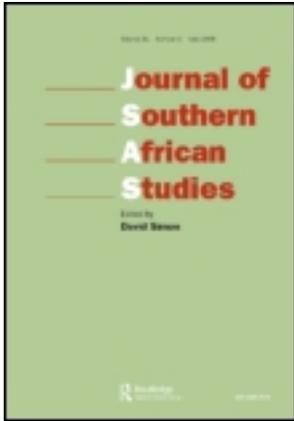


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### Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique

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# *Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique*

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*The role of violence in sustaining the political projects of state ruling elites in Mozambique and, more broadly, sub-Saharan Africa, remains under researched. In Mozambique, many of the authors of the literature produced in the 1980s avoided writing about the issue of Frelimo's use of violence and the numbers and identities of the victims. This article aims to fill this gap. It focuses on the continuities in Frelimo's anti-colonial and post-independence violent trajectories, and the party's efforts to depart from the practices of the preceding regime and eradicate alleged enemies from society. In the early period of independence, Frelimo depended on the politics of memory as well as on mobilisation of Mozambicans through and to violence, transitional and revolutionary justice. This culminated in 1982 with the realisation of a week-long, complex political event known as the 'Meeting of the Compromised', under the leadership of the late Samora Machel. By examining Machel's behaviour at this meeting and the reactions of some of those who were compromised, this article reveals the political ambivalences of Frelimo's authority in postcolonial Mozambique, in that violence both enabled the Frelimo elite to rule officially but also seriously endangered their political project and brought great suffering to the people. These contradictions helped to show the fractures and increasing disarray of Frelimo's revolutionary project and fostered Machel's own political and moral collapse.*

## Introduction

From the outset, the late Marshal Samora Machel defined the 'Meeting of the Compromised' as 'a political meeting' in that it was related 'in a particularly intensive way to the interests of the community'.<sup>1</sup> Its importance was demonstrated by the presence of high-ranking Frelimo party-state officials. As the meeting unfolded, the Frelimo officials, well dressed and clean shaven, remained seated quietly, content to watch Machel performing. But during one of these instances, while Machel was interrogating a participant called ARS, unexpectedly Machel disclosed how Frelimo uses violence to rule Mozambique. After some questions Machel, who thought that ARS was trying to delay admitting guilt, tried to coerce him to talk. He said, '[Y]ou do not manage to talk; maybe in private, but in private we are violent. We talk many languages – languages, are you hearing? Please talk here. This is where we talk the language of human love, of respect for the person, respect for the person. Talk please. Don't force us to use many languages'.<sup>2</sup>

Machel did not disclose whether the private spaces were within or without the party-state structures, whether the party-state bureaucracy kept records of those that had fallen prey to the multiple languages of violence, or whether he as a statesman personally used these manifold languages. Despite the importance of the post-independence transitional initiative in dealing with the legacies of colonialism, which culminated in the week-long meeting of the

1 O. Kirchheimer, *Political Justice* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 25.

2 S. Machel, *Reunião dos Comprometidos* (RC), day 1. Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM).

compromised in 1982, this political process has received scant attention from scholars of contemporary Mozambican politics. The few existing accounts that discuss the meeting of the compromised are problematic: some exaggerate and distort what happened,<sup>3</sup> while others provide superficial coverage.<sup>4</sup> A documentary, which also dealt with this meeting, entitled 'Mozambique or a Treatment for Traitors' is incomplete.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike many of the violent actions perpetrated throughout the country by Frelimo's low-ranking officials,<sup>6</sup> this meeting was led entirely by Machel who interrogated the compromised about their past colonial affiliations. Perusing Machel's performance and some of the contingent reactions of the compromised offers possibilities 'to espy alternatives'<sup>7</sup> vis-à-vis the early mainstream literature on Frelimo and Machel during and after the anticolonial struggle. In so doing, 'acts of human agency' can be represented, such that a world is conceived in which 'people do things' rather than one in which 'things happen to people'.<sup>8</sup> Many of the authors writing in the 1980s focused principally on the Marxist-Leninist aspects of Frelimo's policies,<sup>9</sup> and remained silent about the importance of violence for Frelimo in sustaining these policies and the numbers and identities of their victims. These authors had the tendency 'to reiterate uncritically official historiography'<sup>10</sup> and to represent violence as something that happened to Frelimo. Authors who focused on how Frelimo spread violence were the exception, although they said less about Machel's own violent performances.<sup>11</sup> Others critically analysed the contradictions of Frelimo's socialist rural development plans.<sup>12</sup> This article fills a gap in the literature. Following approaches that seriously explore 'the actual behaviour of leaders and other political authors',<sup>13</sup> examine 'the meaning and legacies of violence'<sup>14</sup> in Africa, and discuss Frelimo's use of violence before and after independence,<sup>15</sup> this article focuses on Frelimo's transitional strategy to address the legacies of the Portuguese colonial regime. It is argued here that Frelimo's use of violence can partly be interpreted as a 'hegemonic search',<sup>16</sup> in that it attempted to establish a radical discontinuity with the colonial regime by eradicating alleged enemies from society and imposing a national revolutionary consciousness. A comprehensive account of Frelimo and Machel's violence indicates that sometimes violence was enacted without purpose, and this created a serious moral

3 I. Christie, *Samora Machel: A Biography* (London, Zed Press, 1989); J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London, Zed Books, 1984).

4 J. Saul (ed.), *A Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1985); J. Coelho, 'Da Violência Colonial Ordenada à Ordem Pós-Colonial Violenta', *Lusotopie* (2003), pp. 175–93.

5 W. Louwrier and I. Bertels, *Mozambique or Treatment for Traitors* (documentary, without a date).

6 T. Henriksen, *Mozambique: A History* (London, Rex Collings, 1978).

7 E. Cabral de Mello, *O Negócio do Brasil: Portugal, os Países Baixos e o Nordeste, 1641–1669* (Rio de Janeiro, Topbooks Editora, 2003), p. 15.

8 H. White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 10.

9 M. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London, Hurst & Company, 1995); J. Saul, *Socialist Ideology and the Struggle for Southern Africa* (Trenton, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1990); A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Gower, Westview Press, 1983); B. Munslow, *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary* (London, Zed Books, 1985).

10 A. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa* (Oxford, Routledge, 2006), p. 62; A. Bragança and J. Depelchin, 'Da idealização da Frelimo à compreensão da história de Moçambique', *Estudos Moçambicanos* 5/6 (1986), pp. 29–52.

11 Henriksen, 'Mozambique', 1978; J. Leguèbe, 'Mozambique Under Frelimo Rule', in W. Veenhoven and W. Ewing (eds), *Case Studies on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 3–28.

12 L. Vail and L. White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique* (London, Heinemann, 1980).

13 P. Chabal and J-P. Daloz, *Africa Works* (Oxford, James Curry, 1999), p. 31.

14 J. Alexander, J. McGregor, and T. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland* (Oxford, James Curry, 2000), p. 181.

15 J. Cabrita, *Mozambique: The Tortuous Road to Democracy* (New York, Palgrave, 2000); B. Ncomo, *Uria Simango* (Maputo, Edições Novafrica, 2003).

16 J. Bayart, 'Hégémonie et coercion en Afrique sub-saharienne', *Politique Africaine*, 110 (2008), pp. 123–52.

conundrum in which 'the will to power' existed in a disturbing tension with 'the will to justice'.<sup>17</sup> The overall use of violence ended up reproducing the same ills and perils that the revolution wanted to eradicate. This contradiction raises questions about the moral legitimacy of Frelimo and Machel's political practices, which ultimately contributed to Machel's own alienation and the disarray of Frelimo's socialist project.

The main arguments of this article were developed on the basis of personal transcriptions of many hours of recorded audio and video-taped proceedings of the meeting.<sup>18</sup> I also analysed magazines and newspapers that reported on violent events prior to and after independence, and official Frelimo party documents, Machel's public speeches, and the speeches of Frelimo government officials. The article also draws on interviews I conducted in 2003 and 2009 with political figures who participated in this meeting and individuals who survived violence perpetrated by Frelimo in the postcolonial period.

