

8 At the Margins of the Nation: Malawians at Heart in Mozambique

8.1 “Aah! Even I was afraid”: Mozambican Independence on the Ground

“Aah! Even I was afraid,” was the retrospective comment of one of my interviewees about his state of mind in the face of the “impending” moment of independence in 1975. This may be a startling reflection on what is by nature supposed to be a moment of joy for the formerly colonized. It may not be so surprising a comment if we consider the local history leading up to the moment of independence. We have seen in Chapter 7 that the majority of Nkhlongue’s inhabitants had ended up living in the Portuguese-controlled zone of the battle line, and many of them had begun to support the Portuguese counter-insurgency effort indirectly or directly. Above all for the latter, the revolution in Portugal and the subsequent recognition of Frelimo as the sole legitimate heir to the colonial state was a blow to their calculations. Once more, the Winds of History had changed the local situation abruptly and profoundly.

The idea of “ordinary people” being afraid of the moment of independence runs counter not only to popular imaginations but also to what has long been written by historians about independence. Historians initially tended to be pretty close allies of the newly independent nations in Africa. Not so differently from what had happened at the birth of historiography in Europe earlier, the resurgent historiography was to equip the new nations with their history. Historians took a comparatively uncritical stance towards the nation-building projects, being in many ways themselves part of them.¹ In relation to Mozambique, the Mozambican historian João Paulo Borges Coelho has aptly phrased this as “neighbourliness relations” that evolved between “Politics” and “History.”² Undoubtedly, scholars became more critical of the new national elites in light of the political and economic developments after the end of the early euphoria.³ At first, it was, however, primarily political scientists and not so much historians that addressed the history of

1 Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, “Historicising Nationalism in Africa,” *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 4 (2018): 11–12.

2 Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique,” 21.

3 Thus, Malyn Newitt has recently offered a very critical and compelling overview of Frelimo’s takeover in his *A Short History of Mozambique*: Malyn Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst, 2017), chap. 7.

what has been called the post-colonial African malaise. The focus was thereby more on colonial legacies (authoritarianism, despotism, tribalization) than on proper processes of decolonization,⁴ and more on external actors ("neo-colonialism," Cold War) and political elites ("neo-patrimonialism," "politics of the belly") than on local outcomes and dynamics. Essentializations (including culturalist ones) had been rather popular.

Certainly, in line with Cooper's call to avoid teleological narratives of independence, historians have increasingly begun to analyze late-colonial alternative roads not taken. But, similar to the older national historiography, these analyses have usually had their end point at the moment of independence. Only later did Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq highlight the need for empirical studies of competing nationalisms that transcended the moment of independence. Through their own studies they have contributed much to rejecting the independence myth of national unity.⁵ Another important strand of historiography has examined continuities in colonial and post-colonial governance, highlighting for example the role of the developmental state.⁶

As for social history, there has been limited interest in the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial period. Alexander Keese argues that what little interest there was has recently even tended to recede.⁷ This is where this chapter sets in

4 On this point, see: Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 170–173.

5 Larmer and Lecocq, "Historicising Nationalism in Africa"; Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). See as well: Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Lucas Barnabé Nkomo, *Uria Simango: um homem, uma causa* (Maputo: Novafrica, 2003).

6 For examples, see the issue on *Continuities in Governance in Late Colonial and Early Postcolonial East Africa* in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* or Cooper's concept of the Gatekeeper State: Andrew Burton and Michael Jennings, "Introduction: The Emperor's New Clothes? Continuities in Governance in Late Colonial and Early Postcolonial East Africa," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 1–25; Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See as well: Christophe Bonneuil, "Development as Experiment: Science and State Building in Late Colonial and Postcolonial Africa, 1930–1970," *Osiris* 15, no. 1 (2000): 258–281.

7 Alexander Keese, "Just like in Colonial Times? Administrative Practice and Local Reflections on 'Grassroots Neocolonialism' in Autonomous and Postcolonial Dahomey, 1958–1965," *The Journal of African History* 60, no. 2 (2019): 265. See as well: Alexander Keese, "Decolonisation, Improvised: A Social History of the Transfer of Power in Cabo Verde, 1974–1976," *Portuguese Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2017): 294–297. Historians had already complained about the lack of such studies in the 2000s. See: Stephen Ellis, "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," *The Journal of African His-*

as it examines the social history of decolonization on the ground. Highlighting the experiences and perceptions of the inhabitants of Nkhlongue across the moment of independence, this chapter hopes to make an important contribution to our understanding of what Arnold Temu once called “multiple meanings” of independence.⁸ We will investigate how life changed locally and how official government policy translated into local practice.

With respect to Mozambique, there are few empirical studies about (a part of) society that cut across the moment of independence and explicitly ask about the effects of decolonization.⁹ We have few if any inquiries into how Mozambicans actually experienced the transition from being subjects of an empire to being citizens of a nation. This is in line with the fact that Frelimo was one of the liberation movements that embarked on independence with the maximum of intellectual support. If there was an African hope on the scholarly horizon in the mid-1970s, this was definitely Mozambique, probably sidelined only by the intellectual attraction of Guinea-Bissau and especially Amílcar Cabral. In accordance with their own beliefs, scholars largely took Frelimo’s popular support for granted. With few exceptions,¹⁰ criticisms of certain policies began to rise only during the 1980s. It was only much later that such strong former party supporters like Allen Isaacman or John Saul admitted that they had been too confident of Frelimo.¹¹ Still, for many, Frelimo’s post-independence project remains one of the “most principled and decent ever proposed for the continent.”¹²

tory 43, no. 1 (2002): 1–26; M. Anne Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique,” *Africa* 76, no. 1 (2006): 106–108.

8 Arnold Temu, “Not Telling: African History at the End of the Millennium,” *South African Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (2000): 3.

