

3 The liberation struggle and the politics of heroism in Mozambique

The war veterans as remains of memory

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Introduction

In 1979, four years after Mozambique became independent, a star-shaped monument was built to house the mortal remains of the nation's heroes and thus pay tribute to their participation in the Liberation Struggle (1964–1974). Eduardo Mondlane, Josina Machel, and Samora Machel are among those represented in the monument, which stands in the *Praça dos Heróis* in Maputo. Their celebration as heroes also materialised in the form of statues erected throughout the country and the dedication of the years 2009 and 2011 to the “year of Eduardo Mondlane” and “year of Samora Machel”, respectively. As in many national narratives, in Mozambique the memorialisation of the struggle for independence and the public representation of its heroes have become the pillars of a public memory which overlaps with the nation state. The legitimating quality of heroic memorialisation is evident and therefore “serves to strengthen the bonds between citizens or members of the political community by representing the values of the community, or by enacting real or symbolic victories over outsiders”.¹

In the case of Mozambique, the centrality of the memory of the liberation struggle, as the mainstay of the national community, structures – and is structured by – the continuity between the FRELIMO that led the anticolonial war (1964–1974) and the FRELIMO which has governed the country uninterrupted, from independence to the present day. João Paulo Borges Coelho summarises the master narrative in which the events that took place in the multiple geographies and temporalities of the liberation struggle are set. According to this author, the liberation struggle was codified

as a grand narrative with the simple structure of a fable, starting symbolically with an act of colonial aggression (the Mueda massacre, corresponding other identical phenomena such as the 1959 Pidjiguiti massacre in Guinea-Bissau, or the wave of repression in response to the attack on the Luanda Prison in 1961 in Angola, Viriathus in Portugal, etc.), followed by the “first shot” fired by the guerrillas against the colonialists, and unfolding as a heroic story in which the movement gradually purged itself of the burden of the reactionaries (the Second Frelimo Congress) and began to assume greater revolutionary

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purity. The story is underpinned by a series of binary oppositions (colonialism versus revolution, reactionaries versus revolutionaries, civilians versus soldiers, rural versus urban, etc.) and it is clearly its simplicity that makes it tremendously effective.²

As Borges Coelho also notes, it is reasonable to speak of an exaggeration of the status of the liberation struggle within the memoryscape erected and maintained in independent Mozambique, considering, on the one hand, the relative erasure of the colonial past and, on the other hand, the failure to include the civil war (1976–1992) with RENAMO, which would result in a peace agreement in 1992 marking the end of the war and the political transition from socialism to a new democratic order.³ In this sense, recognising “[the] status of the liberation struggle as the only experience”⁴ involves understanding how FRELIMO forged a revolutionary chronology in which the splendour of the armed struggle and the innovation brought from the liberated zones defined the new age, either overriding the sad memory of colonialism, meanwhile eradicated, or relegating the essential tensions of the post-independence social experience to a subaltern past.

In this context, the figure of the national hero within the memoryscape of Mozambique should be considered in the light of the processes used, within different political frameworks, to establish and re-establish the liberation struggle as the unifying experience of Mozambican nationalism under the aegis of FRELIMO.⁵ The memorialisation of heroic figures from the liberation struggle⁶ bequeaths to the future a form of exaltation inscribed in the same grammar of meaning used for the past, in which “the figure of the enemy inspired the construction of a shared national consciousness”.⁷ It is in the light of this contraposition, reaffirming Portuguese colonial power as the original enemy, that the process which led to the gradual recovery and veneration of the figure of Ngungunhane⁸ should be understood within the Mozambican political memory.⁹ In fact, as Maria Paula Meneses demonstrates,¹⁰ the figure of the enemy was crucial to the construction of a Mozambican nationalism within the anticolonial struggle, for FRELIMO’s transition from a liberation movement to a vanguard party, and for the affirmation of different political projects over the course of time. Hence, the enemy was, in succession, Portuguese colonialism, Rhodesia, South Africa and its allies, and a category of Mozambicans accused of acting as “internal enemies”. These “internal enemies” included the following: troops who joined the Portuguese army’s war effort, in particular those belonging to the Commandos, Special Forces, and Special Paratrooper Units; individuals who collaborated with the PIDE; members of the Provincial Volunteer and Civil Defence Organisation (*OPVDC*); members of Mozambican nationalist movements or parties; the traditional and religious authorities; dissidents who did not observe the official FRELIMO line; political prisoners suspected of collaboration; individuals with socially unacceptable behaviour (such as prostitutes) and members of RENAMO.¹¹