## Violence in African Nation-building Projects

As history is 'virtually continuous and discontinuous',<sup>19</sup> there are continuities in the use of violence from the colonial projects of exploitation to the establishment of national liberation movements and postcolonial attempts to create new political communities.<sup>20</sup> Despite the centrality of violence, 'the paradox is that there is a deficit of scientific reflection in relation to the "coercive fabrics of politics"'.<sup>21</sup> It was only in the late 1980s, with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new democratic regimes in Africa, that systematic research was developed to understand the dynamics of violence perpetrated by liberation movements and postcolonial revolutionary parties. For instance, Abbink's analysis of the actions of the Red Terror in Ethiopia drew on the notion of 'theatrics of violence',<sup>22</sup> to explore publicly staged and performed violent acts, partly explained by a 'hegemonic search'.<sup>23</sup>

The idea of a 'theatrics of violence' suggests the existence of 'repertoires of coercion',<sup>24</sup> used by local and national political elites against real or virtual political dissidents, often labelled as 'people's enemies'. In colonial and postcolonial contexts, alleged 'enemies' were exposed to direct physical violence through acts of torture, forced confessions of treason and guilt, illicit political orders for imprisonment, deportation to labour camps or were subjected to the death penalty or extra-judicial executions.<sup>25</sup> The repertoires of violence also included what Judith Butler calls 'excitable speech', in her analysis of the power of hate speech to injure the addressees.<sup>26</sup> Butler suggests that certain kinds of speech 'can act in ways that parallel the infliction of physical pain and injury', to the extent that language can be conceived as carrying the power to both sustain the body but also threaten its existence.<sup>27</sup> Paying attention to the

17 A. Camus, *The Rebel* (New York, Vintage International, 1991 [1956]), p. 225.

18 These tapes were made available by the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), library of the Assembleia da República (AR), archives of Rádio Moçambique (RM) and Televisão de Moçambique (TVM) in Maputo.

19 P. Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2007 [1955]), p. 38.

20 M. Mamdani, 'Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa', *Identity, Culture and Politics*, 3, 2 (2002), pp. 1–24; Bayart, 'Hégémonie et coercion'.

21 Bayart, 'Hégémonie et coercion', p. 133.

22 J. Abbink, 'Transformations of Violence in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia: Cultural Roots, Political Conjectures', *Focaal*, 25, (1995), p. 67.

23 Bayart, 'Hégémonie et coercion'.

24 *Ibid.*

25 V. Igreja, 'Testimonies of Suffering and Recasting the Meanings of Memories of Violence in Postwar Mozambique', in L. Kapteijns and A. Richters (eds), *Mediations of Violence in Africa: Fashioning New Futures from Contested Pasts* (Leiden, Brill, 2010), pp. 141–72.

26 Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York, Routledge, 1997).

27 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, pp. 4–5.

contents of ‘excitable speech’ sheds further light on the disjunctures between Machel’s violence in his written and improvised speeches. In the light of continuities with colonial violence, this analysis of violent political performances after independence reveals the ambivalences of Frelimo ruling elites towards the postcolonial project of nation-building.

Such ‘theatrics of violence’ by African national ruling elites generated destructive conflicts. In the aftermath of Angola’s independence in 1975, there were political and ideological conflicts and struggles for political control within the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA),<sup>28</sup> culminating in violent attempts to overthrow the MPLA party-state in May 1977. The MPLA’s response consisted of ‘a bloody repression’ in which ‘hundreds of people’, real or virtual participants in the coup attempt ‘were executed all over the country’.<sup>29</sup> In postcolonial Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe’s ZANU(PF) cast unsettled groups of Ndebele ex-Zipra guerrillas as ‘dissidents’, culminating in a ‘reign of terror’ against ex-Zipra guerrillas and the political party ZAPU;<sup>30</sup> the Fifth Brigade of the Zimbabwean National Army ‘carried out a grotesquely violent campaign’ in which a number of individuals ‘believed to have aided or abetted dissidents, but particularly former Zipra combatants... were tortured and sometimes killed’.<sup>31</sup> There are plenty more examples of violent postcolonial state responses (e.g. Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Malawi, etc.) which were linked either to political and ethnic rivalries fostered by colonial regimes, or to postcolonial ideological power struggles.<sup>32</sup> What these cases share is the consistency of resistance of ‘dissidents’ vis-à-vis postcolonial state elites’ ‘hegemonic search’, whilst the heads of state in these countries often worked behind the scenes. These cases differ from the postcolonial transition process in Mozambique, I argue, in that the head of the state, Samora Machel, was centre stage in performing violence.

## Violence Prior to Independence in Mozambique

The various scholars writing about Mozambique in the 1980s demonstrated little interest in Frelimo’s use of violence.<sup>33</sup> Even when scholars claimed to have ‘firm first-hand experience’<sup>34</sup> there was a disjuncture between what was seen and experienced and what was written, such that the texts produced appeared ‘blind’ to Frelimo’s use of violence as an instrument of politics and self-perpetuation.

During the liberation struggle there were accounts of mutual suspicions, mistrust and violence within Frelimo’s ranks. The late president Eduardo Mondlane wrote that ‘a movement cannot afford to become too paranoiac, or it will alienate potential support’.<sup>35</sup> One of the storylines about the liberated zones was that they were constituted through an ‘almost perfect symbiosis between FRELIMO and the people’.<sup>36</sup> In reality, however, they were also

28 W. Burchett, *Southern Africa Stands Up: The Revolutions in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa* (Melbourne, Outback Press, 1978).

29 J-M. Tali, *Dissidências e poder de estado: O MPLA perante si próprio (1962–1977) Vol. II* (Luanda, Editorial Nzila, 2001), p. 184.

30 E. Worby, ‘Tyranny, Parody, and Ethnic Polarity: Ritual Engagements with the State in Northwestern Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies (JSAS)*, 24, 3 (1998), p. 565.

31 Alexander et al., *Violence and Memory*, p. 190.

32 A. Jones and D. Manda, ‘Violence and ‘Othering’ in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa’, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 18, 2 (2006), pp. 197–213; I. Sundiata, ‘The Structure of Terror in a Small State’, in R. Cohen, *African Islands and Enclaves* (London, Sage Publications, 1983), pp. 81–100.

33 Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*; Munslow *Samora Machel*; Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*.

34 Saul, ‘Socialist Ideology’.

35 Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, pp. 132–3.

36 Y. Adam, ‘Samora Machel e o desenvolvimento de Moçambique’, in A. Soupa (ed.), *Samora: Homem do Povo* (Maputo, Maguezo Editores, 2001), p. 41.

sustained by 'force and repression' and in some provinces it is alleged that 'many recruits were executed', although 'little or no information exists about this type of action'.<sup>37</sup>

The armed struggle for independence ended with the signature of the Lusaka Accord on 7 September 1974. This Accord marked the beginning of attempts to build a new political order in Mozambique under the leadership of Frelimo and Machel.<sup>38</sup> Before independence in February 1975 Frelimo elaborated the 'Mocuba Plan', which proposed the purge of 'reactionary elements within Frelimo'.<sup>39</sup> Re-education camps were created to discipline the reactionaries within Frelimo and collaborators with the Portuguese regime. It is asserted that in April 1975 around 240 to 300 'political detainees, whom Frelimo had rounded up since the inauguration of the transitional government, were paraded in Nachingewa during a show trial'.<sup>40</sup> In a similar style of confession through torture as that enacted by SWAPO warriors during Namibia's independence struggle,<sup>41</sup> Frelimo extracted 'confessions under duress' in Mozambique and 'the detainees were paraded before a tribunal of honour presided over by Machel who acted as both prosecutor and judge', according to João Cabrita.<sup>42</sup>