9 Pamilla Gupta’s article, which claims to examine the “multiple and sometimes contradictory experiences of decolonization,” is based on anecdotal evidence only. See: Pamila Gupta, “Decolonization and (Dis)Possession in Lusophone Africa,” in *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa*, ed. Darshan Vigneswaran and Joel Quirk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 173.

10 One of the earliest serious questionings of the myth of unity was made by Leroy Vail and Landeg White. See: Vail and White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique*, 389–92. They were heavily criticized for it. See: Judith Head and David Hedges, “Problemas da história da Zambézia,” *Estudos Moçambicanos*, no. 4 (1983): 127–139.

11 Allen Isaacman, “Legacies of Engagement: Scholarship Informed by Political Commitment,” *African Studies Review* 46, no. 1 (2003): 1; John S. Saul, “Mozambique – Not Then but Now,” *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 127 (2011): 93–101.

12 These are the words of Norrie MacQueen: Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (London: Longman, 1997), 236. Despite his now more critical perspective, Saul remains generally positive in his appraisal of Frelimo. See: Saul, “Mozambique – Not Then but Now.” For another recent positive appraisal, see: Anna

Nevertheless, important research complicating the social dynamics of Mozambique's post-colonial history has been accomplished. This includes for example the area of agricultural policies. In this respect, scholars criticized Frelimo from the early stages onward for its focus on state farms and its neglect of the country's numerous small peasants. The gigantic top-down plans for villagization and collectivization also came under scrutiny. The effects of the shortages of consumer and producer goods were repeatedly pointed out, even though many emphasized external rather than internal reasons as a cause of them.¹³ These arguments were later explored more systematically by different scholars such as Merle Bowen in her impressive *The State against the Peasantry*, in which she argued that Frelimo's policies "proved to be as inimical to the peasantry as those of the Portuguese colonial regime,"¹⁴ or such as Sérgio Chichava in his analysis of the failure of the "socialization of the countryside."¹⁵

In the mid-1980s, such arguments, coupled with a critical stance toward Frelimo's policies against everything "traditional," also began to animate the debate on the origins and drivers of the Mozambican Civil War. In a deviation from the previously dominant destabilization theory, it was argued that Frelimo's actions had alienated wide parts of the peasantry and thus provided Renamo with a social base (see Chapter 9). Consequentially, many works on the Civil War have included accounts of the experiences of the post-independence years by "ordinary" Mozambicans.

The arguments offered in this chapter support much of what has been previously said about the alienation of the peasantry from the party and state appara-

Maria Gentili, "Queremos ser cidadãos': Citizenship in Mozambique from Frelimo to Frelimo," *Citizenship Studies* 21, no. 2 (2017): 182–195.

13 Aquino de Bragança et al., "A situação nas antigas zonas libertadas de Cabo Delgado" (Maputo: Oficina de História, 1983), accessed July 9, 2014, http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4503/1/a_situacao_nas_antigas.pdf; Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London: Zed Books, 1990), 95–131; Rosemary E. Galli, "The Food Crisis and the Socialist State in Lusophone Africa," *African Studies Review* 30, no. 1 (1987): 19–44; Bertil Egerö, *Mozambique, a Dream Undone: The Political Economy of Democracy, 1975–84* (Uppsala: Nordiska afrikainstitutet, 1990); Lars Rudebeck, "Entwicklung und Demokratie – Notizen zur Volksmacht in Mozambique," in *Agrargesellschaften im portugiesisch-sprachigen Afrika*, ed. Peter Meyns (Saarbrücken: Breitenbach, 1988), 111–127; Meyns, "Zur Praxis ländlicher Entwicklungspolitik in Afrika"; Adam, "Trick or Treat."

14 Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry*.

15 Sérgio Chichava, "They Can Kill Us but We Won't Go to the Communal Villages!' Peasants and the Policy of 'Socialisation of the Countryside' in Zambezia," *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 112–130. See also Kathleen Sheldon's work on the impact of Frelimo's agricultural policies on women: Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 165–179.

tus. Still, my contribution hopes to deepen our understanding of the social history of the period following Mozambican Independence in four respects.

First, what most analyses have in common is that the independence myth of national unity is still taken for granted. In the case of Mozambique, this view is especially strong, underpinned by the belief that the need for political mobilization in a war scenario was conducive to greater nationalist unity compared to other cases where decolonization was reached by more peaceful means.¹⁶ In combination with what has been said in the previous chapter, this one hopes to show that the alienation of the peasantry was not a process setting in only some years after independence,¹⁷ but that very different visions and predictions of the future existed already at the moment of independence. My argument is fully in line with that of Sayaka Funada-Classen, who has argued that the War of Independence produced not just unity but also disunity. But unlike Funada-Classen, I will try to analyze this disunity beyond the moment of independence.¹⁸

Connected to this is my second concern. Scholars writing about the post-independence history have suggested that the transition was easier in areas where Frelimo already had a presence during the War of Independence.¹⁹ As this book hopes to show, this is an idea resulting from a romantic reading of the war, which, at least in the case of Niassa, barely captures the war's complex and dynamic realities.

Third, many analyses of Frelimo's economic policies have focused on cases where the government's plans were realized at least in design. Nkhlongue was never made a communal village. Rather, Nkhlongue was one of those places where many government policies were trickling down at best. Certainly, this chapter will show that the post-colonial state could be highly intrusive and authoritarian, but as in colonial times its presence was in many ways weak, and its leverage to enforce its policies limited. This left quite some room for local adaptations and state evasion.

Last but not least, many works have emphasized the crucial role of Frelimo's policies against tradition in alienating people from the party. This chapter shows

¹⁶ On this point, see: Patrick Chabal, "Lusophone Africa in Historical and Comparative Perspective," in *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, by Patrick Chabal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 20–22.

