictory elements in the two histories. In some cases they expressed contempt for the experiences of those who lived in towns occupied by the Portuguese during the struggle. Their experiences were not valued, and if expressing disagreement or resentment for preferential treatment the former fighters received, their argument would not be perceived as legitimate. They were considered unreasonable since, having not fought, or lived far from Portuguese controlled areas, they had no right to make claims on the state. This was especially contentious when discussing rights to state provided pensions, which the veterans of the struggle were entitled to. Since large numbers of Makonde fought, while large numbers of Mwani remained in towns controlled by the Portuguese, they could make claims to these pensions and therefore reap the financial benefit of their role in the struggle. At a time when the political arena in Mocimboa became increasingly contested, the references to the past and to the experience of resistance and collaboration were brought to the forefront and used to assert or deny political claims. Unsurprisingly the use of the past in this fashion highlighted tensions between the diverse groups living in town. The aftermath of the 2005 local elections, and the violence that ensued (Santos 2010) is but one example of the continuing tension in this area of Mozambique.

A wider discussion on memory and its political relevance and role has been emerging in anthropology and history. The analyses of memory as a form of public practice brought forth by Werbner (1998) highlighting the divisions between those who fought and those who did not are especially relevant here. Werbner's questioning of 'who is a hero to be honoured, and who receives or should

receive state benefits and compensation for wartime sacrifice' (*Ibid.*: 8) is a remarkably pertinent one to ask here. It is one asked frequently in northern Mozambique, bringing into focus the division between those who resisted colonialism and those who did not. But this question does not provide satisfactory answers in the light of the variety of experiences during the war, or the lack of clearly defined categories of resistance and collaboration, which often emerge blurred from the narratives, and create what Werbner (1998) terms an 'unfinished narrative' leading to an increased politicized understanding of memory. Examples of increased politicization of memory, and its consequences, can be found in Terence Ranger's (2004) analysis of the use of history as a political weapon, in the process of which history is written with a patriotic bent and the narrative becomes increasingly set.

NOTES

¹ The official census results for 2007 are available at: <http://www.ine.gov.mz/censo2007> accessed in September 2010. The town's results were broken down locally immediately after the end of the census. As a note on the increase in population in the district: numbers from the 1950s put the district's population at 37,687 (Dias 1964).

² Details of the migrations and population shuffle in the north can be found in Dias 1964; Medeiros 1997; Conceição 2006; West 2005.

³ There are Makonde living in Mozambique and Tanzania, but they constitute separate groups with distinctive histories, political affiliations and national allegiances.

⁴ The Makonde and Mwani are often crudely divided into very distinctive categories: agrarian societies, continental and ethnic; maritime societies, coastal and non-ethnic (Conceição 2006: 130).

⁵ The charter for the Nyassa company lasted until 1928, at which point the Portuguese government decided not to renew it and began administering Cabo Delgado directly (Vail 1976).

⁶ The pacification of the Mueda Plateau, where the Makonde traditionally live, was only completed in 1922 (West 2005; Medeiros 1997).

⁷ The most prominent of whom were Ernesto Vanomba and Chibiliti Diwani. Ernesto Vanomba and Chibiliti Diwani were both young Makonde who had lived in Tanganyika for some time and who had become involved in Makonde associations there. Their presence in Mueda in 1960 was linked with demands for workers rights, and especially to 'ask for the independence of the country' as many of my informants put it.

⁸ There are various accounts of the massacre (Hall and Young 1997; Graça 2005; West 2005; Henriksen 1983) and participants tell different stories. It has

been looked at by various witnesses and researchers from diverse viewpoints since it happened.

⁹ Later renamed Mozambican African National Union.

¹⁰ *Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas* – Conference of Nationalist Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies. CONCP joined together all the liberation movements from the Portuguese colonies and aimed at establishing cooperation between these movements. It was founded in 1961 in Casablanca, Morocco, by PAIGC from Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) from Angola, FRELIMO for Mozambique and MLSTP (Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe – Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe). It left out UNITA (União para a Independência Total de Angola – Union for the Complete Independence of Angola) and FNLA (Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola – National Front for the Liberation of Angola) from Angola.

¹¹ For an account of the different regional experiences of the colonial administration see Cahen (1987).

¹² Eduardo Mondlane was the first Mozambican to have a PhD (in Sociology from Northwestern University) and who had experience as a University lecturer (Syracuse University) and worked for the United Nations.

¹³ Fronts were opened in Nyassa Province as well, but, at least in the early days of the struggle, FRELIMO's presence was never as strong there as it was in Cabo Delgado.

¹⁴ A good knowledge of travel routes, and personal networks has proved important in other conflicts providing more diffuse networks of resistance and making it harder for those who do not have access to them (the Portuguese in the case) to be able to make sense of the spread of information and support (*cf.* Swedenburg 2003 on the rebellion of 1936–1939 in Palestine for an analysis of local networks of resistance).

¹⁵ He recalled in detail what he kept with the documents: 30 cards; 60 escudos (the Portuguese currency in use at the time); 4 pens; 4 notebooks; 1 photo of Mondlane; and a FRELIMO flag. His long imprisonment and the experience of it were constantly remembered, what explains the details he provided when we were talking about the struggle.

¹⁶ This is the case with the telling of war stories elsewhere (*e.g.*, Algeria). The narratives acquire a format deemed appropriate and there is less space for interpretation of the stories and experiences of war (Smith 2004; Scheele 2006) and, in this case, prison. These stories also become a set part of nationalist narratives (McDougall 2006).

¹⁷ These were the liberated areas, under the control of FRELIMO during the liberation struggle. It was in these areas that FRELIMO first tried its hand at administration and tried for the first time some of the policies it would later implement all over the country.

¹⁸ Eugenia Bwanda is a Makonde woman who had lived in the liberated areas for the duration of the struggle.

¹⁹ Albano Amissi is a Makonde man who had spent most of the war years living in liberated areas.

²⁰ Machava is located in the outskirts of Maputo. During the liberation struggle there was a prison there where many of those arrested remained for the duration of the war.

²¹ Fatima Suleimane is a Mwani woman who had lived in the town during the liberation struggle.

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