## Persecution and War after Independence

In the aftermath of independence in June 1975, the country was engulfed in 'fear and suspicion' and 'coercion became an ever more important component of mobilisation and discipline'.<sup>43</sup> As has been noted in other countries emerging from liberation movements, 'the winners had the tendency . . . of simply replacing the former powers themselves'.<sup>44</sup> In a speech proffered in 1978, the then Frelimo party secretary Óscar Monteiro, indicated that 'we have our policy, we arrest; we arrest the reactionaries, *boateiros*, we have no fear regarding this. We punish'.<sup>45</sup> Alleged reactionaries within and without Frelimo, traditional authorities and Christian religious leaders,<sup>46</sup> and numerous other Mozambicans accused of past collaboration with Portuguese colonialism were arrested and sent to re-education camps.<sup>47</sup> The punishments were so arbitrary that even mentally-ill people were found in these camps.<sup>48</sup> In Gorongosa, a district in the centre of Mozambique considered 'territory of the enemy',<sup>49</sup> a number of primary school teachers were punished with imprisonment and subjected to severe interrogations in 1978 because of a linguistic misinterpretation in the third grade exam. They spent 3 months in prison to learn to master Portuguese properly.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the implementation of the postcolonial transitional initiative it is alleged that Frelimo was 'responsible for tens of thousands of deaths and by its own admission the detention,

37 *Ibid.*

38 H. Abrahamsson and A. Nilsson, *Moçambique em Transição* (Maputo, CEGRAF, 1994).

39 Leguêbe, 'Mozambique under Frelimo Rule', p. 13.

40 T. Henriksen, *Mozambique*, p. 227; Cabrita, *Mozambique*, p. 82; M. Hall and T. Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence* (London, Hurst & Co., 1997), p. 47.

41 J. Saul and C. Leys, 'Lubango and After', *JSAS*, 29, 2 (2003), pp. 334–53.

42 Cabrita, *Mozambique*, pp. 82–3.

43 J. Alexander, 'The Local State in Post-War Mozambique', *Africa*, 67, 1 (1997), p. 4.

44 K.R. Xanana Gusmão, *A Construção da Nação Timorese* (Lisboa, LIDEL, 2004), p. 97.

45 O. Monteiro, *Tempo*, 406 (1978).

46 C. Geffray, *La cause des armes au Mozambique* (Paris, Karthala, 1990); F. Florêncio, *Ao encontro dos Mambos: autoridades tradicionais vaNdau e Estado em Moçambique* (Lisboa, ICS, 2005); V. Igreja, 'Traditional Courts and the Struggle Against State Impunity for Civil Wartime Offences in Mozambique', *Journal of African Law*, 54, 1 (2008), pp. 51–73; V. Igreja and B. Dias-Lambranca, 'Christian Religious Transformation and Gender Relations in Postwar Gorongosa', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39, 3 (2009), pp. 262–94.

47 Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*; M. Cahen, *Os outros: um historiador em Moçambique, 1994* (Basel, P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2004); Cabrita, *Mozambique*.

48 Machel, RC, day 3, Archives of RM.

49 *Noúcias*, 9 September 1985.

50 Personal interviews: Gorongosa, 17 December 2004; Beira, 7 January 2009.

displacement or enforced relocation of several hundred thousand more within Mozambique'.<sup>51</sup> These campaigns increased the gap between Frelimo's goals of national unity and its 'potential support' alluded to by Mondlane, as people were alienated by the violence. The most notorious cases of individuals executed by the Frelimo government remain a vivid part of the memories of individuals who survived that period,<sup>52</sup> and the histories of other key figures that Frelimo killed were immortalised in books published many years after the occurrence of these vicious events.<sup>53</sup>

While the internal persecution of, and violence against, perceived enemies unfolded, the Frelimo government also got involved in an external front of conflict by supporting the anti-colonial struggle in Rhodesia and by adopting United Nations sanctions against that country. As a result Ian Smith's military forces invaded Mozambique and wreaked havoc on both its people and infrastructure. These external invasions coincided with the beginning of the civil war (1976–92) in Mozambique, led by the rebel movement Renamo, which, according to the testimonies of its leaders, was founded by Mozambicans who had suffered and escaped Frelimo's violent persecution.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of authors writing about post-independence politics regarded the Rhodesian invasions, and the fact that Renamo was initially supported by Rhodesia and later by apartheid South Africa, as the sole factor responsible for the mass political violence in Mozambique, also called a 'war of destabilisation'.<sup>55</sup> As this article demonstrates, Machel's performances gave various hints as to how Frelimo was also responsible for postcolonial violence. Some authors took internal factors seriously, including the 'unresolved conflicts within Frelimo ranks during the anti-colonial struggle',<sup>56</sup> and regarded the conjunction of internal and external factors as contributing to transforming postcolonial reality in Mozambique into a state of fully-fledged civil war.<sup>57</sup>

Alongside the civil war that was slowly building toward the end of 1970s, the country was also disintegrating into social chaos, which Machel called 'the great alienation'.<sup>58</sup> Frelimo cadres attributed responsibility for this disintegration to the continuation in the postcolony of 'enemy agents'. Therefore, in 1978, during the outset of the campaign to restructure the Frelimo party, Machel announced the next round of purges in order 'to reject the impure load'.<sup>59</sup> 'The impure load' had been connected to some of the following ex-colonial organisations: PIDE (International Police for the Defence of the State); ANP (National Popular Action Party) and GEP (Special Parachutes Groups). The black Mozambicans who worked for these colonial organisations were generically identified as 'The Compromised'.<sup>60</sup>

## The Politics of Memory, Transitional and Revolutionary Justice

The strategy to deal with the 'compromised' was articulated as a 'reintegration strategy', 'mental de-colonisation', or 'the inner combat to liberate consciousness'. This strategy unfolded between the end of 1978 and 1982. Frelimo's position was that without public

51 D. Hoile, *Mozambique, Resistance and Freedom* (London, Mozambique Institute, 1994), p. 29; Leguèbe, 'Mozambique under Frelimo Rule'.

52 H. West, 'Voices Twice Silenced', *Anthropological Theory*, 3, 3 (2003), pp. 343–65.

53 Ncomo, *Uria Simango*; Cabrita, *Mozambique*.

54 B. Mazula (co-ord.), *Moçambique: 10 anos de paz*, Vol. I (Maputo, CEDE, 2002); Hoile, *Mozambique*.

55 Hanlon, *Mozambique*; Saul, *A Difficult Road*; M. Hall, 'The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo)', *Africa*, 60 (1990), pp. 39–68.

56 Hoile, 'Mozambique, Resistance and Freedom'; Coelho, 'Da violência colonial ordenada'.

57 C. Geffray, *La cause des armes*; M. Cahen, 'Success in Mozambique?', in S. Chesterman, M. Ignatieff and R. Thakur (eds), *Making States Work* (Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 2005), pp. 213–33.

58 Machel, in CEDIMO, Vol. IV.

59 S. Machel, *Tempo*, 424 (1978).

60 Machel, in CEDIMO, Vol. IV.

acknowledgment of guilt by the 'compromised' of their former ties with colonialism, it would not be possible for them to free themselves from the 'impure load' harboured in their consciousness. Machel ordered that in all work places and residences, the compromised had to be known by all, popular vigilance should be enacted against them, their names and betrayals should be written down and posted on boards in all work places together with their photos.<sup>61</sup> The compromised lost civil and political rights and many of them were sent to re-education camps.<sup>62</sup> Machel also informed that this strategy would be monitored by the secret services, army, police, Frelimo officials, and the mass democratic organisations.

After four years of vigilance, purges and re-education camps, 'the closure meeting' took place in mid-1982 under the direct command of Machel and lasted for 5 days.<sup>63</sup> This transitional initiative combined different processes related to the handling of legacies of violent predecessor regimes, namely the politics of memory, revolutionary and transitional justice. Another factor influencing the meeting and the intersection of processes involved was the politics of mobilisation: Frelimo and Machel did not openly recognise that they needed the compromised, particularly the younger men, to fight in the Mozambican civil war, yet deploying them was one of the outcomes.

