

12 The subaltern pasts of the Portuguese colonial war and the liberation struggles

Memories in search of a homeland

Bruno Sena Martins

Precarious memories

The subtitle which sets the tone for the reflections produced in this text – *memories in search of a homeland* – is inspired by the sense of abandonment I found expressed in the life stories of veterans of the colonial war/liberation struggles, with whom my research into the armed conflict began. The historical centrality of the war, in which the Portuguese armed forces confronted the liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, is underscored by the crucial role it would play in the transition to democracy, established in Portugal by the 25 Abril Revolution in 1974, and in the independence of the former colonies which had been under Portuguese rule (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe).

Between 2010 and 2013, I had the opportunity to set out on a path in search of the memories and life stories of former combatants from the Portuguese colonial war and the liberation struggles. Following talks in Portugal with the Association for the Disabled of the Armed Forces (ADFA), in 2010 I was able to establish ongoing contact in Portugal with a social group organised on the basis of the biographical scars imposed by the colonial war (impairments of various kinds and post-traumatic stress disorders). A little later, in 2012, I was engaged in fieldwork in Mozambique, where I first interviewed disabled Mozambican veterans who had fought for the Portuguese army and still had links with the Maputo branch of the ADFA. Afterwards, with the institutional support of the ACLLN,¹ I interviewed disabled FRELIMO veterans, most of whom lived in Nangade in Cabo Delgado, in a village reserved after the war to accommodate men and women who had been wounded in action, fighting against the Portuguese armed forces.²

Considering the paths and personal reflections I was able to explore within this research framework, linking war, disability and biographical reflections, it is the striking diversity of the coordinates within each individual journey which stands out, connecting the past of the front lines of battle to the lives which have survived it. However, drawing together the implications of the many different life stories, it is possible to identify memory disjunction as a common element. This disjunction occurs between, on the one hand, the crucial descriptive force of the war in defining

personal narrative and, on the other hand, a specific feeling of non-recognition in the context of social frameworks unwilling to incorporate memories of the war – depending on the context, it may refer to the non-inclusion of the war in a general sense or, more specifically, to the particular wars of the disabled veterans. It is a matter of having identified an abandonment of memories which I describe here as *precarious memories*. They are precarious not so much because they refer to facts whose truth may be questionable or because they have not been validated by historiography, but because they are constitutive of subjects whose paths and identities are not well known in their respective societies. It is important to recognise that the precarious nature of these memories is mitigated, in contextual terms, by the existence of collective veterans' organisations whose demands are associated with the inclusion of the war disabled in agendas for claims addressed to nation states. Hence, these organisations campaign for recognition of the lasting after-effects of war on a plethora of anonymous fighters, resulting in an agency that develops grammars of hospitality for pasts which, remain alienated within the societies that have emerged out of the war.

Later, as a member of the CROME³ project team, I was able to extend and densify the analysis and collection of testimonies to the memory of the colonial war and the liberation struggles. This expansion refers to the countries in which the research was carried out, with interviews being held in Portugal, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. It also concerns the diversity of the experiences and accounts of the armed conflict, involving disabled veterans, but also civilian victims of war, former prisoners of war and former combatants in the broader sense, speaking from different positions of power and intervening in different arenas within their societies as “memory agents”.⁴ This led to the belief that a critical perspective informed by the experiences of the war disabled enables us to analyse, on the one hand, the specific nature of the lived experience and the collective mobilisations defined by an “excess of memory” or an “irredeemable memory”.⁵ These memories are linked to what we will call here an *ontological injunction*. However, I would argue that this critical perspective also sheds light on the way in which the experience of the colonial war and the liberation struggles leads us to a whole range of subalternised memories that are inscribed in a discursive marginality defined by memories which are rarely shared and difficult to share. These memories are linked to what we will call here the *political injunction*. In this sense, the war-disability nexus represents a particular case of violent pasts that maintain a position of exteriority and/or subalternity in relation to the dominant public representations of the war.

I believe it is possible to cross-reference subaltern memories from different locations involved in the colonial war far beyond any symmetry that disregards the lasting iniquities supported by colonialism. To a certain extent, the cross-referencing of memories without a homeland proposed here seeks to counter a Eurocentric description of the past which renders colonial violence and the forms of resistance which confronted it invisible. In any case, recognising the paths and dimensions of experience that are linked to these rarely shared memories of

war necessarily implies a situated analysis of representations which have been enshrined as dominant in each context.