¹⁷ Lubkemann captures the general tone of this argument, saying that "[w]ithin the first two years of independence the differences between the new government's vision of the postcolonial future and that imagined by the residents of Machaze became starkly—and consequentially—clear." See: Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos*, 118.

¹⁸ Funada-Classen, *The Origins of War in Mozambique*.

¹⁹ For examples, see: Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos*, 117; Newitt, *A Short History of Mozambique*, 153.

that these policies did indeed undermine Frelimo’s local credibility, especially as Frelimo had used the “traditional authorities” as important means to recruit support at the beginning of the War of Independence. However, the chapter also underlines the importance of not falling prey to the Aboriginal Delusion (see my comments in Section 1.4). “Traditions” were not as static and communitarian values not as strong as is often suggested. Consequentially, this chapter also argues that the main reason for the local discontent with Frelimo was not its fight against “obscurantism,” but the deterioration of the economic situation. This was especially pronounced as many Nkhlongueans had seen a distinct rise of their standard of living in the last years of colonialism.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. In a first part, we will briefly focus on people’s feelings and behavior after the end of the war when most people returned to the previous location of Nkhlongue and Malango. In a second part, we will then analyze people’s experiences of the first years of independence in the village.

8.2 “We even fled to Malawi”: The Moment of Independence in the Biographies of People from Nkhlongue

The moment of independence is usually associated with joy as far as it concerns the former colonized. But the dynamics analyzed in Chapter 7 allow us to understand that the end of the war and the anticipation of Frelimo rule could also generate quite different feelings among the villagers of Nkhlongue. As we have seen, Nkhlongue’s population had initially supported Frelimo. But the course of the war had made them supporters of the Portuguese war effort. This made a lot of sense from a local perspective. For not only had the Portuguese state indeed made its policies more inclusive and less repressive, but there was also little to suggest that Frelimo could win this war.²⁰ The revolution in Portugal caught most of the former villagers quite unprepared: they had ended up on the wrong side of the conflict.

The expectation of having a Frelimo government was far from enjoyable for everybody. “Aah! Even I was afraid,”²¹ were the words of one who had worked

²⁰ On the latter point, see for example: PA, I115: interview with *P0160* (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:43:54–00:44:34; ANTT, PIDE, SC, CI(2), GU, cx. 18, f. 331–342; DGS SUBVC, “Relatório de Situação do Dist do Niassa: Período de 30ABR a 15MAI73” (Vila Cabral, May 19, 1973), 73; APGGN, 1 A: Relatório de Acção Psicológica N.º 3/74 do Posto Administrativo do Cóbue, período de 01 a 31MAR74 (Cóbue, April 1, 1974).

²¹ PA, I115: interview with *P0160* (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:57:45–00:57:50.

for the technical services of the navy base, and also served as a guide for the colonial troops. He was afraid of losing his job and afraid of suffering reprisals.²² Rumors spread about Frelimo intending to kill the colonial “collaborators,” and at least four men from Nkhlongue, three of whom had joined the *Grupos Especiais*, fled to Malawi. One of these four put it like this:

We were afraid when we heard it. We even fled to Malawi when we heard that Samora [Machel] said that they will kill all those who had worked for the Portuguese. We said: “they will kill us?” We were guilty of having done the job and that’s why we fled to Malawi [...] ²³

The majority was certainly happy that the war was over as this finally ended the restrictions on free movement.²⁴ But to draw the conclusion that everybody was now celebrating and already had a clear-cut plan for the future would be misleading. This is also shown by a report from the representative of the UNHCR in Tanzania. Barely a month before Mozambican Independence in 1975, he visited the Mozambican refugee settlements along the border to explore people’s intentions regarding a possible return to Mozambique. He reported that the “mass appear undecided and are following a policy of ‘wait and see’.”²⁵ Among the reasons for this lack of determination, he listed that people were uncertain “about the sort of reception they will receive from the authorities in Mozambique” and stated that people were afraid “that they may be treated harshly or as second-class citizens.”²⁶ It cannot be forgotten in this respect that many people of the region had initially cooperated with Frelimo. It was against Frelimo’s will and policy that they, then, fled either to the *aldeamentos* or abroad. Frelimo’s policy had been one of keeping the people in the country under its control. Frelimo’s resentment toward the people who had fled the country during the war and who had not supported the war effort to the end was also clearly evident in the speeches and statements that govern-

22 PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:57:33–00:58:54.
23 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:15:29–01:16:10. See as well: PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:53:24–00:53:53; PA, I091: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, December 23, 2015), min 00:16:00–00:17:22. For people fleeing from other villages, see: PA, I095: interview with P1453 (♂, ~1947), P1506 (♀, ~1950) (Malango, January 28, 2016), 01:10:08–01:11:47.

24 PA, I145: interview with P0284 (♂, 1966), P0273 (♀, 1950) (Metangula, June 9, 2016), min 00:04:15–00:05:01; PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 01:51:19–01:51:42.

25 AUNHCR, Box 1124, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.TAN.MOZ[a]: Robert Chambers, “Note on the Return of Refugees to Mozambique” (Dar-es-Salaam, June 9, 1975), 1.