The transitional justice applied in postcolonial Mozambique differed from transitional justice as it is currently known and practised, in that Frelimo did not establish an independent commission of inquiry, a formal protocol to guide the investigations, state the rights of witnesses or set out the time frame of the process.<sup>64</sup> Its main aim was the stated goal of publicly dealing with crimes committed by the Portuguese colonial regime. It was one-sided because it only dealt with the alleged Mozambican collaborators, while excluding Portuguese colonial officials and any investigation of the alleged crimes committed by Frelimo prior to and after independence.<sup>65</sup> Performatively, memory was central to the meeting and broader strategy of transitional justice: the compromised had to narrate their experiences of colonial affiliation by revealing dates, names of people and places, and the plots that they had participated in. Yet since the compromised had a life filled with contradictory experiences, there was a disjuncture between the narratives of memories that Machel wanted to hear and what the compromised narrated. This disjuncture gave rise to a serious clash, giving further visibility to the revolutionary justice dimensions of the strategy. Yet this type of justice is an oxymoron as 'acts of vengeance are always part of the revolutionary process'.<sup>66</sup> The clashes caused Machel to threaten the compromised and force them to talk, based on the 'assumption of guilt, repentance, punishment and re-education'.<sup>67</sup> The combination of these threats paved the way for Machel to mobilise some of the compromised to fight in the civil war.

## Beginnings: The Meeting and the Participants in the Room

Machel appeared at the meeting wearing a military uniform and dark glasses. The high-ranking Frelimo officials sat on the stage. Machel's chair was in the middle; Marcelino dos

61 Machel, *Tempo*, 424 (1978).

62 Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 171.

63 *Tempo*, 609 (1982).

64 L. Huysse, *All Things Pass, Except the Past* (Belgium, New Goff, Mariakerke, 2009); R. Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony* (London, Zed Books, 1998); V. Igreja, 'The Politics of Peace, Justice and Healing in Post-war Mozambique', in C. Sriram and S. Pillay (eds), *Peace versus Justice?* (KwaZulu-Natal, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 2009), pp. 277–300.

65 Ncomo, *Uria Simango*; Cabrita, *Mozambique*.

66 S. Fitzpatrick, 'Vengeance and Resentment in the Russian Revolution', *French Historical Studies*, 24, 4 (2001), pp. 579–88; J. Ulloa, *Entre aromas de incienso y pólvora: los altos de Jalisco, México, 1917–1940* (Ph.D. Thesis, Leiden, University of Leiden, 2008).

67 Coelho 'Da violência colonial ordenada', p. 191.

Santos was to his right side, and Joaquim Chissano was sitting on Machel's left-hand side. As the days unfolded other Frelimo officials occupied the chairs of Chissano and dos Santos.<sup>68</sup>

The meeting took place in Josina Machel secondary school in the capital city of Maputo. The room was decorated with slogans upon the walls that read: 'When we liberated Mozambique those who compromised with colonialism also gained a *patria*'.<sup>69</sup> A total of 1,250 people participated, the majority (1,086) of whom were the compromised and the remainder were guests. The 'compromised' were seated in groups according to the colonial organisations to which they had putatively belonged.

Initially, Machel rejected the idea that the past is comprised of 'competing versions of truth'.<sup>70</sup> Machel affirmed that 'some of the compromised were forced . . . particularly those from the army . . . but later they assumed the role of the oppressor . . .'<sup>71</sup> Yet the compromised were all lumped together in the same category, and Machel stated that ' . . . regardless of their motivation or the degree of their involvement, all supported the system that was fighting against our independence'.<sup>72</sup> This erasure of subjectivity of the compromised was problematic, as some of the compromised narrated memories of experiences of affiliation but also of resistance against the harassment of the colonialists. Others narrated experiences of imprisonment and subjection to torture by the PIDE.<sup>73</sup> Some of the accusations that Machel made against the compromised also applied to him, as Machel had acquired the status of an assimilated person and as a result had been given the privilege of studying nursing in colonial schools.<sup>74</sup> The intersections of some aspects of Machel's past life and of the accused further rendered problematic the moral foundations of this process.

## The Speech

The outset of the meeting consisted of declarations of praise, through '*vivas*' to Frelimo and the Mozambican people, as well as the singing of revolutionary songs. The revolutionary songs, applause, Machel's whistles and compulsive repetition of questioning, were characteristic features of the entire meeting. These aesthetics, which some of those present considered to be a kind of 'religious mysticism',<sup>75</sup> were credited to Machel personally.

In his inaugural speech, Machel briefly analysed the outcome of the four-year strategy. He concluded that the results were mixed. The first result was that during the transitional strategy's implementation 'there were those who felt exposed . . . When we exposed them to popular vigilance they found themselves obstructed from their anti-patriotic activity and they openly went to join the enemy so that they could continue fighting against our independence and freedom . . . They cannot live without sucking boots'.<sup>76</sup> Two years earlier, in 1980, Machel had made a similar remark about Mozambicans escaping from Frelimo's re-education camps to go to Rhodesia.<sup>77</sup> Although Machel did not disclose on either occasion the number of Mozambicans who had escaped, this negative outcome was a confirmation that Frelimo's strategies of cleansing the alleged internal enemies was backfiring in perilous

68 RC, archives of TVM.

69 *Ibid.*

70 J. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004).

71 Machel, RC, day 1, opening speech, archives of RM.

72 *Ibid.*

73 RC, days 1–5, archives of TVM, RM, and AR.

74 Burchett, *Southern Africa Stands Up*.

75 Personal interview with the late Fernando Ganhão; Maputo, 14 December 2004.

76 Machel, RC, opening speech, day 1, archives of RM.

77 S. Machel, in B. Munslow, *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary* (London, Zed Books, 1985).

ways. It is interesting to note, however, that Machel's acknowledgement that Frelimo was responsible for political alienation and persecution was subsequently ruled out as an explanatory cause for the mass violence in postcolonial Mozambique.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to this first group who had joined the enemy, a second group was described as having reacted constructively since, 'when they saw their pictures exposed they seriously reflected upon their anti-patriotic actions of the past . . . they understood their mistake and they decided that . . . with the engagement in the task of national reconstruction they could also deserve one place in our *patria*'.<sup>79</sup> Because of their transformation, this group received a round of applause, and Machel concluded that they as well as their actions symbolised 'rebirth; the New Man'.<sup>80</sup>

The final group was composed of undecided individuals. Machel insisted to his addressees, 'listen very well, the enemy is still camped in their heads . . . they are used to planning anti-revolutionary actions. The enemy turns the mouth of these elements into parrots in order to diffuse anti-patriotic ideas'.<sup>81</sup> At this stage of Machel's speech the idea of a 'hegemonic search' is well illustrated in Machel's clarification of the nature of this final group, 'the main feature of this group is to refuse our power; the refusal of the popular power'.<sup>82</sup>

## Problems, Objectives and Proceedings

The crux of the matter, Machel affirmed, was that to be a Mozambican consisted of being ready to defend 'the principle of Mozambican citizenship itself. But not everyone assumed this principle'; therefore, he said, 'it is here that our problem is located'.<sup>83</sup> However, Machel did not provide concrete examples of how these individuals had failed in their defence of Mozambican citizenship. He only stated that their failure was related to the problem of 'mental colonisation' and 'loss of personality', which in turn 'no longer enables individuals to perceive the truth of things'.<sup>84</sup> These tropes, which locate political problems within the confines of consciousness and try to mobilise through transforming it resemble Steve Biko's suggestion that 'the first step [in creating black consciousness] therefore is to make the black man [sic] come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth'.<sup>85</sup>

On various occasions in the meeting, Machel insisted upon the idea of an 'inward-looking process' as a precondition for creating a national consciousness. As the inaugural speech unfolded, Machel's language became stronger. He elaborated that the compromised 'had assumed the personality of a *moleque* [little Negro],<sup>86</sup> to serve. They started to mimic and to *macaquear* [live like monkeys] the colonial bourgeoisie . . . monkey, there that small aspirant, that small official with his caught hanged in the chair, monkey, monkey, do you understand! . . . They still want to *macaquear*, and here, there is no place to *macaquear* . . .'<sup>87</sup> He went on to affirm that 'sons of peasants, working class, lower-ranking