Silencing and glorification

The war was an “intertwined” phenomenon to the extent that it involved interconnections of various kinds between movements and nations in different continents, giving rise to transnational alliances and clashes experienced at close quarters on the front lines of battle. However, the memories of war summoned up in the writing of each nation state involved separate processes. We are therefore faced with what Edward Said termed “discrepant experiences”,⁶ readings and interpretative frameworks that engender histories and social contexts that do not communicate with each other. To paraphrase Said, with reference to the colonial war/liberation wars, we are faced with the force of what we would call *discrepant memories*. Discrepant memories in the sense that they were separated by the rigours of the national imagination and by the self-referential nature of Eurocentrism, thus engendering political memories that resist any juxtaposition or confrontation with viewpoints that have the potential to create new knowledge and perspectives.

Transcending discrepant memories, understood here on the basis of Said’s work, leads us to some relevant theorisation in the field of memory studies. It concerns a set of proposals that aim to recognise and foster porosities and explorations of meanings involving, on the one hand, different political communities and also – perhaps to a lesser extent – overcoming a Eurocentrism which, within memory studies, tends to produce hegemonic repertoires associated with the Holocaust and the experience of Europe and the global North. Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, for example, link their proposed concept of “mnemonic solidarity”⁷ to a conceptual genealogy which recognises the validity of concepts, such as “multidirectional memory”,⁸ transcultural memory or “travelling memory”.⁹ In the words of the authors:

Acknowledging the agency and eliciting the voices of subaltern and marginalized historical actors, irrespective of where they were positioned in moments of historical trauma (whether as “victims,” “perpetrators,” or “bystanders”), are essential to the democratization of both narratives and resources that is part of the mnemonic solidarity.¹⁰

Said, for his part, focusing on the “discrepant power established by imperialism and prolonged in the colonial encounter”, had already proposed the notion of “intertwined histories”,¹¹ an epistemological and methodological proposal for re-engaging with pasts by addressing the way in which colonialism constituted metropolitan societies and colonial societies as “discrepant but related entities”¹²:

If I have insisted on integration and connections between the past and the present, between imperializer and imperialized, between culture and imperialism, I have done so not to level or reduce differences, but rather to convey

a more urgent sense of the interdependence between things. So vast and yet so detailed is imperialism as an experience with crucial cultural dimensions, that we must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future.¹³

In this sense, I consider it important to discuss subaltern or non-communicating enunciations in the light of the statement by Frantz Fanon, which is as controversial as it is famous, namely that “decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon”.¹⁴ The violence-decolonisation nexus would certainly seem apt to account for the repercussions of the prolonged conflict between the Portuguese armed forces and the African liberation movements between 1961 and 1974. Rather than a celebration of violence, Fanon’s affirmation seeks to highlight what the author understood to be an inevitability determined by various orders of reason. The first concerns the idea that colonialism is established through a form of violence that is understood to be primordial, or violence in its pure state, whose eradication is unthinkable without another form of violence to counter it. Secondly, it was an inevitability defined by the disruptive nature of a radical transformation from a reality governed by colonizers to a new order governed by the colonised: “decolonization is quite simply the substitution of one species of mankind by another”.¹⁵

Thirdly, it stems from the potentially disruptive legacies which the colonial order leaves behind for the colonised populations. These legacies result from the wounds inflicted by the dehumanisation of racism, from the internalised inferiority, convincingly and violently reiterated by the colonial system – whose correlate may be the desire to emulate European representations and models.¹⁶ These disruptive legacies also result from the subaltern inscription of new national realities (“underdeveloped countries”) within a capitalist economy that favours co-opting the local bourgeoisie: the “native bourgeoisie which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners”.¹⁷

Fourthly, the inevitability of violent decolonisation results from dispossession and the reluctance to accept loss which decolonisation imposes on *colonists* and their countries of origin: “the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another ‘species’ of men and women: the colonizers”. Fanon’s understanding of decolonisation as a violent process is expressed as the evidence of someone who knew the violence of a colonial system, had fought in the anticolonial struggle and understood the roots of the violent tensions that would survive the colonial occupation. However, it is crucial to interpret uprisings that originate in the colonial order on the basis of the contexts and historical realities that define the terms of the different decolonisations. As Fanon himself argued:

Decolonization, we know, is an historical process: In other words, it can only be understood, it can only find its significance and become self-coherent

insofar as we can discern the history-making movement which gives it form and substance.¹⁸

The historical movement which in this case led to Portuguese decolonisation in Africa assumed form and substance as the liberation wars waged against the intransigence of the *Estado Novo*. In fact, the impact of the liberation struggles defines the successive presents of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé e Príncipe and Mozambique to such a great extent that, long after they became independent, the social and political realities of these post-colonial states cannot be minimally understood without the considering the imprints left by the armed insurgence. In the same way, the fact that the end of Portuguese colonialism materialised in the form of a long war that mobilised significant resources and contingents of troops makes the colonial war a singular case study in how the emergence of a post-imperial nation, coinciding with the establishment of a democratic regime, was generated from a colonial war. In moving from the past to the different presents, the colonial war and the liberation struggles, crucial as they were to the decolonisation process, the independence of the African countries and the transition to democracy in Portugal, founded new political realities in the six-nation states by means of armed violence. In moving from these different presents to the past, it is within the political communities defined by these states that the grammars of intelligibility, social solidarity and conflict of the violence of war are structured. In other words, the violence of decolonisation defined the frameworks of meaning from which the reverberating memories of this violence are constituted and apprehended.

It is beyond the scope of this text to review the processes involved in constructing a dominant public memory of the war in each of the national contexts. However, in order to consider the dissonant reverberations of the colonial war and the liberation struggles, whether as an ontological or a political injunction, it would appear to me fundamental to establish a dialogue with the contraposition forged elsewhere between the “politics of silence” and the “politics of exaltation”.¹⁹ Firstly, in Portugal, this is a distinction which captures a dominant memory of the past which, almost 50 years after the end of the war, has never granted colonial war a place in the public memory that reflects its social and political impact. Secondly, it analyses the way in which the different representations of the liberation struggle in the African countries challenge the glorification of the war as a constituent element in the founding narrative of the nation states that emerged from the anticolonial independence.

Referring to the “politics of silence” to explain the place of the colonial war in the Portuguese public memory does not mean assuming that the subject of social representations of the past has been ignored. This would represent a profoundly uninformed perspective on the different incursions of the legacy of war within Portuguese society, via political collectives organised around the issue of the war (such as the aforementioned case of the ADFA), the social spaces run by groups of former combatants, the vast *monumentalia* constructed throughout the country to

pay tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the war, the production of literary narratives, important works of journalism, and the recent public controversies that have been gaining visibility.²⁰ Nevertheless, acknowledging the different ways in which the colonial war has erupted into Portuguese society does not in any sense undermine the belief that its memory has failed to find effective public validation within the dominant representations that have defined the democratic and post-imperial reconstruction of Portuguese society. As Jay Winter observes, one of the ways of producing a silence on the past is the mere absence of any performativity on the part of nations in relation to events that are considered inglorious or out of step with their cherished self-representations:

[c]ommemoration is the collective representation of a shared view of a past worth recalling. As such, it is performative; it selects elements of a narrative and necessarily suppresses other sides of the story. It is difficult for any nation to commemorate inglorious events or acts committed in its name. Military disasters and war crimes fall into this category.²¹

In Portugal, the contrast between the unavoidable social and historical impact of the war and its limited representation is evident from the outset in the disbelief and indignation reported by many former combatants who have experienced the ghostly status of the war within Portuguese society. As a very specific framework within the vast experience of the former combatants, my work in Portugal with the DFA (the disabled of the armed forces) has made the “loneliness of memory” very clear. Undoubtedly intensified by the scars of physical disability or memories of trauma, the post-war experience of the DFA presents us with an obvious struggle against the unsustainable individualisation of the memory of war. It involves continuous resistance, at times operating through a strategic distancing in search of possible forgetfulness compatible with a return to everyday life away from the front, and at other times voicing demands that expose the inescapable permanence of wounds that remain unhealed. In recent times the memory work undertaken by the DFA in recording the colonial war has been echoed in other enunciations that have increasingly been challenging the permeability of the “politics of silence”. I am referring here in particular to the way in which the relationship between forms of racism, colonial legacies and the social struggles of racially subalternised populations is being included in the postcolonial debate on a transnational level, with a significant increase in the visible mobilisation of black and Afro-descendent peoples’ organisations in Portugal to denounce colonialism and colonial violence.