Despite the grand narrative that gives meaning to the heroes consecrated by the official memory and the different representations of the enemy, a vast amount of the experiences of Mozambican people retains perspectives on the war of liberation

that are scarcely represented in the shared memory of Mozambique. The concept of shared memory is used here on the basis of the distinction which Avishai Margalit establishes between common memory and shared memory. According to this author, common memory is the aggregate of the individual memories of people who record a particular event. However, shared memory:

is not a simple aggregate of individual memories. It requires communication. A shared memory integrates and calibrates the different perspectives of those who remember the episode – for example, the memory of the people who were in the square, each experiencing only a fragment of what happened from their unique angle on events – into one version. Other people in the community who were not there at the time may then be plugged into the experience of those who were in the square, through channels of description rather than by direct experience. Shared memory is built on a division of mnemonic labour.¹²

Given the relatively circumscribed nature of the geography of the liberation struggle and the fact that a large percentage of Mozambicans belong to a generation born after 1974, the memory of the liberation struggle, considered here as a “shared memory”, depends on a “division of mnemonic labour” between those who experienced the struggle and those who access it through various communications channels. This chapter specifically aims to recognise the bearers of what we call “rarely shared memories” of the liberation struggle, in particular the war disabled. In territory far removed from the politics of exaltation and demonisation that define the epic of the struggle, there are countless veterans and communities who have first-hand experience of the events of war. Starting with the monuments to the national heroes erected in Maputo, we then travelled to the far north, to Nangade in the province of Cabo Delgado, to recover the voices of FRELIMO veterans whose experiences of war have been defined by physical disability.

The politics of heroism in Mozambique

Judith Butler developed the concept of “frames of war” to refer to structures of intelligibility which, with the support of communities of belonging (in modern times codified in the form of nation states), seek to confer meaning and legitimacy on armed violence. Under different formulations, these frames are firmly linked to the idea that “[war] is precisely an effort to minimize precariousness for some and to maximize it for others”.¹³ From this perspective, defending the war effort involves accepting that the precariousness and exposure to violence which this instils in “us”, as well as the enemy, is justifiable to the extent that it deals with (or avenges) greater precariousness. This acceptance is crucial for the social mobilisation required to start an armed conflict and the continuing support of populations throughout the war effort, but also for the revisitation and remembrance of the place of war in representations of the past.

As Jay Winter observes,¹⁴ the delegitimation of war is, to a large extent, the delegitimation of the powers of the state. Since the opposite also applies, the link between the memory of war and the legitimacy of the ruling powers is particularly deep in the case of conflicts such as the liberation struggle in Mozambique, which are celebrated as the founding moment of the nation state and the national community. We are dealing here with what Jay Winter¹⁵ terms “frameworks of memory”, referring to the languages and iconographies that make up the memory-scapes through which war is laboriously inscribed in collective memories. These mnemonic frameworks enable us to understand how war is perceived in various ways in different social contexts, whether in terms of the different iconographies of public representations – statues, street names, films, novels – or the place occupied, for example, by the veneration of individual heroes, representations of martyrdom or revolutionary sacrifice, or elegies to the unknown soldier. In the same sense, the “frameworks of memory” also call for an analysis of the establishment and reinscription of particular tropes, such as those embodied in the heroic narratives of individual nation states.