78 V. Igreja, 'Memories as Weapons' *JSAS*, 34, 3 (2008), pp. 539–56.

79 Machel, RC, day 1, archives of RM.

80 *Ibid.*

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*

84 K. Burrige, *New Heaven, New Earth* (New York, Schocken Books, 1969), p. 8.

85 S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Johannesburg, Picador Africa, 2008 [1978]), p. 31.

86 Michaelis Dictionary (1989, Revised Ed.)

87 Machel, RC, opening speech, day 1, archives of RM.

functionaries, or other modest workers used to forget, listen carefully . . . used to deny their own origins.’<sup>88</sup> Throughout the meeting’s proceedings, the term ‘monkey’ was central to the ‘theatrics of violence’.<sup>89</sup>

Judith Butler suggested that ‘no term or statement can function performatively without the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force’.<sup>90</sup> Terms such as ‘monkey’, ‘savage’, ‘*moleque*’ etc., were applied, before Machel, by the colonisers to refer to the colonised as non-humans. In this respect, the term injures because ‘we already know its force from its prior instances . . . and we brace ourselves against its future invocations’.<sup>91</sup> When Machel iteratively used slurs such as ‘monkeys’ against the compromised – or in one instance women braiding hair in public<sup>92</sup> – it seems that he was less concerned with the future than ‘making linguistic community with a history of speakers’.<sup>93</sup> Although Machel was adamantly against mimicking the colonisers, his use of slurs ended up reproducing the colonial practices of humiliating ordinary Mozambicans. Some academic commentators ignored the instances in which Machel replicated these colonial practices, and rather praised his intelligence and Marxist credentials.<sup>94</sup>

While intercalating his speech with injurious language, Machel insisted on the need ‘to make them assume the Mozambican personality without which it is not possible to have dignity’.<sup>95</sup> The issue of restoring the dignity of the victims, often spoken about in transitional justice processes,<sup>96</sup> was not systematically articulated. Machel only briefly mentioned the victims by arguing that because of the actions of the compromised many persons were victimised; ‘there are orphan children whose fathers fell down in the hands of PIDE, in the hands of administrators; there are widows whose husbands were killed and burned by the commandos . . .’<sup>97</sup> Machel mentioned these victims to demonstrate that, despite the gruesome actions that victimised numerous Mozambicans, Frelimo did not apply revolutionary justice as others had done elsewhere. Machel asserted that as a result of Frelimo’s practices of clemency, the compromised should say, ‘thank you for this power’, because it is, ‘a power loaded with . . . humanism’.<sup>98</sup>

The proceedings of the meeting were said to be inspired by the teachings of the liberated zones; ‘to talk directly and to be up-front about the problems’ in order to achieve ‘trust’.<sup>99</sup> Machel said, ‘we want you to tell us . . . what your task under the service of colonialism was. We want to know the degree of your consciousness in relation to this past’.<sup>100</sup> Since the speeches about the transitional programme omitted clarifications as to whether subsequent to the disclosures there would be further punishments, the initial ambience of the meeting was characterised by fear among many of the participants. Machel acknowledged this at the end of the first day of the meeting, ‘today you thought that you were going to be arrested, it’s true, I could have arrested some of you, it’s true, but *enfim*’.<sup>101</sup>

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88 *Ibid.*

89 *Ibid.*

90 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 51.

91 *Ibid.*

92 S. Machel, inaugural academic year of 1982, archives of TVM, Maputo.

93 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 52.

94 Newitt, *A History of Mozambique; Christie, Samora Machel*.

95 Machel, RC, opening speech, day 1, archives of RM.

96 A. Boraine, *A Country Unmasked* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

97 Machel, RC, opening speech, day 1, archives of RM.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

101 Machel, RC, day 1, archives of RM.

## Talking as an Alternative to Revolutionary Justice

It was Machel's decision to begin the proceedings with the former members of the ANP.<sup>102</sup> Initially the compromised were invited to come forward on a voluntary basis; they talked from the ground below the stage, and followed Machel's orders, 'Please state your name and talk freely'.<sup>103</sup>

The biographical trajectory of the first witness (DPH) was not related to a voluntary decision to join the repressive colonial structures.<sup>104</sup> His brother had been the first to be arrested by PIDE and spent '16 years in prison'. Machel immediately interrupted him, because it was impossible that it was 16 years in prison. The witness corrected his momentary lapse of memory or language. The correct information was 16 months. It became evident during the subsequent disclosures that conscious or unconscious lapses of memory or language were common. DPH said that he was forced to join the ANP because of similar circumstances to those that led his brother to prison; his brother was charged and acquitted, but three months after his release he died, 'because of the torture he received inside the prison cell'. With this explanation, Machel recognised that there were different experiences among the compromised in relation to their colonial past.

Following DPH, a witness named IJ testified.<sup>105</sup> Machel asked him some trivial questions which drew laughter from everyone in the room. IJ recounted that he was a kind of volunteer member of the ex-National Union and that he joined to save his life. He continued that he was arrested by PIDE under the charge that he was head of the black workers in ex-Lourenço Marques docks; he was imprisoned for 29 days and spent 11 days in isolation. Machel asked him whether he was a *Che* (a Muslim clerk), to which IJ answered positively, and Machel replied that he had seen it in his face. Answering another of Machel's questions, IJ said he never paid subscriptions for membership even after some of his colleagues threatened him with being arrested again by PIDE.

Machel was disappointed with IJ's narration and asked him why he was there. IJ answered, 'I came here to speak, to liberate myself from what you may think that I am, when in reality I am not'. In response, Machel reacted by spontaneously initiating a short song. When the singing was over, Machel urged IJ and all the other compromised to be more serious. IJ tried to respond but Machel interrupted him, sounding irritated. Eventually IJ managed to say that everybody who had worked with him over his 29 years in the docks would take him seriously. Machel, however, was not convinced and said, 'Do you know colleague, that we have a lot of work! We interrupted the work of the Ministers Council and of the party; we did not come here to play. We have the armed bandits; we have bandits within the city that commit murder against foreigners . . .'<sup>106</sup> Machel repeated that this meeting was of utmost importance as exemplified by the high-ranking officials of the party-state attending it. Machel produced a long speech during which he began presenting the various distinguished members of Frelimo party, then he made a threat, 'This is a highly political meeting; it is not an administrative one. Yet, we can transform it into an administrative meeting'.

In spite of this threat, IJ stated, 'Mr. President, we Mozambicans think that we are free and independent, therefore', he proudly said, 'I am not afraid of any punishment that a man can force upon me, I only fear the punishment of God because I know that God's punishment will be more overwhelming . . .' Machel instantly interrupted him to say that he expected

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102 Machel, RC, opening speech, day 1, archives of RM.

103 *Ibid.*

104 RC, day 1, archives of RM.

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Ibid.*

punishment on earth, and not God's punishment. Machel also said that he preferred to 'live well here [on earth]; move around with a car here; to receive money here . . . To drink whisky and to drink beer here; there [heaven] I don't want'. Machel concluded by ordering IJ to return to his seat.

Another witness, APM used a similar argument of victimhood by PIDE to explain his affiliation to the ANP.<sup>107</sup> A prolonged exchange developed between the two as Machel had one version of the relation between ANP and PIDE, whereas APM had another one. Machel became infuriated and shouted, 'You crazy, shut up!' You want to dissociate ANP from PIDE?' As a result of Machel disparaging APM, his comments were reduced to replies of 'Yes Mr. President' until APM was ordered to return to his seat.