The colonial war still constitutes what I would call a “rarely shared memory” in Portugal, kept alive through subaltern memorialisations that include the private spaces of personal and family memories, veterans’ organisations, works of art and academic research, journalism and occasional public controversies. As detailed elsewhere,²² the deep reasons within Portuguese society for the systemic denial of the colonial war are linked to the hegemonic narratives of exaltation associated with the construction of the Portuguese national identity,²³ the way in which the war defined the conditions and the protagonists in the transition to democracy, and

the hegemony of a Eurocentrism common to nations that were formerly metropolises, which accommodates the benign idea of a “civilisational Europe” that is completely irreconcilable with full recognition of the overseas violence of European colonialism.

For its part, the “politics of exaltation” refers to the way in which the liberation struggles, in the form of war and clandestine resistance, constitute the key element in the founding narratives of the nation states of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe. In these contexts, the liberation struggles were crucial in terms of the creation of the independent nation states formed from the Portuguese colonies²⁴ and also in conferring political power on the nationalist movements, as representatives of the people, that had ensured their legitimacy through the anticolonial struggle: the MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in Angola; FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) in Mozambique; the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)²⁵ in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau; the MLSTP (Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe).²⁶ In referring earlier to the frameworks of meaning within which the violence of war unfolds, it is important to recognise, from the outset, the profound implications of the fact that the anticolonial struggle was a nationalist struggle on behalf of nation states. The founding of nation states whose independence had been affirmed in opposition to colonial rule produces a context defined by the colonial legacy, which not only results in the form of the modern state, but also the way in which this political formation establishes particular shared meanings and practises within the political community: borders, the flag, the anthem, legislation, political and administrative hierarchies, languages and identities. As Mahmood Mamdani observes:

On the one hand, the modern state enforces particular group identities through its legal project; on the other, it gives depth to these same identities through a history-writing project. It is by giving group identities both a past and a future that the modern state tries to stand up to time.²⁷

The anticolonial liberation movements defined nationalist agendas in opposition to Portuguese colonial rule and identified the first principle of political legitimacy within the new nation states in the anticolonial struggle. Although this legitimacy was initially claimed within the framework of the single-party systems and mobilisation in the context of civil war (in the case of Angola and Mozambique), later, under the multiparty system and economic liberalisation, the anticolonial struggle still provided crucial political capital for the parties that had emerged from the liberation movements. Despite political disputes over the status of the liberation struggle, whether involving claims related to the true heroes of the struggle or the inclusion of other key symbols of legitimacy,²⁸ or even in confronting post-colonial disenchantment in the face of the hardships of present-day life, the anticolonial fight remained central in the different contexts, as an essential mainstay of the national narrative. Hence, the recapitulation of the many episodes from the liberation wars and the evocation of the forms of violence that survived them necessarily

challenge the closure produced by the public memory via the “grand narrative” of the liberation struggle. As João Paulo Borges Coelho observes, in relation to the situation in Mozambique:

when the version gains enough voice to become a grand narrative or public memory for the nation, it starts to exert great pressure and is not restricted to subaltern (individual, community, etc.) memories. We can find various examples of disturbances to the coexistence between subaltern memories and the political memory, including when former combatants unintentionally contradict the canonical narrative.²⁹

The “politics of exaltation” of the liberation struggle constitutes a different form of denial from the one produced by the “politics of silence” previously analysed. On the one hand, this is because the liberation struggles are nowadays widely recognised in the international arena as a worthy cause, a “just war” for the self-determination of the African peoples waged against the structures of colonialism and racism. On the other hand, since there is no social embargo or organised dememorisation of the war, it is also glorified and invoked exhaustively in the commemorative symbology of the nation and the pantheons of national heroes. It may be said that the “politics of exaltation” creates a community memory that selectively invites certain kinds of violence³⁰ into the heart of the national liberation narrative, while relegating others to the status of mere threats, improbabilities or insignificant events.