The heroicisation or construction of national heroes is an ongoing process that is socially and politically determined and hence subject to reconstruction and reinterpretation over time.¹⁶ Its importance stands out above all in times of uncertainty, namely in the necessary reiteration of a particular social order or in the transition to a new one. In this context, political leaders create a hero as a rallying point to consolidate a sense of shared belonging or to justify and legitimise their objectives.

In the case of Mozambique, Heroes’ Day is celebrated on 3 February, a date chosen in homage to the first president of FRELIMO, Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, who died on 3 February 1969.¹⁷ Although the exact criteria used at the time to attribute the title of hero of the armed struggle for national liberation are unknown, the newspapers of the day offer some clues. “The hero of today”, according to a statement released by the Standing Committee on Politics, “is the combatant in the frontline of the political and ideological struggle, production, or armed combat, who is committed, steadfastly and to the maximum extent, to the values of the revolutionary struggle of the Mozambican people and its internationalist dimension”.¹⁸

In order to mark the tenth anniversary of Mondlane’s death, the Frelimo Central Committee decided that the commemorations on 3 February 1979 would include the transfer to Mozambique of the bodies of heroes buried abroad, to be laid to rest in a monument built especially for this purpose. Coffins containing the mortal remains of Mondlane, Filipe Samuel Magaia, Mateus Sansão Muthemba, Paulo Samuel Khamkomba, Josina Machel, and Francisco Manyanga were received from Dar es Salaam by an official committee at the airport in the capital, Maputo, and laid to rest in a crypt that had been constructed in the *Praça dos Heróis*. Although it had been built rapidly, the monument has great symbolic significance. As the press noted at the time, the crypt was designed in the shape of a socialist star and, due to the “marble facing, will be illuminated by natural light during the day and by the reflection of the interior electric lighting on the exterior of the monument throughout the night. This means that the monument will always appear as a shining star”.¹⁹ Moreover, “in the centre of the chamber there is a place for a torch to be lit, which will always be kept burning”.²⁰

The celebrations for 3 February illustrate how heroism can be invoked as unifying device. Many of the celebrations that have been held and repeated over time serve to consolidate the importance of the armed struggle for the liberation of the country and the benefits delivered by the combatants, whilst also aiming to encourage the population of the independent nation to emulate their inspiring example. “We have to make sacrifices and give all we can so that the work begun by these fighters is ever greater”,²¹ stated one worker taking part in the 1979 celebrations.

It is also worth remembering that the Mozambican Heroes’ Day celebrations were instrumental in reinforcing the fight against the “enemy”. When asked about the best way to honour the heroes, Joaquim Chissano and Jorge Rebelo, members of the political bureau of the FRELIMO Central Committee at the time, stressed that

the best way is to fight to destroy the armed bandits who are trying to ruin everything our people fought for, for years. The assassins of Eduardo Mondlane, the assassins of all our Heroes and these armed bandits come from the same background, they have the same nature and use the same methods to betray us and commit crimes.²²

The politics of heroism established institutional roots in 1981 with the approval of Law 8/81, establishing the System for Decorations, Honorary Titles, and Distinctions.²³ Under this law, the honorary title of “Hero of the People’s Republic of Mozambique”, the “Order of Eduardo Mondlane”, and the “Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle” medal were created as decorations, together with the “15 years in the FPLM” (Popular Liberation Forces of Mozambique) distinction, among others.²⁴

In this context, during the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the founding of FRELIMO and the 7th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the then President Samora Machel was honoured with the title of Hero of the People’s Republic of Mozambique, on 25 June 1982.²⁵ During the ceremony, other FRELIMO members and activists were also awarded decorations and medals, such as the “Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle” medal.²⁶