26 AUNHCR, Box 1124, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.TAN.MOZ[a]: Robert Chambers, “Note on the Return of Refugees to Mozambique” (Dar-es-Salaam, June 9, 1975), 1.

ment officials made locally in the aftermath of the war.²⁷ In a speech in Chissindo near Metangula in October 1975, Armando Guebuza, Mozambique’s new interior minister, accused returnees from Tanzania of having done nothing but dance and drink during the war.²⁸

However, at the level of Nkhlongue’s former population, most of the worst fears did not come true. In fact, it was the permanent employees of the technical services of the navy base that could keep their jobs.²⁹ Far from suffering reprisals, they belonged to the group of late colonial social climbers that could sustain their privileges into independent Mozambique. Similarly, those who had fled to Malawi because of the aforementioned rumors had already returned to Mozambique after about a year, as there were no killings going on.³⁰

Nobody from Nkhlongue who had joined the colonial ranks during the war was sent to one of Frelimo’s re-education camps.³¹ But this is in fact no real surprise. For though one could be tempted to assume otherwise,³² these camps were not built for colonial “collaborators” in the first place. Rather, the two main groups sent to these camps until 1976 were alleged prostitutes (more than 50 percent of the

27 For examples, see: Aurélio Valente Langa, *Memórias de um combatente da causa: O passado que levou o verso da minha vida* (Maputo: JV, 2011), 293–94; APGGN, 1 A: Assembleia Provincial VI Sessão: Síntese Final do estudo em grupos dos discursos proferido por sua Excelencia Senhor Presidente do Partido Frelimo e Presidente da República Popular de Moçambique no comício popular realizado em Lichinga, durante a sua histórica visita a esta província (Lichinga, November 30, 1979), 2; APGGN, 1 A: 8a Sessão do Comité Geral: Resolução de Política Geral (Maputo, February 27, 1976), 20; APGGN, 1 A: Síntese do Relatório do Distrito de Amaramba, Primeira Reunião de Administradores, Comissários Políticos e Grupos Dinamizadores dos Distritos da Província do Niassa (Lichinga, May 20, 1976), 2.

28 AUNHCR, Box 1124, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.TAN.MOZ[b]: H. Idoyaga, “Memorandum HCR/MOZ/313/75: Excerpts Concerning Returned Mozambican Refugees from Speeches by Mozambican Minister of Interior, Mr. A. Guebuza” (Geneva, November 20, 1975). For more details, see: Zeman, “Caught between the Guerrilla and the Colonial State,” 133–134.

29 PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:57:53–00:58:54; PA, I047: interview with P0596 (♂, ~1950) (Metangula, August 21, 2013), min 00:24:28–00:26:20; PA, I076: interview with P1449 (♂, ~1948) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:20:44–00:22:05; PA, I008: interview with P0299 (♂, 1938) (Nkhlongue, September 1, 2010), min 00:57:18–01:00:09; AHMar, Colorado, Pasta 066/MO: Relação do pessoal civil voluntário para receber instrução nas lanchas, n.d.

30 PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:21:51–01:22:07.

31 PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:48:59–00:49:07; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:26:36–01:27:16.

32 For examples where this is suggested, see: João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Da violência colonial ordenada à ordem pós-colonial violenta: Sobre um legado das guerras coloniais nas ex-colónias portuguesas,” *Lusotopie*, no. 10 (2003): 191; Oliveira, “Saved by the Civil War,” 138; Rodrigues, “Vidas deslocadas pelo colonialismo e pela guerra,” 52.

inmates) and former Frelimo fighters who had deserted during the war. Later, the number of those who Frelimo considered “drug addicts” grew more important.³³ In this light, it is very plausible that the danger of being sent to re-education contributed to the reasoning of two of my interviewees not to return to Mozambique after the war for very long periods as they had deserted Frelimo during the war.³⁴ One of them returned in 2007, and the other only in 2012.³⁵

While, thus, some were rather relieved at the way things were going, others were disappointed. These included the men who had stayed with Frelimo until the end of the war. Two who had probably done so now had to return to the village, obviously feeling robbed of the reward for their struggle. One of them complained that Frelimo had forgotten who had fought for them during the war. In his words:

Now, at the end of the war, Frelimo made a little little little little bit an error. For, they only said: “the war is over.” They did not pursue with whom they were. [...] This is called an error. [...] I went back where I came from. We went to Malango, there where we came from.³⁶

This quotation requires special attention with regard to the interviewee’s emphasis on the smallness of the error committed by Frelimo. Quite certainly, the inter-

33 In 1976, there were 1,942 inmates in five re-education camps Niassa. The two largest camps were Msawizi and Ilumba. They were for alleged prostitutes and were guarded and run entirely by women. In 1976, they had together 1,101 inmates (plus an additional 76 children who were taken to the camps with their mothers). Mtelela and Chiputo, which were mainly for dissidents and deserters, had 131 and 315 inmates respectively. Naisseco hosted 395 people who were considered “drug addicts.” See: APGGN, 1 A: Relatório Político-Militar da Província do Niassa (Lichinga, March 24, 1976), 4; APGGN, 1 A: Efectivos dos Campos de Reeducação, n.d.; APGGN, 1 A: Relação dos responsáveis e pessoal em serviço nos Campos de Reeducação, n.d.; APGGN, 1 A: Relação das crianças que se encontram nos campos com suas mães, n.d. See as well: PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:49:07–00:49:28. See as well Machava who has shown that many inmates were detained for minor common law offenses: Machava, *The Morality of Revolution*, 218–219, 227.

34 One of them did explicitly deny that the fear to end up in a re-education camp had something to do with his staying in Malawi. See: PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:13:51–01:15:28. But there is some reason to doubt the credibility of this statement. See: PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:50:39–00:52:04.

35 PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), 01:15:28–01:23:12; PA, I038: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:43:37–00:44:43.

36 “Agora, no fim da guerra, a Frelimo fez um pouco um pouco um pouco erro, porque só dizer: ‘guerra acabou.’ Não procurou, não procurou: estavam com quem? [...] Este chama-se erro. [...] Ia ficar onde que saía. Nos íamos para Malango, aí, onde saímos.”, PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 00:43:33–00:44:36. For the fate of the other who had already passed away in 2006, see: PA, I105: interview with P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 01:27:06–01:28:21.

viewee would have formulated his statement much more sharply 30 years ago. His emphasis on the negligibility of the error is most probably a consequence of the fact that he is a beneficiary of Frelimo's changed memory politics mentioned in the previous chapter (see Section 7.2). As a result of this, he was admitted to the *dinheiro dos antigos combatentes* in 1999, made a member of the provincial capital's parliament, and appointed a judge of a local court.³⁷ This is quite an astonishing late advancement for his deeds in the war.