The various witnesses that came forward to tell their stories did not please Machel; he became dissatisfied and stated, 'Look I want a real ANP; I don't want these small, ignorant fish'. In the meantime, another witness, named FDSX, came to the front to give his testimony; he was a pharmacist and had studied in Portugal.<sup>108</sup> As FDSX started his narration, Machel interrupted him to say that he had a photo of FDSX giving a political speech during the colonial era. Machel then addressed the whole audience to say, 'I know all of you here . . . The PIDE gave me all your biographies . . . Everything that each of you has done, I know. I am not just gathering with you like that, am I crazy?' Before the meeting Machel had also made a similar remark, 'soon we will announce the complete list of men that collaborated with PIDE to kill Mondlane. We know them.'<sup>109</sup> However, Christie indicated that the colonial regime 'had given no lists of names'.<sup>110</sup>

To reinforce his claim that he knew everyone through PIDE's files, Machel insisted that he had a photo of FDSX giving a speech at the ANP party in Quelimane. FDSX refuted Machel's allegation by saying that the only place he had given speeches was in Xai-Xai city thus discrediting Machel and the putative PIDE files. Nevertheless, Machel kept humiliating FDSX by saying that when FDSX had returned from Portugal, 'You were already an assimilated person, a doctor . . . you were alienated'. FDSX tried to respond but Machel did not allow him to do so. Machel suggested that FDSX should feel ashamed to have studied in Portugal to become a doctor, which demonstrated hypocrisy as Machel did not demonstrate any shame for having studied nursing in colonial schools. Some of Machel's performances turned the proceedings into something 'intensely personal'<sup>111</sup> that lay beyond the 'hegemonic search'. His former close aide rebutted this supposition saying, 'No, president Samora had this quality; he did not mix his personal feelings with the national interest'.<sup>112</sup>

As the meeting advanced, Machel was still not convinced by any of the witnesses: 'These things that you are telling me, it does not tell me anything'.<sup>113</sup> The witnesses until then said that they had suffered a lot and their enlistment in the colonial structures had not been the result of 'voluntarily supporting the repressive colonial apparatus'.<sup>114</sup> They joined because of traumatic experiences and in attempts to save their lives. It is difficult to know whether this was true or not, and Machel did not produce the putative PIDE files to prove his accusations. It is unclear whether Machel succeeded in changing the minds of people like IJ, DPH and others as a consequence of these interactions.

107 *Ibid.*

108 *Ibid.*

109 Machel, speech during the Frelimo party re-structuring, cited in CEDIMO, Vol. IV, Maputo, 1978.

110 Christie, *Samora Machel*, 1989.

111 *Ibid.*

112 Personal interview, Jorge Rebelo; Maputo, 15 December 2004.

113 RC, day 1, archives of RM.

114 Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 171.

## The Struggle for a Discursive Model

In light of the disappointment he felt after hearing various witnesses, Machel announced what kinds of answers he had been expecting, 'You have to answer, "Yes it is true"'.<sup>115</sup> This implied that the initial intended strategy of dialogue was in fact to be replaced by a more aggressive set of questions and a more passive line of required response. Then Machel decided on the spur of the moment to call on someone in the audience that captured his attention: 'Mr. Vogal, deputy of the Legislative Council, go there'.<sup>116</sup> This was the witness, ARS, mentioned earlier in this article's introduction.

When ARS began to give his account Machel had already become sidetracked, and embroiled in details of racial genealogy.

Machel asked, 'Your father was coloured or an Indian-coloured?'

ARS answered, 'Indian coloured.'

Then Machel questioned ARS about his mother's provenance: 'Your mother is coloured or black?'

ARS answered, 'She is coloured.'

Machel continued, 'Is she also Indian-coloured?'

ARS gave an explanation. The next question that Machel asked was, 'What about you? You have a coloured father and your mother is also coloured, what are you?'

ARS answered, 'Coloured'. There was a verbal exchange and then Machel shouted, 'Alienation, alienation; you are afraid to say that you are black'. Then Machel ruled, 'You are black, I am telling you now, are you listening?'

ARS answered, 'Yes I heard you.'

The way in which Machel created the context for this interrogation demonstrated that he desired to humiliate ARS. This humiliation further demonstrates that in the logic of the 'theatrics of violence' Machel shared 'linguistic community with a history of speakers'<sup>117</sup> whereby he 'reappropriated the colonial rationality'<sup>118</sup> by considering the black race to be an inferior race. The condition of inferiority of the black race was repeatedly defended by the white colonisers, and it has been argued that feelings of inferiority became characteristic of individuals living under the colonial oppression.<sup>119</sup> Only when ARS affirmed he was black did Machel focus on the topic of the meeting. He asked about ARS's involvement with the ANP. ARS said that he knew very little about the purposes of the ANP. The detailed interrogation went ahead, Machel again called the compromised '*patria* sell-outs', 'traitors', and he wanted to know in whose names the compromised committed murders. ARS answered that he had never killed anybody, and he said 'I was just a modest bystander'.

## A Light in the Middle of the Tunnel

Another group that Machel ordered to come forward and reveal past collaborations were journalists. One of them was AF.<sup>120</sup> AF penetrated the heart of the politics of memory and transitional justice as he carefully selected his memories for public narration and recognised that his actions had been deplorable in light of the struggles for independence. This combination pleased Machel and AF became the icon of Machel's project of mental de-colonisation, to the extent that Machel referred to him as 'my son'. He began with the following, 'Mr. President,

115 RC, day 1, archives of RM.

116 *Ibid.*

117 Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 52.

118 A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001).

119 F. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, Pluto Press, 1986 [1952]); Biko, *I Write What I Like*.

120 RC, day 1, archives of RM.

many thanks for this opportunity to talk. Firstly, I would say that my connection with ANP constitutes the result of the whole trajectory of my political compromise . . . ' At this, Machel became animated and called AF forward and thanked him. Machel was convinced when AF said, 'Mr. President I must confess that I had a fascist education; it began when I was a child, as I was . . . educated by the priests . . . ' Machel did not interrupt to pose questions, but only to reinforce what AF was saying. In the end AF was approved. He was rewarded with the kindest response from the President, 'That's how I want it, to be given a good analysis . . . There is a need to talk honestly'. Consequently Machel invited AF to become a member of Frelimo, and was applauded. Perhaps AF embodied the flattering script so well because, since the earlier days of independence, Frelimo cadres had developed a comprehensive process of revolutionary ideological indoctrination of journalists and of the information sector as a whole.<sup>121</sup>

It is interesting to note that the compromise that followed AF did not mimic the unconditional acknowledgement of guilt exemplified by AF. The reason seems to be resistance. It can be argued that some of those allegedly compromised saw resistance 'as a defensive struggle against a tyrant guilty of acts of aggression upon the political order'.<sup>122</sup>

## Revolutionary Justice

AF's testimony increased Machel's expectations and he made an appeal, 'all the treading down must be won. All the inhibition of consciousness must be overcome . . . so that we become free and independent men'. He went further, using the language of warfare, 'We already have our ammunition, isn't it true? We already have our weapons; the barrels of our weapons are already loaded, isn't it true? . . . The liberation of consciousness is a battle'. These words no longer appealed to memory, this was an attempt to mobilise for new struggles beyond consciousness. Machel was purposefully rousing people politically with a series of reminders: 'You are loaded with individualism . . . you are *tribalistas*, racists, regionalists, elitists, but with a superficial elitism of ignorance [ . . . ] only by having consciousness of this reality, you will be able to liberate yourselves'.<sup>123</sup>

As the meeting proceeded, Machel called someone who had asked to talk the previous day.<sup>124</sup> It was AJE, who stated outright that the process of his compromise started with his arrest by PIDE. Machel demonstrated less interest in AJE's story than in his clothes and beard. Machel said that since the previous day, he had noticed that AJE was not dressed properly. To show his dislike, Machel enquired, 'Don't you have money? Why do you come here in a t-shirt?' When AJE tried to answer, Machel cut him off, further criticising AJE's clothes, 'The way in which you are dressed, *enfim*, says that you are anti-social, a drug addict, and insignificant [laughter] . . . Go out of here, go and get dressed . . . go and clean yourself up and shave your beard . . . '

A vivid demonstration of revolutionary justice was performed during an exchange with a man Machel called 'Big Fish'; his name was MDV; and Machel said that he wanted to listen very carefully to his story.<sup>125</sup> Machel was particularly interested in Big Fish's story because of his former affiliation with the organisation *Associação dos Negros*. Big Fish stated that he had not been a member of the *Associação dos Negros*, but he had participated in their parties. Machel said that Mr. Ferreira, an alleged PIDE officer had introduced Big Fish to the

121 E. Machiana, *A Revista 'Tempo' e a Revolução Moçambicana* (Maputo, Promédia, 2002); Leguèbe, Mozambique.

122 M. Walzer, 'Revolutionary Ideology', *The American Political Science Review*, 57, 3 (1963), p. 654.

123 RC, day 2, archives of RM.

124 RC, day 2, archives of RM.

125 RC, day 3, archives of RM and TVM; *Tempo*, 609 (1982).

*Associação dos Negros*, so he wanted to hear how PIDE had prepared him for spying on the association. However, at this point Big Fish refuted the allegation and there was a standoff between the two.