Memorial subalternity and the ontological injunction

Martinho Mendes³¹ was born on 20 August 1960 in the Cacheu region of Guinea-Bissau. His life first collided with the colonial war/liberation struggle in 1967 when the “*tabanca*” (village) where he lived was abandoned by his family and the rest of the community. He went to live in the “*zona das matas*” (forest), an area less exposed to clashes between the troops and the PAIGC guerrillas. He recalls that one morning in 1969 he heard the sound of Portuguese planes and the family began to fear an attack, which soon materialised. He remembers the exact place where he was lying in the flimsy straw-roofed house he lived in when the shooting began, and where his father was sitting, and his stepmother, two brothers and two sisters. His father was hit in the chest and one of his brothers in the head. They both died immediately. Another brother was shot in the arm and it was only when Martinho stood up that he realised he had been hit in the leg. He was rescued by PAIGC guerrillas who took them to the “*barracas*” (barracks) and provided first aid. He was then taken on a long journey to Senegal, always travelling by night and arriving there two weeks later.

In Senegal, he received treatment at the PAIGC medical centre in Ziguinchor, where his leg was amputated. One year later he was taken to Conakry (in Guinea-Conakry), where the PAIGC base was located. He lived in a home in Conakry and

remembers the last time he saw Amílcar Cabral,³² in 1972, just before he was sent to study in Cuba, where he remained for 15 years and graduated with a degree in economics. He returned to Guinea in 1987 where, as one of the qualified cadres trained by the PAIGC, he was given a position in the Guinean civil service. In 1996 he founded the Guinea-Bissau Association of Disabled Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle (ADELLIN – *Associação dos Deficientes da Luta da Libertação Nacional*), which had its headquarters in Martinho Mendes' own house. The association, inspired and supported by the ADFA in Portugal, was created with the aim of forging international links that would enable its members to obtain material support, namely prostheses for amputees.

Martinho's narrative combines several elements that I consider significant to reflections on subaltern memories of the war. Firstly, there is the deeply personal nature of the memories he entrusted to us, which are difficult to convey. Certain experiences are difficult to share because they affect the body-memory in such disturbing ways that they can only be communicated tentatively. Martinho told us that he cried every night in Conakry because he had lost his father and brother and had to live in a home without his family, conveying only a minute notion of the devastating impact of this loss. In the same way, it is not easy to convey the physical pain, functional difficulties and exclusions resulting from having a leg amputated at the age of nine. Before the interview, which took place in his house, he showed us his vast collection of old prostheses, providing a glimpse of how the war has made itself corporeally present throughout his life.

Secondly, the fact that Martinho was not a former combatant brings us closer to a perspective on subaltern or rarely shared memories, given that it draws attention to the many forms of violence associated with the war which affected anonymous civilian populations in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Civilian victims constitute a group which is absent from the narratives of the anticolonial struggle (with the possible exception of the victims of the massacres included in the narrative). Thirdly, there is the way in which the war made Martinho a witness to the violence directed against others. Even if he had not been hit, as he first thought, it may be supposed that the fact that he had witnessed the very violent deaths of members of his family would have been enough to ensure that the experience of war would remain with him for life, in terms that do not translate easily into a political memory of the nation. The impact of violence against others affects many former combatants and civilians who, although not wounded themselves or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, are burdened with aspects of this irredeemable memory.

The fact that Martinho Mendes founded an association that brings together people who were wounded in the war reveals the strong links between war imprinted in biography and the politics of memory as the imperative that gives meaning to experiences that have little representation in the public memory. Thus, Martinho's narrative resonates with many of the stories I gathered from disabled Portuguese veterans, via the ADFA. As I have been able to analyse, the DFA still maintain a biographical link to the war through the impairments inscribed in their bodies and present in the terrors and shock, the wheelchairs, the prosthetic arms and legs, the white canes, the ringing in the ears and the incessant pain. He also maintains

a political link with the organisation that was being created prior to 1974 at the Lisbon Military Hospital and which, in campaigning for compensation for its members, is the organised political voice within Portuguese democracy that has long challenged the “politics of silence” surrounding the colonial war.

At one point in his life story, Martinho Mendes told us how he and other Guineans in the student residence in Cuba were devastated to hear the news of the assassination of Amílcar Cabral. This echoes an interview with Pedro Martins³³ in which he gave an account of how he and other prisoners incarcerated in the Tarrafal concentration camp on the island of Santiago in Cape Verde spread the news that saddened them all: “They [the guards] came to give us the news to crush us. (...) Amílcar Cabral was the only leader we knew and trusted”.³⁴ Pedro Martins was taken prisoner at the age of 19 and was released after 25 April, having spent four years in jail without trial. The news of the death of Amílcar Cabral, added to the very strong memories of the privations and violence of prison life, calls on us to consider the multiple geographies and forms of militancy far away from the front line, where the agonies of war were experienced and accumulated.