It is quite certain that the lack of direct promotion after independence was linked to his lack of formal Portuguese education. It is true that the respective interviewee, despite being a Muslim, claimed to have visited the Anglican school in Messumba for some years. With this experience, he was a clear exception among the population of Nkhlongue. But in light of his rather basic knowledge of Portuguese his formal education must have been limited. Furthermore, he himself pointed out that the only difference between him and Messumba-born Eduardo Mulémbwè, president of the national assembly from 1995 to 2009 and one of Frelimo's most influential politicians, was the fact that Mulémbwè had continued the school. My interviewee stopped it, as in order to continue he would have needed to convert to Christianity, according to his account.³⁸ This explanation is also in line with the analyses of Liazzat Bonate on the post-war experiences of (female) Muslim combatants and of Harry West on those of female combatants in general. They both came to the conclusion that many of their interviewees came away empty-handed after independence "due to their lack of formal Portuguese schooling."³⁹ Bonate put it like this:

[G]uerrilla fighters and former political prisoners who completed at least two classes of the formal Portuguese schooling became party cadres, took government jobs or stayed in the military. But those who could neither write nor read in Portuguese [...] had no other options than to take up subsistence farming or take low-paying or symbolic jobs, like *Grupos Dinamizadores*, or return to the jobs they held before the war. Women were relegated to a domestic sphere and moved to live with their parents in villages until they married. Thus they could view their situation as unchanged or even having worsened.⁴⁰

37 PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 01:28:02–01:37:33.

38 PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 00:16:09–00:21:42.

39 The quotation is from Bonate: Bonate, "Muslim Memories," 242. For West, see: Harry G. West, "Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of Frelimo's 'Female Detachment,'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2000): 189. For the disappointment of female veterans about their fate after independence, see as well: Jonna Katto, "Emotions in Protest: Unsettling the Past in Ex-combatants' Personal Accounts in Northern Mozambique," *Oral History* 46, no. 2 (2018): 53–62.

40 Bonate, "Muslim Memories," 256.

We can observe that it was those who enjoyed higher levels of colonial education that now witnessed a further promotion.⁴¹ In the case of Nkhlongue's former population, this was Artur Tolohate. Tolohate was born in Nkhlongue in 1943. Belonging to the village's Christian minority, he left the village with his mother and siblings to live in Messumba around 1952. There, he visited the school of the Anglican mission. In 1965, he joined Frelimo and quickly became one of the movement's most important photographers. After the war, he moved to Maputo, where he became the personal photographer of both Samora Machel and his successor Joaquim Chissano.⁴² While a comparatively large number of the Messumba-educated Christians found their way into Mozambique's post-colonial elite in the manner of Tolohate,⁴³ the inhabitants of the predominantly Muslim villages south of Metangula had little "success" in this respect.

For the majority of Nkhlongue's resettled population, independence meant a return to the village. However, many of those who had migrated to the hamlet of Malango in the years before the war did not return there but went again to Nkhlongue proper.⁴⁴ In the case of the refugees staying in Tanzania, the governments

41 See also Egerö's observations for the Mueda Plateau that Frelimo preferred educated *regressados* to war veterans when staffing local organs. See: Egerö, *Mozambique, a Dream Undone*, 157.

42 Official sources give Messumba as his place of birth. My informants, including Tolohate's siblings, stated however that Tolohate was born in Nkhlongue. While Tolohate's father was from Nkhlongue, his mother was from Messumba. See: Hilário Matusse, "Artur Torohate: De guerrilheiro a homem da imagem," *Tempo*, no. 780 (September 22, 1985): 26–27; Teresa Sá Nogueira, "Cinema Moçambicano (3). Artur Torohate: Cineasta guerrilheiro," *Tempo*, n. 830 (September 7, 1986): 44–45; AIM, "Mozambique: Death of Leading Photographer," *allAfrica*, March 10, 2003, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/20030303100613.html>; PA, I126: interview with P1466 (♂, 1952) (Chuangwa, April 28, 2016), min 00:01:02–00:06:02; PA, I165: interview with P1467 (♀, 1948) (Lichinga, June 27, 2016), min 00:01:41–00:05:49, 00:13:44–00:15:33; PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:38:24–00:41:41.

43 Another prominent figure in this respect is Brazão Mazula, president of the National Elections Commission (CNE) during Mozambique's first multi-party elections in 1994 and later vice-chancellor of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. The list also includes Mazula's younger brother Aguiar Mazula, who was Minister of Labor, Minister of State Administration and Minister of Defence. Huhn claimed that John Kachamila, Mozambique's former Minister of Natural Resources and later of Environmental Affairs, was equally among the graduates of Messumba. This is though not correct according to Kachamila's published memoirs. Therein, Kachamila stated that his family emigrated to Tanganyika when he was about four years old and that he did all his schooling in Tanganyika. See: Huhn, "Sustenance and Sociability," 52–53; John William Kachamila, *Do Vale do Rift ao sonho da liberdade: Memórias de Lissungu* (Maputo: Nachingwea, 2016).

44 PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 02:18:30–02:22:39; PA, I049: interview with P0267 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 23, 2013), min 00:17:45–00:18:15; PA, I073: interview with P1012 (♂, 1955) (Malango, September 5, 2013), min 00:25:35–00:26:23; PA, I068: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 2, 2013), min 00:50:48–00:52:31.

of Mozambique and Tanzania (in collaboration with the UNHCR) made official arrangements to repatriate the people, organizing transport by boat.⁴⁵ Several people from Nkhlongue returned that way in October 1975, shortly before the rains.⁴⁶ In the case of the refugees living in Malawi, there was no comparable official coordination.⁴⁷ Rather, those who returned did so on their own.