A new emphasis was placed on national heroes during the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the start of the Armed Struggle for National Liberation, in 1984. In a ceremony similar to the one held in 1979, the mortal remains of 13 national heroes were transferred to be laid to rest in the *Praça dos Heróis* crypt on 22 September 1984.²⁷ As part of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the start of the struggle, certain national heroes were also decorated with the “Order of 25th September”,²⁸ including those who had already received the Order of the 20th Anniversary of Frelimo a few years earlier: Marcelino dos Santos, Alberto Chipande, Sebastião Mabote, Raimundo Pachinuapa, and José Moiane.²⁹ During the honours ceremony, emphasising the importance of the national heroes, Samora declared: “The hero does not die; he remains forever in the memory of his people, because his life is charged with geography, history and science”.³⁰

Although they were not always carried out with the same pomp and ceremony reserved for special occasions such as those described above, and were also affected

by the vicissitudes associated with different political and economic contexts, it is valid to argue that the 3 February celebrations, as well as those associated with other public holidays linked to the liberation struggle, kept the exaltation of the struggle and its heroes alive over the years.³¹ It should also be noted that this was not only expressed in material terms through the aforementioned titles, decorations and honours, but also by awarding offices and positions to certain important figures in the power apparatus. In this regard, praise and honours for the heroes contrast with the feeling of being forgotten and abandoned experienced by many low-ranking veterans.

On the banks of the Rovuma: “memories rarely shared”

In the context of Africa, colonial violence has forged a complex genealogy involving slavery, wars of occupation, displacements, genocides, forced labour, everyday racism, massacres, and liberation wars. The inclusion of the liberation wars in laudatory narratives does not cancel out the fact that these wars are pervaded with experiences of suffering, including massacres, rapes, arrests, and deaths or injuries in battle. However, unlike other periods defined by the violence of long-term colonialism, these forms of suffering can be remembered within the framework of a triumphal teleology, insofar as they may be viewed as instrumental to achieving independence or, in other words, the end of colonialism and the emergence of sovereign nations. Yet, whilst it is true that many individual and collective experiences can be accommodated within the teleology of sacrifice, this desire crucially depends on the particular place each occupies in an independent society. The confrontation is certainly inescapable for populations and veterans whose memory of war has been inscribed in the form of physical disabilities or recollections relived as post-traumatic experiences. Achille Mbembe refers precisely to this:

Memory and remembrance put into play a structure of organs, a nervous system, an economy of emotions centered necessarily on the body and everything that exceeds it. (...) All forms of memory therefore find consistent expression in the universe of the senses, imagination, and multiplicity. For this reason, in African countries confronted with the tragedy of war, the memory of death is directly written on the injured or mutilated bodies of survivors, and the remembrance of the event is based on the body and its disabilities. The coupling of imagination and memory enriches our knowledge of both the semantics and the pragmatics of remembrance.³²

In fact, from the way in which these veterans and other embodied witnesses of the war are “inhabited” by the memory of war, present in the terrors and shock, the wheelchairs, the amputated legs and artificial limbs, the white canes, the ringing in the ears, and the incessant pain, we find a whole range of “vestigial wars”.³³ Inscribed in body memories, these wars may be understood as vestigial (in the sense that they are residual and disposable) because of the way in which they resist being shaped by the collective epic of triumphal liberation. Symbolic and socioeconomic

recognition is crucial to ensuring that the individual, private memory of war as suffering is not overridden by the triumphant memories forged within the public memory.

In the context of Mozambique, the issue of recognition for the rights of the veterans of the liberation struggle periodically erupts in the form of protests denouncing the inadequate compensation that is awarded, the bureaucratic obstacles and the delays in granting benefits. The legislative framework which governs social policies allocated pensions for veterans of the national liberation struggle, extraordinary pensions for the Disabled of the Armed Forces of Mozambique (*Deficientes das Forças Armadas de Moçambique* – DFAM) and pensions for relatives of the DFAM, among other benefits. The politics, in this case, are not a matter of honouring individual heroes who merit statues but instead address the situation of thousands of combatants who contributed to national independence. Although socially recognised as heroes, this mass of veterans is overwhelmingly made up of anonymous figures whom the state has come to recognise through welfare and social inclusion policies. It is a matter of granting a modicum of remuneration for their contribution to the nationalist cause and also to compensate for the disruptive impact of war on those permanently marked by the events of the armed struggle, such as the disabled FRELIMO veterans who are a particular focus of this chapter.