In an attempt to break the deadlock, Big Fish suggested 'if someone knows me to be an informer . . . I request you to denounce me and give me concrete things [evidence] that I cannot refute'. Machel became annoyed and performed a revolutionary act by shouting, 'I am going to arrest you now and you will end up in Niassa'. Machel ordered, while treating MDV like an object rather than a person, 'Hey you from security take *this*, arrest *this* [man] and go to Niassa. Take him out of here! Go to Niassa and make sure he stays there forever'. This was 'a sovereign speech act, a speech act with the power to do what it says'<sup>126</sup> so the security forces arrested MDV in order to take him to Niassa, a northern province of Mozambique. Whether MDV survived that ordeal remains a matter for Frelimo to clarify. Yet Christie claims to have seen MDV in Maputo 'smiling happily as usual'.<sup>127</sup>

When MDV walked out of the room guarded by the security forces, Machel asked the audience, 'Who here acknowledges that Mr. Ferreira was a fascist? . . . Who knows Ferreira there? Raise your hands? You who know Ferreira, wasn't he a fascist? Look up there . . . all of them know him, a fascist, wasn't he?' Machel ordered the members of his team to look at the audience to confirm the evidence, indicated through the raised hands, that indeed Mr. Ferreira was a fascist and, therefore, MDV was a spy. This connection was tenuous. This post-fact rhetoric contradicted what had been affirmed in the inaugural speech regarding the need to talk without inhibitions. Machel said that MDV 'was infiltrated in the *Associação dos Negros*, monkey'.<sup>128</sup>

Christie wrote in relation to this episode that 'it seemed to reveal a cruel streak which I had never seen before'.<sup>129</sup> This is odd because prior to and during this meeting Machel demonstrated his disregard for the law, and stated how ordinary it was for both him and for Frelimo to punish people. Christie excused Machel, 'But of course the whole episode was a trick by Machel to get the others to come clean. It worked'.<sup>130</sup> If it was 'a trick' and 'it worked' why did Machel keep insulting and threatening the compromised after MDV had already been arrested? Christie distorted Machel's performance; his reaction of exempting Machel from criticism and the silence of the so-called 'Frelimo's sympathisers'<sup>131</sup> vis-à-vis Frelimo, and Machel's violent practices cannot be explained only in terms of the 'euphoria of the day',<sup>132</sup> or as 'pure Marxist humbug'.<sup>133</sup> His position confirms the statement that 'what discredits the apologist literature and calls into question the role of intellectuals is its failure to acknowledge the scale of the recent suffering of the people'.<sup>134</sup> To conclude this episode Machel said, 'We also have various languages, is it that not so? We were always arrogant towards the enemy'.<sup>135</sup>

## Counteracting Arrogance and the Mobilisation to Violence

Despite Machel's insistence, it was never predictable what attitude constituted 'arrogance', although Hanlon asserted that some former ANP members were 'implacably arrogant'.<sup>136</sup>

126 Butler, 'Excitable Speech', p. 77.

127 Christie, *Samora Machel*, p. 174.

128 RC, day 3, archives of RM.

129 Christie, *Samora Machel*, p. 174.

130 *Ibid.*

131 Dinerman, 'Revolution, Counter-revolution', p. 62.

132 A. Isaacman, 'Legacies of Engagement', *African Studies Review*, 46, 1 (2003), p. 5.

133 R. Aya, *Rethinking Revolutions and Collective Violence* (Amsterdam, Het Spinhuis, 1990), p. 86.

134 L. White, 'The Revolutions Ten Years On', *JSAS*, 11, 2 (1985), p. 321.

135 RC, day 3, archives of RM.

136 Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 174.

because they refused to sing Frelimo's revolutionary songs. Machel's further interrogations provided additional evidence that this meeting was no longer solely about reckoning with the legacies of the colonial past. Machel was mobilising these men, although in a disguised way, to provide a violent response against the 'armed bandits' that had besieged the country.

One of the compromised, CF, narrated that he had been to Portugal to take the parachutes course in the air force.<sup>137</sup> Machel asked him how he had joined the air force. CF answered that he had volunteered. Machel did not like his answer and said, 'It is visible indeed . . . we can see that he is a volunteer, he is convinced, *mas vou-te desfazer* [but I will undo you], go on'! Yet Machel did not let CF give his full testimony. Machel interrupted CF and asked all the volunteers to come forward, and then began interrogating all of them. Then Machel changed, suddenly seeing the group as enemies in the room and conveying the impression that the meeting had become 'a matter of life and death for the participants'.<sup>138</sup> He ordered all ex-volunteers to leave the room, and then, in an agitated state, he repeatedly instructed his aides (Fernando, Julio, Carrilho and Rebelo) to make haste and 'to record these men very well, draw them fast so that they can be well pinned down . . . now we have to act in a different way, administratively . . . We had the war here against Smith but they never volunteered; there are bandits, but they do not volunteer. But these men were volunteers against our people . . . South Africa has infiltrated armed bandits in the country, but, no they do not volunteer'.

Machel complained about the alleged arrogance of these ex-volunteers. However, it seems that only Machel saw or felt their arrogance. This became apparent when he began asking everyone, 'Did you see the arrogance with which they were talking, those resounding affirmations, monkey! Oh, the measures will be drastic'!<sup>139</sup> Although the ex-volunteers were many, Machel used the word 'monkey' in the singular indicative as he was referring to CF. Machel had become fixated upon CF and he said, 'That young man that was here talking, that CF he is not normal, he seems pathological. Did you hear how he was talking?' The people may not have heard CF speaking because Machel hardly allowed him to speak. I heard what CF said because his voice went straight from the microphone into the sound recorders, but I did not find anything unusual in the little that CF said. Nevertheless, the audience replied that they had heard. If Machel understood that CF had been arrogant, it had not been as a result of what CF had said. Machel could only have come to that conclusion by interpreting through the *bodily emotion* of CF. Pierre Bourdieu suggested that through 'bodily emotion (shame, timidity, anxiety, guilt)'<sup>140</sup> the dominated tacitly accepts, in advance, the limits imposed on them. In this case, Machel accused CF of being arrogant based on an alleged absence of these bodily emotions. This meticulous reading of bodily emotions suggests that Machel's senses were hyper-alert.

Machel's fixation on CF was so intense he said, 'If we get him, then execute him'. He ordered all GE and GEP in the room to stand up and he exclaimed, 'If we get hold of him, then execute him!' In that instance, Machel started shouting, 'CF, CF . . . bring him here very fast, he is the worst of all, a person of the worst species. Friends, you make provocations. If we get hold of you and execute you, so what! The power is with us'. It is grisly, but also informative of the way in which Machel chose the words to speak of punishment: he speaks of friends in tandem with the possibility of executing them. The combination of these two words creates the impression that he is talking about something mundane. He gave further evidence of how banal executing someone could be in saying, 'The people outside are with us. If we get hold

137 RC, day 4, archives of RM and TVM.

138 C. Bengelsdorf, M. Cerullo and Y. Chandrani (eds), *The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 126.

139 RC, day 4, archives of RM.

140 P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006), p. 169.

of you and put you to death! Look at this crazy person'. It is banal in the sense that Machel 'combines evil and indifference, which is lethal'.<sup>141</sup>

In these instances, what kind of hegemony were Frelimo and Machel seeking by threatening to execute crazy people, monkeys, *moleques*, peasants and lower-ranking functionaries? Machel insisted on treating the alleged pathological case (CF) as an object similar 'to disposable trash which was never of any value'<sup>142</sup>: 'If we get hold of *this* and execute him, *this* is what? We get hold of him right now and execute him, what is *it*?'<sup>143</sup> Machel went on, 'If we get hold of you right now and put you to death! We do not hide it... we put you to death right now, who is going to forbid us'? This assertion about the capability to execute CF without accountability seems less connected to the 'hegemonic search',<sup>144</sup> than to Machel's own desire to relive his personal sense of sovereign power. Later, Machel slightly changed his approach and personalised his threats, 'What if I [issue an] order for your execution, right now? What are you'? With this latter question, Machel wanted to reiterate the 'insignificance' of CF.