On the same day that we interviewed Martinho Mendes in his home, we also interviewed three more members of ADELLIN. One of them was Makemba Sila, who was born in the Tite region in 1968. Her impairment is the result of shrapnel that lodged in her foot during the course of a bombing raid, when she was trying to flee the “*tabanca*” to seek refuge in the PAIGC “*barracas*”. The story of Makemba Sia alerts us to a very strong element of subalternity associated with the experiences of women during the war. As well as the female guerrillas, civilian victims of the violence of war, and providers of essential logistical support for the war effort, women were also indirectly affected by the mobilisation of their husbands, sons and fathers. The case of Luísa Eduarda Mulhovo³⁵ provides a particularly harrowing example of this. Her Mozambican husband had been recruited locally to fight for the Portuguese armed forces in the war in Mozambique and been wounded.³⁶ In order to claim his DFA pension he had to travel to Portugal, where he died before the process was completed. Luísa continues to fight to ensure that the pension her husband had been claiming will remain for their children and grandchildren. The death of her husband plunged the family into a situation of deep economic vulnerability. This is one example of how, so many decades after the war ended, abandonment still exists, created in the search for compensation for wartime damages.

We have embarked on a cross-referencing of precarious memories instigated by the way in which ontological damage very often acts as a catalyst for the subaltern agents of war memories. These subaltern agents often intervene to counter a selective performativity of the past. We are dealing with minority discourses, in a similar sense to the way in which Bhaba describes them here:

Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture – and the people – as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life. Now there is no reason to believe that such marks of difference cannot inscribe a

‘history’ of the people or become the gathering points of political solidarity. They will not, however, celebrate the monumentality of historicist memory, the sociological totality of society, or the homogeneity of cultural experience.

Minority discourses expressed through memories without a homeland have an obvious potential to open up the past to communities in which the endlessly recapitulated violence can be more easily accommodated. Whether discussing the “politics of silence” or the “politics of exaltation”, we recognise the massive amount of war experiences that find no place in national political memories and bring us closer to the challenge embodied in the question presented by Homi Bhaba: “How does one encounter the past as an anteriority that continually introduces an otherness or alterity into the present?” A greater porosity of national narratives can enable a democratisation of the present by recognising the wide-ranging repercussions of war that concern subjects, discourses and aspects of experiences that cannot be accommodated within the monumentality of a national culture.

In a radio broadcast to the Portuguese people in 1966, Amílcar Cabral recalled the existence of a common struggle to be waged by different peoples against the Portuguese *Estado Novo* regime:

We consider that ours is a common struggle. By fighting in Cape Verde, in Guinea and in other Portuguese colonies we are making a serious contribution to the development of your struggle. And as your struggle develops, it will help us to speedily defeat these tremendous enemies of our peoples who are the Portuguese colonial fascists.³⁷

Almost five decades after the end of the war which led to independence for the African countries and the establishment of a democratic regime in Portugal, the challenge of summoning the voices that convey the memory of war and colonial violence revives Cabral’s exhortation, directing it towards another common struggle that also appears to make perfect sense: the postcolonial struggle against the structures of Eurocentrism and the dememorisation organised within each nation state.

Notes

- 1 Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle – Mozambique.
- 2 See Chapter 3 in this book.
- 3 *Crossed Memories, Politics of Silence: The Colonial-Liberation Wars in Postcolonial Time (2017–2023)*, coordinated by Miguel Cardina.
- 4 Jay Winter, “The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity,” in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 25.
- 5 Bruno Sena Martins, “Violência Colonial e Testemunho,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26.
- 6 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 31–42.