In order to grasp the “mnemonic structures” of the war beyond the narrative that has established the pantheon of heroes, we sought out the locus/loci of enunciation of veterans who had become disabled during the liberation struggle. To this end, via an intermediary from the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces in Portugal, we were put in contact with the ACLLN (the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle) which, in addition to indicating some interviewees with this profile in the Maputo area, also suggested a visit to the Mueda Plateau in Cabo Delgado, since the Nangade district headquarters, near the River Rovuma and the border with Tanzania, was the area where accommodation had been provided for disabled veterans from the liberation struggle. In September 1974, FRELIMO had occupied the Portuguese barracks in Nangade and, after 1975, reserved the existing structures for the war disabled. Later, in the twenty-first century, 50 more houses were built to accommodate former soldiers and their families.

In order to meet the veterans resident in Nangade, we received support from the Provincial Delegation of the Cabo Delgado ACCLN, who provided us with transport, accommodation, and, when necessary, assistance with translation for the interviews. Although the conditions for the interviews were defined by the local authorities in Nangade who, in addition to allowing only a short time for each interview also drew up a shortlist which did not, for example, include women,³⁴ the opportunity to visit a place where a community of disabled veterans and their families lived was, from the outset, a striking example of legacies of war that were different from the models enshrined in the public representation of national heroes.

In addition to a group conversation and some informal conversations, a series of 12 individual interviews were held with disabled veterans (eight of which could be recorded). The veterans, originally from different areas in the northern provinces

of Mozambique, shared the following characteristics: they had joined FRELIMO as youngsters; they had received their political-military training during the struggle in Nachingwea, in Tanzania; they had fought the Portuguese army for long periods of time; they had been wounded in action (by anti-personnel mines or in enemy ambushes) and subsequently lost their sight or their legs and/or arms; they had been living in Nangade since the end of the war (in most cases from as early as 1975), where they remained with their families up to the time of the interview (2012).

In general, the life stories and reflections of these veterans bear witness to a continuing link with FRELIMO and the illustrious memory of the struggle. This is consistent with the broader social recognition of anticolonial veterans in Mozambican society, and the interviewees are aware of this and symbolically proud of it. It also stems from the fact that they are living in Nangade in houses that had been reserved for them and receive a pension, which not only constitutes a material form of recognition on the part of the state but also creates a sense of belonging to a kind of veterans' community. This sense of belonging was very evident in the way in which they responded to the call to assemble in the centre of the village to be interviewed. As soon as the local representative rang the bell, a crowd of disabled women and men were seen to leave their houses, marching with all the discipline of an army, at the pace imposed on each one by the shrapnel of war.

Within this specific framework, a consensual idea emerged of purpose to the armed cause to which they had dedicated themselves, as illustrated in the following extracts:

But then, this happened because I wanted to free this country. [...] I am aware that this had a result for the struggle for national liberation. I had some unforgettable experiences during the liberation struggle. In one day alone we faced four, five attacks! On the same day! Man, I was trying ... I was walking that way, and there were shots! Those are moments I don't forget. Moments I don't forget. And the result was just. This is what happened to us and this is the result: we're independent now.³⁵

When it happened ... when I returned to Nampula, I felt I wanted to go back to living with my family. But the Mozambican government, when they then organised the Nangade centre here, that made me aware. "There's no problem. You go and live with others who have the same problem. The state will give you as much support as it can".³⁶

I have no reason to complain! The state hasn't forgotten. The state hasn't forgotten me. [*And do you feel proud to have been part of the struggle for independence?*] I don't have any ... only the act, only... I am very... I did a lot! And it's thanks to that that I'm sitting here now!³⁷