While most people returned to Nkhlongue and Malango, some stayed in Metangula and Malawi. In the case of Tanzania, I could identify only one person who did not return. But she had lived there with her husband already before the war.⁴⁸ It is rather difficult to deduce the reasons for people's decisions to return or to not return to the village from people's own statements. Most people who returned portrayed it as a rather obvious decision without any alternative.⁴⁹ The fact that others stayed shows, however, that there were certainly different factors at play. Those who stayed in Metangula were those who could keep their jobs or those who had married there.⁵⁰ But, for most others, it made more sense to return to Nkhlongue or Malango, also because they could have bigger farms here.⁵¹ One interviewee ex-

45 See various documents in: AUNHCR, Box 1124, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.TAN.MOZ.

46 PA, I145: interview with P0284 (♂, 1966), P0273 (♀, 1950) (Metangula, June 9, 2016), min 00:01:10–00:03:33; PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 01:45:12–01:46:28. Some of the people are also included on the official list of those who returned. See: APGGN, 1 A: Pedro Chindandali, “Lista de regressados que desembarcam em Metangula em 8.10.975” (Metangula: Frelimo, October 11, 1975).

47 APGGN, 1 A: Relatório Político-Militar da Província do Niassa (Lichinga, March 24, 1976), 5.

48 For examples of those who stayed in Malawi, see: PA, I032: interview with P1196 (♀, ~1955), P0793 (♀, 1939), P0792 (♂, 1917) (Chipoka (Malawi), April 25, 2012), min 00:00:02–00:08:19; PA, I132: interview with P1439 (♂, ~1940), P1507 (♀, ~1930), P1508 (♀) (Ndegue (Salima), June 1, 2016); PA, I120: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:14:35–01:20:48. For the one who stayed in Tanzania, see: PA, I142: interview with P0743 (♀, ~1930) (Nkhlongue, June 8, 2016).

49 PA, I041: interview with P0951 (♀, 1948), P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, August 16, 2013), min 00:31:20–00:32:40; PA, I040: interview with P1030 (♀, 1965), P1009 (♀, 1958), P1029 (♂, ~1959) (Malango, August 16, 2013), min 01:08:57–01:09:20; PA, I054: interview with P0554 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2013), min 00:41:00–00:42:11; PA, I069: interview with P0650 (♀, 1939) (Nkhlongue, September 2, 2013), min 00:26:54–00:28:04; PA, I078: interview with P0258 (♂, 1953) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:04:31–00:04:55; PA, I052: interview with (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, August 26, 2013), min 00:24:24–00:25:23; PA, I044: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:17:15–00:18:23.

50 PA, I108: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 00:39:40–00:40:59; PA, I074: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:37:12–00:37:50; PA, I076: interview with P1449 (♂, ~1948) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:20:44–00:22:05; PA, I047: interview with P0596 (♂, ~1950) (Metangula, August 21, 2013), min 00:24:28–00:26:20.

51 PA, I040: interview with P1030 (♀, 1965), P1009 (♀, 1958), P1029 (♂, ~1959) (Malango, August 16, 2013), min 00:47:26–00:47:51; PA, I054: interview with P0554 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 27,

plicitly stated people needed money to stay in Metangula.⁵² However, the end of the war and the retreat of the Portuguese had gone hand in hand with the disappearance of many jobs.⁵³ We can also assume that the decision also depended on people's age. It seems that younger people were more willing to stay in Metangula than older people. The young had spent considerable parts of their lives in Metangula and preferred town to village life. One woman, born in 1960, for example, stated that she would have liked to stay in Metangula but that it was her mother who urged her to come back to the village to make her *machamba* and marry.⁵⁴

The decision to stay or leave, thus, depended heavily on one's prospects at the place of exile. This seems to have also been at stake in the case of those who had fled abroad. While the refugees in Tanzania had mostly lived in official refugee villages,⁵⁵ those in Malawi had apparently been integrated much more into local society. This integration was certainly also facilitated by the cultural commonalities (including the same language) that the refugees found in Malawi. It is also important to keep in mind that the end of the war in Mozambique coincided with a politically tense time in Tanzania as the country entered the coercive phase of its post-colonial villagization scheme.⁵⁶ This may have made staying in Tanzania far less attractive.

2013), min 00:41:00–00:42:11; PA, I062: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, August 30, 2013), min 00:27:17–00:27:49, 00:36:47–00:38:27. One stated that her field in Metangula had been just as large as that in Malango: PA, I042: interview with P1193 (♀, 1953) (Malango, August 17, 2013), min 00:19:11–00:20:43.

52 PA, I085: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:19:21–00:20:39.

53 PA, I086: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:15:54–00:16:54.

54 PA, I039: interview with P0898 (♀, 1960) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:27:48–00:29:57, 00:32:45–00:33:43.

55 PA, I041: interview with P0951 (♀, 1948), P0242 (♂, 1945) (Malango, August 16, 2013), min 00:28:50–00:30:44.

56 Yusufu Qwaray Lawi, "Tanzania's Operation Vijiji and Local Ecological Consciousness: The Case of Eastern Iraqwland, 1974–1976," *The Journal of African History* 48, no. 1 (2007): 69–93; James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 223–261.