- 7 Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, "Introduction: Mnemonic Solidarity – Global Interventions," in *Mnemonic Solidarity: Global Interventions* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
- 8 Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
- 9 Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 4–18.
- 10 Lim and Rosenhaft, "Introduction," 11.
- 11 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.
- 12 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 278.
- 13 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 61.
- 14 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.
- 15 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1.
- 16 In the words of Fanon, "Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe". Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 312.
- 17 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 153.
- 18 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2.
- 19 Miguel Cardina and Bruno Sena Martins, "Memorias cruzadas de la guerra colonial portuguesa y las luchas de liberación africanas: del imperio a los estados poscoloniales," *Endoxa* 44 (2019): 113–34.
- 20 See Chapter 1 of this book.
- 21 Jay Winter, "The Performance of the Past," 20.
- 22 Cardina and Martins, "Memorias Cruzadas."
- 23 In some ways, the "politics of silence" associated with the colonial war is related to the power of the politics of exaltation associated with the Discoveries and the Lusotropicalist narrative of an intercontinental nation.
- 24 Known as the Overseas Provinces by the Portuguese administration from 1951.
- 25 From 1980, following the split between the branches in the two countries, in Cape Verde the PAIGC became known as the PAICV.
- 26 The MLSTP is a special case, as it was not directly involved in the armed struggle against the Portuguese armed forces.
- 27 Mahmood Mamdani, "Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa," in *War and Peace in the 20th Century and Beyond*, eds. Geir Lundestad and Olav Njolstad (River Edge: World Scientific, 2002).
- 28 For an informative case study on the subject, see: Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde: A Mnemohistory* (New York and London: Routledge, 2022).
- 29 João Paulo Borges Coelho, "Abrir a Fábula: Questões Da Política Do Passado Em Moçambique," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 105 (2015): 153–66.
- 30 Referring, of course, to what Fanon terms "counterviolence," which confronts colonial violence, but also to the colonial violence heavily emphasised, in almost all contexts, in the public visibility of the "founding massacres".
- 31 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins and Diana Andringa, Bissau (Guinea-Bissau), September 2018.
- 32 The founder and leader of the PAIGC, assassinated on 20 January 1973.
- 33 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins, Praia (Cape Verde), January 2020.
- 34 Idem.
- 35 Interview by Bruno Sena Martins and Miguel Cardina, Maputo (Mozambique), April 2022.
- 36 As Carlos Matos Gomes notes, at the end of the colonial war, "around 83,000 of the approximately 170,000 men serving in the Portuguese forces in the three theatres of war had been recruited locally, representing approximately 48%" of the total – Carlos de

- Matos Gomes, “A africanização na guerra colonial e as suas sequelas. Tropas locais – os vilões nos ventos da história,” in *As Guerras De Libertação E Os Sonhos Coloniais: Alianças Secretas, Mapas Imaginados*, eds. Maria Paula Meneses and Bruno Sena Martins (Coimbra: Almedina, 2013), 127.
- 37 Message broadcast by the Portuguese Resistance radio station “A voz da liberdade” in Algiers (Algeria), 2 July 1966. Printed in Amílcar Cabral, *A Luta Criou Raízes* (Praia: Fundação Amílcar Cabral, 2018), 198.

Bibliography

- Cardina, Miguel, and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues. *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde: A Mnemohistory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022.
- Cardina, Miguel, and Bruno Sena Martins. “Memorias cruzadas de la guerra colonial portuguesa y las luchas de liberación africanas: del imperio a los estados poscoloniales.” *Endoxa* 44 (2019): 113–34.
- Coelho, João Paulo Borges. “Abrir a Fábula: Questões Da Política Do Passado Em Moçambique.” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 105 (2015): 153–66.
- Erlil, Astrid. “Travelling Memory.” *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 4–18.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Gomes, Carlos de Matos. “A africanização na guerra colonial e as suas sequelas. Tropas locais – os vilões nos ventos da história.” In *As Guerras De Libertação e Os Sonhos Coloniais: Alianças Secretas, Mapas Imaginados*, edited by Maria Paula Meneses and Bruno Sena Martins, 123–41. Coimbra: Almedina, 2013.
- Lim, Jie-Hyun, and Eve Rosenhaft. “Introduction: Mnemonic Solidarity – Global Interventions.” In *Mnemonic Solidarity: Global Interventions*, edited by Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, 1–13. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. “Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa.” In *War and Peace in the 20th Century and Beyond*, edited by Geir Lundestad and Olav Njolstad, 71–99. River Edge: World Scientific, 2002.
- Martins, Bruno Sena. “Violência Colonial e Testemunho.” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 105–26.
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Winter, Jay. “Introduction. The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity.” In *Performing the Past. Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, edited by Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter, 11–32. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010.