It may be said that having taken part in a victorious war, still acclaimed as a just war nowadays and as the foundation for national independence, provides these veterans with a solid redemptive narrative.³⁸ However, this narrative does not prevent some from expressing dissatisfaction with the meagre pensions they receive or the difficulties imposed by red tape when they attempt to claim benefits to which they

are entitled, such as a pension for their relatives. Independence as salvation does not mean that their memories of war, far removed from any glorious epic, are not deeply marked by stories of suffering that have lasted to the present day, specifically those relating to the time and lingering nature of the injury that would embed itself in their lives or the experience of witnessing the death of comrades-in arms at first hand:

I suffered during the war. (...) I was caught in an ambush. The Portuguese soldiers had set up an ambush and I walked into it and during the shooting I was hit... Lead! Lead! A real bullet. (...) After the attack I got away, I spent six days alone in the bush! (...) During this time I suffered badly! I was dragging myself along, little by little, little by little. Badly wounded! Then I managed to get out to a settlement and so... Malunda. We call it... I mean, it's in the Second Sector. (...) After I was wounded, I was transported to Tanzania. The treatment ... ok. I returned in 1975, the year of independence. [...] Nangade. Straight from Tanzania to here!³⁹

I really long [to see] if ... to be able to do things like the others, the ones who are walking around here, riding motor bikes, having a drink at the store, I don't know... that's what I'd like most. There are small jobs, but ok... because I have to have children. I have no support.⁴⁰

The centrality of the suffering, loss, and tortuous paths in search of reparation that feature in the biographical memories of these veterans is echoed in the words of Veena Das, who observes that:

guarantees of belonging to larger entities such as communities or the state are not capable of erasing the hurts or providing a means of repairing this sense of being betrayed by the everyday.⁴¹

We are aware that the perspectives presented here, which are the result of a form of recruitment mediated, in institutional terms, through the ACLLN, reveal an identification with the liberation struggle due to a specific context defined by the important protection provided by the state, which is something many other veterans in Mozambique have been unable to secure.⁴² Equally, we are dealing with subjects whose disabilities have corroborated a socially and administratively recognised “narration of suffering”⁴³ that has thus inscribed them within a “common revolutionary experience”⁴⁴ based on the colonial experience.

However, in Nangade, a very remote area away from the seats of power where the governing bodies claim to be the heirs of the liberation struggle, we found mutilated bodies that have no place in the ceremonials for the memorials that have been constructed, and we encountered the force of the reverberations of war as memories of irredeemable loss. In the end, we found a living memorial filled with sorrows, sacrifice, and deeds of combat that both exceed and fall short of the “docile heroism”⁴⁵ that is shaped to fit the “frames of war” defined by the “liberation script” for Mozambique.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The relation between biography and the liberation struggle is of crucial importance to the political memory in Mozambique, in close connection with what Joan Scott has termed the “authority of direct experience”.⁴⁷ However, the legitimacy derived from this authority is always ranked by constructs in which the protagonism recognised for each individual in the historic act of gaining independence intersects with various strands of inequality: rank or office in FRELIMO during the war, gender, level of education, ethnic, and/or territorial background, able-bodied/disabled, etc. As João Paulo Borges Coelho observes:

Not all the combatants followed the path that would promote a mere protagonist in an event to the status of witness. Becoming a witness presupposes having won and maintained a voice capable of telling the story, within the new order that followed the declaration of independence. And since, after independence, there has been no systematic undertaking to adequately record the testimonies of the combatants and others who took part in the armed struggle, those who did gain a voice and could tell the story were those who entered the cities and began to occupy important positions in the Frelimo and state structures.⁴⁸

In a framework in which the authorised witnesses are precisely those who have the prerogative to recognise – or be recognised as – the unique heroes of the liberation struggle, encountering the voices of the war disabled in Nangade makes us aware of memories which barely travel beyond the local worlds in which they exist or, in other words, beyond private, family, and community space. Even though the national narratives of modernity rarely fail to include a pantheon of names enshrined as heroes who embody the idea of a nation, a more democratic representation of anticolonial resistance may involve engaging with different experiences of colonialism and resistance in which more of the “rarely shared memories” can circulate.