8.3 From Taxing Natives to Taxing Citizens: The New Government on the Ground

Many of my interviewees were initially pretty reluctant to speak about the new government of independent Mozambique. An 81-year-old woman living in Malango answered “[m]aybe, the government knows,”⁵⁷ when I asked her about changes between the colonial and post-colonial government. Other interviewees made comparable statements to similar questions. One answered my question of what she thought of the new government in the following way:

But we don't know anything of the government. We didn't go to school, did we? We don't know these things.⁵⁸

The lack of enthusiasm for and the level of indifference towards this supposedly very important moment of Mozambican history is startling. There are different possible explanations for why people replied the way they did. Disappointment about the course of things after independence must certainly be considered an important factor in this respect. Or, as a former Frelimo fighter put it:

We thought that, maybe, when the Portuguese leave, we will live well.⁵⁹

But, as we have already seen, in the case of many people from Nkhlongue, the disappointment about the course of the nationalist cause even preceded the moment of independence. Also, if the end of the war fueled new expectations and hopes for the future, they were not shared by everyone and not everyone had the same expectations. One interviewee answered the question of whether he was happy that Mozambique finally had its own independent government with the following words:

We were happy that the war was over, but not because we will receive a new government. Yes, there were those who were saying this. But, I, myself, was just happy that the war was over.⁶⁰

57 PA, I046: interview with *P1045* (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:35:58–00:36:04.

58 PA, I101: interview with *P0316* (♀, ~1952) (Nkhlongue, February 22, 2016), min 00:38:36–00:38:59.

59 PA, I038: interview with *P1439* (♂, ~1940) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:05:21–00:05:24.

60 PA, I093: interview with *P0050* (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 01:51:19–01:51:42.

It is, of course, difficult to assess the opinions and perspectives people held at the time through the means of oral history. But my interviews leave little doubt that if there was enthusiasm it was dampened rather quickly.

(Dis-)Continuities between the Colonial and Post-colonial Government

At first glance, the differences between Mozambique's colonial and post-colonial governments could not be much greater. While the *Estado Novo* has been characterized as a corporatist, authoritarian and even fascist regime, Frelimo saw itself as a progressive Marxist-Leninist vanguard. The party envisaged nothing less than a complete transformation of society and the creation of a "new man." Agriculture was to be collectivized and mechanized, and banks and other enterprises to be nationalized. People's lives were to be organized in communal villages, which ought to provide the health and education infrastructure that had previously been lacking. But Frelimo's socialist modernization course included not only the transformation of the economy and the promotion of the health and education sector but also the fight against "obscurantism." In what was to become known as the *abaixo* politics, Frelimo combated all so-called "vices" of both colonial and "traditional" society such as "tribalism," religion, prostitution, and witchcraft. The "traditional authorities" were denounced as colonial collaborators and not recognized by the state anymore. Instead, their place was taken by village and party secretaries and so-called *Grupos Dinamizadores* ("dynamizing groups"), consisting of local party loyalists.

But, as other scholars such as Anne Pitcher and Harri Englund have already argued, "the reality did not necessarily mirror the propaganda."⁶¹ Frelimo's capacity to actually "implement in practice the changes promised in its rhetoric"⁶² was in fact limited. This was, as we will now see, no different in the case of Nkhlongue and is a valid assessment both for policies that were welcomed by the majority of the people and policies that were disapproved of by most people. But one has also to consider that while rhetoric alone did not change anything it could still be heard. So not only did it influence people's perceptions of what was going on, but it could also undermine Frelimo's political credibility in many different ways.

This is probably best demonstrated by looking at what happened to Nkhlongue's political leadership. Nkhlongue's chief was indeed deposed. He had no more

⁶¹ Pitcher, "Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below," 90.

⁶² Harri Englund, *From War to Peace on the Mozambique-Malawi Borderland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 13.

power in the state's eyes after independence. But it was his nephew and designated successor who was made the village secretary.⁶³ The sources leave little doubt that the two were very close. Such a constellation, where the secretary came from the same lineage as the former chief, has been reported from other places in Mozambique.⁶⁴ It can be assumed that such arrangements disappointed the followers of Frelimo's much more progressive propaganda. However, it seems that the followers of the progressive line were in fact in a minority in the case of Nkhlongue. Here, Frelimo's modernizing discourse found little resonance.

In the case of the selection of the village secretary, then, Frelimo's credibility was most probably damaged not so much by the propaganda that was only half-realized but by the very propaganda itself, since this did not correspond to people's historical experiences. For as we have already seen in the previous chapter, Frelimo had relied extensively on chiefs to recruit people to their cause at the beginning of the armed struggle. To decry them now generally as colonial "collaborators" was somewhat inconsequential. Or, as one interviewee put it:

In colonial times, the Portuguese condemned the chiefs, as Frelimo had used them as a means [to mobilize people]. [Frelimo's fighters] came here to speak to the chiefs, as they knew how to mobilize people and all this stuff. Now, when the government of Frelimo came, it turned out to be very bad for the chiefs. It was the chiefs who had to take the consequences.⁶⁵

⁶³ Opinions differ as to how he was chosen. Some say that he was chosen by (the) people of the village, others claim that it was the government that selected him. In any case, this diversity of opinions suggests that the process was hardly fully transparent. See: PA, I118: interview with *P1218* (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:33:34–00:34:11; PA, I062: interview with *P0713* (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, August 30, 2013), min 00:43:50–00:44:44; PA, I115: interview with *P0160* (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 02:18:13–02:18:35; PA, I124: interview with *P0376* (♂, 1968) (Nkhlongue, April 26, 2016), min 00:59:09–01:00:16; PA, I141: interview with *P0375* (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:42:45–00:43:29; PA, I144: interview with *P0411* (♂, 1965) (Nkhlongue, June 8, 2016), min 00:14:53–00:15:15; PA, I133: interview with *P1473* (♂ ~1938), *P1504* (♀) (Limbi, June 1, 2016), min 00:55:43–00:58:29; PA, I119: interview with *P0855* (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 00:59:54–01:00:55.

⁶⁴ Pérez-Niño, "Post-Conflict Agrarian Change in Angónia," 165.