In the end Machel settled on ordering CF to apologise, and asked him what he would do if he was ordered to kneel? CF answered, 'I would kneel down chief'. Machel ordered him to return to his seat. When it looked like the subjects of the GEP, CF, and execution had been set aside, Machel returned to the issue again: 'If we arrested you and executed you! You are one-hundred, two-hundred, three-hundred people, even if you were three-thousand in a country of twelve-and-a-half million, do you realise your insignificance?' Finally Machel returned to his seat, and ordered the GE and GEP to sit down, and then discreetly asked one of the high-ranking officials, 'Have I already won?' One official answered positively. Machel continued discussing a while longer the number of minutes and seconds it would take to eliminate the GEP ex-volunteers, until he broke out in the song, '*kanimambo* Frelimo' ('thank you Frelimo').

Machel needed to win over these ex-soldiers as some of them appeared to have been well trained by the Portuguese colonial army and could be used to fight in the civil war, which was rapidly intensifying. These ex-soldiers were spread across Mozambique, although up until that point in time they had not been redeployed because of Frelimo's belief that these men's consciousnesses had an 'impure load',<sup>145</sup> meaning that their consciousnesses remained allegedly perverted by the Portuguese colonial ideology. It was only once the civil war progressed that Frelimo and Machel appeared to realise that these ex-soldiers could be coerced to respond violently against the armed bandits. While Machel was interrogating these ex-soldiers their language became militaristic; yet Machel showed only limited interest in the narratives of the ex-commandos. He asked for some details in relation to the massacres of Wiriamo in Tete in 1972, but the discussion was superficial.<sup>146</sup> Machel's questions gave the impression that he had a keen interest in understanding the degree of courage the commandos had needed to kill and destroy, because this was what Machel wished them to do in order to eliminate the 'armed bandits'.

## Conclusion, Matters of Life and Death

On the last day of the meeting Machel reiterated how, 'the past, history, is not denied, there is a need to face it from the front in order to guarantee that our present and future are not a sad repetition of the past'. However, Frelimo and Machel's focus on history was very limited. The

141 A. Margalit, *Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002), p. 34.

142 Abbink, 'Transformations of Violence', p. 68.

143 RC, day 4, archives of RM.

144 Bayart, 'Hégémonie et coercition'.

145 RC, day 1, archives of RM.

146 RC, day 4, archives of RM.

questionable foundations of the process and meeting are also revealed in Machel's accusation that the compromised's actions 'were complementary and they were used to concur for the same objective', which was 'to impede independence, to deny Mozambique'.<sup>147</sup> In light of what the compromised actually narrated, however, Machel's description of their past actions can be seen as 'fantasising or figuring power',<sup>148</sup> in that it imagined a power that the compromised had never had. The compromised's narratives give no indication that their actions shaped colonial policies. By putting them down by calling them 'small fish' at the same time as inflating their role, provides further evidence that the power attributed to the compromised was a postcolonial invention on the part of Frelimo.

Despite Frelimo and Machel's investment in 'decolonising the minds' of the compromised, it is doubtful that they achieved this goal. In his final speeches, Machel indicated that although there had been some success, there had also been serious setbacks. For example, some people fled the country as a result of the meeting, although Machel only disclosed information about the cases of three top officials of the Mozambican state: 'And precisely because of this meeting, today one element of the security gave himself to the racists... Jorge Costa'. Machel suggested that the escape of Costa represented a serious threat to the security of the country, '... for this reason', he said, 'get ready, he [JC] could bring on an invasion'. The other fugitives were the First Secretary of the Mozambican embassy in Harare, and a staff member to the presidency of the republic.<sup>149</sup>

Previous accounts of this meeting do not mention these limitations, contradictions and failures. Instead, they argue that during the meeting, 'the tone changed dramatically as the compromised slowly became convinced of their acceptance by Frelimo [...] Reconciliation had been achieved',<sup>150</sup> or that the compromised 'discussed frankly their own pasts'.<sup>151</sup> Such analyses distort Machel's performance and those of the compromised. Machel used deplorable language against the compromised ceaselessly and those who were accused returned to their seats showing little evidence of being reconciled. On the last day of the meeting, Machel was still commenting on the compromised's resistance to change by comparing them with the tail of a dog. 'If you insert and fasten the tail of a dog in a pipe during three years, on the day that you unfasten the tail unfolds again.'<sup>152</sup> On only three occasions did Machel seem happy; when calling AF 'my son'; when an old man named EL called Machel *Hossi* (God), and was forgiven by Machel for his past evil deeds; and when a man called MM, who had already been in a re-education camp for three years in the north of Mozambique, disclosed that he had denounced many Mozambicans to the PIDE, admitted guilt and asked for forgiveness. These cases, compared to the numerous others, provide insufficient evidence of reconciliation. However, these are also the cases presented in a recent documentary on the compromised,<sup>153</sup> in which the quandaries and violence that took place during the meeting were left out.

Besides the failures, Machel indicated that successes had been achieved by positing that, 'Many showed that they knew to assume the responsibility of their past...' The representatives of the various groups of compromised read their final speeches in which they promised to live and die for the patria. In his final speech Machel explicitly declared that it was his desire to use the compromised to provide a violent response in the civil war. Machel

147 RC, day 5, archives of RM.

148 Butler, 'Excitable Speech', p. 78.

149 RC, day 5, archives of RM.

150 Hanlon, *Mozambique*, p. 174.

151 Saul (ed.), *A Difficult Road*, p. 89.

152 RC, day 5, archives of RM.

153 Louwrier and Bertels, *Mozambique*.

singled out the fact that in their closing speeches the compromised had offered themselves to fight against the 'armed bandits', classifying this gesture as 'a revolutionary attitude'.

There is recent evidence that through the political police (SNASP), Frelimo created a secret structure named *Luta Contra-Bandidos* (LCB, Fight against Bandits) specialised in counter-guerrilla operations.<sup>154</sup> Some of the ex-soldiers of the Portuguese colonial army were incorporated in the ranks of the LCB. With the creation of these groups Frelimo was mimicking the example of the *Flechas*, special groups of counter-guerrillas within the Portuguese PIDE.<sup>155</sup> In spite of these re-enactments of ex-enemy military tactics, Frelimo and Machel were unable to eliminate their enemies and terminate the war through military means.

In the last months before his death, Machel had become alienated and incorrigible. One of his former aides, who treated Machel as 'A Thunder Storm in the Sky', broke the silence and briefly asserted that 'he used to drink a lot, he lost serenity, he used to get angry without purpose, he used to raise his voice, he used to get stuck on worthless details'.<sup>156</sup> However, Machel had already demonstrated some of these features in 1982. While facing alienation and political degradation, Machel was preparing to increase the persecution of his enemies beyond borders by going after the late Kamuzu Banda of Malawi. He had told journalists that the response of his government was 'to put missiles [along] the whole border with Malawi, we have lots of missiles; they just need targets'.<sup>157</sup> However, these measures were never implemented, as Machel died in Mbuzini, then enemy territory, on 19 October 1986.

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154 Cahen, 'Os Outros'.

155 *Ibid.*

156 F. Ganhão, 'Samora Machel: um relâmpago no céu', in A. Soupa (ed.), *Samora: Homem do Povo* (Maputo, Maguezo Editores, 2001), p. 17.

157 September 1986, archives of TVM.