Notes

- 1 Veronica M. Kitchen and Jennifer G. Mathers, *Heroism and Global Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 12.
- 2 João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Abrir a fábula: Questões da política do passado em Moçambique,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 105 (2015): 156.
- 3 Coelho, “Abrir a fábula.”
- 4 Coelho, “Abrir a fábula,” 158.
- 5 It is important to note that the post-independence period is marked by various programmes and policies designed to strengthen the fight against the “enemy” and, at the same time, contribute to the formation of the *New Man*, such as re-education camps and meetings with the “compromised”. On these issues see, for example, Maria Paula Meneses, “Hidden processes of reconciliation in Mozambique: the entangled histories of truth-seeking meetings held between 1975 and 1982,” *Africa Development* 41, no. 4 (2017): 153–180; Benedito Machava, “Reeducation camps, austerity, and the carceral regime in Socialist Mozambique (1974–79),” *The Journal of African History* 60, no. 3 (2019): 429–55.

- 6 On the relationship between biographical narratives and the construction of “official histories” in the context of Mozambique, see Teresa Cruz e Silva, “Memória, história e narrativa: Os desafios da escrita biográfica no contexto da luta nacionalista em Moçambique,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 133–52.
- 7 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.
- 8 The last emperor of Gaza (defeated and captured in 1885), consecrated as a national hero on 15 June 1985.
- 9 Fernando Bessa Ribeiro, “A invenção dos heróis: nação, história e discursos de identidade em Moçambique,” *Etnográfica* 9, no. 2 (2005): 257–275.
- 10 Meneses, “Xiconhoca, o inimigo.”
- 11 Meneses, “Xiconhoca, o inimigo.”
- 12 Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 51–52.
- 13 Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 54.
- 14 Jay Winter, *War Beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- 15 Winter, *War Beyond Words*.
- 16 On the question of heroism, see also Sibylle Scheipers, *Heroism and the Changing Character of War Toward Post-Heroic Warfare?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and Kitchen and Mathers, *Heroism and Global Politics*.
- 17 The decision to introduce Heroes’ Day, as in the case of other national holidays (see Note 8), was approved by the Council of Ministers via Decree-Law No 15/76 of 17 April (BR, 1982).
- 18 “Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo,” *Notícias*, February 2, 1979.
- 19 *Notícias*, “Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo.”
- 20 It is also worth noting the mural (the Praça dos Heróis Mural) on the front of the monument, filled with paintings depicting some of the “most important pages in our History”, in *Notícias*, “Monumento aos heróis erguido no Maputo,” namely illustrations of resistance to foreign domination by figures such as Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel, etc.
- 21 “Momentos altos que vivemos reforçaram a nossa determinação,” *Notícias*, February 4, 1979.
- 22 “Armed bandits” was the pejorative term normally used by FRELIMO to describe RENAMO during the so-called 16-years war, see “Liquidar bandidos armados é honrar nossos heróis,” *Notícias*, February 5, 1985.
- 23 “Aprovados Plano para 82 e Lei das Condecorações,” *Notícias*, December 15, 1981.
- 24 “As Medalhas do Povo,” *Notícias*, June 25, 1982. For a complete list of the titles, decorations, and distinctions created at the time, see *Boletim da República I Série* – no. 24, June 23, 1982.
- 25 *Notícias*, “As Medalhas do Povo.”
- 26 According to the “As Medalhas do Povo”, the “Veteran of the Mozambique Liberation Struggle” medal was awarded to “other outstanding Party activists, including Mário Machungo, João Américo Mpfumo, António Hama Thai, Guidione Ndobe, Morais Mabyeca, Matias Kapesse and Daniel Maquinasse”.
- 27 According to sources at the time, the mortal remains of Milagre Mabote, Romão Fernandes Farinha, Francisco Orlando Magumbwé, Belmiro Obadias Mulanga, José Macamo, Luis Joaquim Marra, John Issa, Tomás Nduda, Emília Dausse, Armando Tivane, António Elias Francisco Langa, Carlos Robati, and Bernabé Kajika were transferred, “Restos Mortais de 13 Heróis vão ser trasladados,” *Notícias*, September 22, 1984.
- 28 “Condecorados heróis da Luta,” *Notícias*, September 25, 1984.

- 29 “Título de ‘Herói da RPM’ atribuído a Samora Machel,” *Diário de Moçambique*, June 26, 1982.
- 30 *Notícias*, “Condecorados heróis da Luta.”
- 31 For an overview of the transmission of memories of the liberation struggle in the post-independence period see, for example, Amélia Neves de Souto, “Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo: Some Research Themes,” *Kronos* 39 (2013): 280–96. The other public holidays associated with the struggle are Independence Day (25 June), Victory Day (7 September – commemorating the signing of the Lusaka Accord), and Armed Forces Day (25 September – commemorating the day on which the struggle started).
- 32 Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 121–2.
- 33 Bruno Sena Martins, “Corpos-memórias da Guerra Colonial: os Deficientes das Forças Armadas e o ‘restolhar de asas no telhado’,” in *Geometrias da Memória*, eds. António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (Porto: Afrontamento, 2016), 305–25.
- 34 On women’s involvement in the liberation struggle in Mozambique see, for example, Harry G. West, “Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of Frelimo’s ‘Female Detachment’,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2000): 180–94; Benigna Zimba, ed., *A mulher moçambicana na luta de Libertação Nacional: Memórias do Destacamento Feminino* (Maputo: CPHLLN, 2012); Alda Saúte Saide, “As mulheres e a luta de libertação nacional,” in *História da luta de Libertação Nacional*, vol. 1, ed. Joel das Neves Tembe (Maputo: Ministérios dos Combatentes, 2014), 553–60; Maria Paula Meneses, “Women and Mass Violence in Mozambique during the Late Colonial Period,” in *The Pluriverse of Human Rights: The Diversity of Struggles for Dignity*, eds. Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Bruno Sena Martins (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 148–67.
- 35 Xaque Anisse, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
- 36 Aripunevila Sauari, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
- 37 Quenha Muikalila, interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Nangade (Mozambique), 2012.
- 38 Not found, for example, among the war disabled who fought for Portugal in the colonial war, Bruno Sena Martins, “Violência Colonial e Testemunho,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26 and Martins, “Corpos-memórias da Guerra Colonial.”
- 39 Muikalila, interview.
- 40 Sauari, interview.
- 41 Veena Das, *Life and words: violence and the descent into the ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 9.
- 42 Cf. e.g., Elias Jossias, *Entre a Colónia e a Nação: Moçambicanos Deficientes Físicos das Forças Armadas Portuguesas* (Lisbon: ISCTE, 2007); João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Antigos soldados, novos cidadãos: uma avaliação da reintegração dos ex-combatentes de Maputo,” in *Conflito e transformação social*, vol. 1, eds. Boaventura de Sousa Santos and João Carlos Trindade (Porto: Afrontamento, 2003) and Nikkie Wiegink, “The Good, the Bad, and the Awkward: The Making of War Veterans in Postindependence Mozambique,” *Conflict and Society* 5, no. 1 (2019): 150–67.
- 43 João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes,” *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 4.
- 44 Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History,” 4.
- 45 A gloss on what Michel Foucault terms “docile bodies”, referring to the strategies, disciplines, and concepts which, by means of an “anatomy-politics of the human body”, establish the body as a machine, aiming at its usefulness, economic exploitation and incorporation within systems of control, see Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 172.
- 46 Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History.”
- 47 Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773–97.
- 48 Coelho, “Abrir a fábula,” 158–59.

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