⁶⁵ PA, I074: interview with *P0160* (♂, 1952) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:25:59–00:26:48. For similar statements, see: PA, I123: interview with *P1460* (♀), *P1461* (♂, ~1935), *P1462* (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 01:23:02–01:25:23; PA, I113: interview with *P0367* (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, April 13, 2016), min 02:17:00–02:19:52; PA, I077: interview with *P1489* (♂) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:12:22–00:14:00. See as well the work of Liazzat Bonate who has emphasized the importance of "traditional" and regional authorities for Frelimo in recruiting supporters in Cabo Delgado: Bonate, "Traditions and Transitions," chap. 6.

The interviews suggest that most villagers not only grappled to understand Frelimo's attitude towards the chiefs, but also had problems with the party's propaganda against religion and above all initiation rites.⁶⁶ People told me that they had to practice their rituals in hiding.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the government is said to have threatened to use the village mosque as a school if the people would not build one that was larger than the mosque.⁶⁸ However, it must also be emphasized that, within the village, the government's anti-traditionalism seems to have remained ambiguous.⁶⁹ This is shown by the fact that the new village secretary was himself a leading Muslim of the community and later even became the village's imam.

Furthermore, we should probably not overestimate people's general dissatisfaction with these policies.⁷⁰ "Traditions" are not as static as they are sometimes portrayed in the context of such questions.⁷¹ This is best shown by looking at the history of these so-called "traditions": there is no doubt that, for example, initiation rites have remained very popular until the present. Nevertheless, we can also observe that these rites have changed considerably since independence. The initiation rites for girls, for example, previously had comprised four stages. Today, only one of these stages is practiced any longer. My interviewees point to the fact that this changed after independence, and that young women would nowa-

66 PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 01:06:19–01:08:43; PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M'chepa, January 27, 2016), min 01:02:04–01:02:42; PA, I145: interview with P0284 (♂, 1966), P0273 (♀, 1950) (Metangula, June 9, 2016), min 00:05:25–00:06:30; PA, I133: interview with P1473 (♂ ~1938), P1504 (♀) (Limbi, June 1, 2016), min 00:49:14–00:49:57. For the wider region, see: PA, I097: interview with P1454 (♂, ~1951) (Malango, February 5, 2016), min 01:36:40–01:40:20; PA, I099: interview with P1420 (♂, ~1922) (Ngongo, February 16, 2016), min 00:23:46–00:26:43; PA, I149: interview with P1501 (♂, 1949), P1513 (♂, 1943) (Chinuni, June 11, 2016), min 00:24:17–00:24:43.

67 PA, I093: interview with P0050 (♂, ~1922) (Nkhlongue, January 19, 2016), min 01:22:11–01:22:32; PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:54:22–00:55:12.

68 PA, I086: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:25:33–00:27:57.

69 PA, I080: interview with P0641 (♂, 1952) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:33:27–00:35:30; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:42:34–00:45:02.

70 On this point, see as well: Bridget O'Laughlin, "Class and the Customary: The Ambiguous Legacy of the Indigenato in Mozambique," *African Affairs* 99, no. 394 (2000): 30.

71 Olaf Juergensen, for example, portrayed it as very normal that people in the district of Angonia (Tete) were against Frelimo's anti-traditionalism. He asked: "But why should the peasantry not celebrate its 'traditionalism?', particularly in isolated locations such as Angonia." See: Juergensen, "Peasants on the Periphery," 189.

days decline the other three stages.⁷² Similarly, it is above all the old people and only very few young that still go to the mosque regularly today.⁷³ It is thus reasonable to assume that the opinions of different people and different generations were somewhat divided on the question of Frelimo's anti-traditionalism, even if this cannot be reconstructed with complete certainty with the available sources.

One should also be cautious with generalizing statements about the widespread unpopularity of Frelimo's *abaixo* politics since this issue was thoroughly explored by Renamo's propaganda after the Civil War. As we will see in the next chapter, Renamo was locally quite successful in spreading its version of history. On the other hand, it was certainly also people's experiences from the post-independence years that made it so easy for Renamo to convince people of its views.

While Frelimo's anti-traditionalism represented a clear break with the past, there were surprising continuities in another area, namely that of state employees. Following Nicolas Bancel, one could say that Frelimo in fact propagated a rupture less with the late colonial society than with the "traditional" order of peasant society.⁷⁴ We have already seen that the permanent employees of the Portuguese navy base could keep their jobs after independence. This is understandable, since they knew how to maintain the operation of the base (which now Frelimo intended to use), but it is still noteworthy since their duties during the war had included accompanying operations of Portuguese forces against Frelimo fighters as guides or carriers. Similarly, the first administrator of independent Lago District had been working for the colonial state since 1963.⁷⁵ Most of the colonial policemen

72 PA, I156: interview with P1478 (♀) (Metangula, June 18, 2016), min 00:29:37–00:30:16; PA, I048: interview with P1446 (♂, ~1945) (Metangula, August 21, 2013), min 00:19:36–00:27:20; PA, I075: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:11:18–00:14:39; PA, I054: interview with P0554 (♀, 1949) (Nkhlongue, August 27, 2013), min 00:58:27–01:03:52; PA, I058: interview with P1074 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, August 28, 2013), min 00:05:01–00:11:12; PA, I059: interview with P0090 (♀, ~1932) (Metangula, August 29, 2013), min 01:06:04–01:08:49.

73 However, more orthodox (Sunni) currents of Islam have recently begun to gain a foothold among younger people.

74 Bancel formulated this idea in connection with the developments in French colonies in the 1950s. My thanks go to Christian Hadorn, who brought Bancel's argument to my attention. See: Hervé Sciardet, "De la colonisation à la décolonisation: les modes de constitution de la Françafrique. Une table ronde entre Nicolas Bancel et Jean-Pierre Dozon," *Mouvements*, no. 21–22 (2002): 23.

75 He had previously been a deputy district administrator. It is, however, unclear whether in Metangula or elsewhere. See: APGGN, 1 A: Salomão Cossa, "Mapa com os elementos respeitantes aos trabalhadores dos Serviços de Administração Civil, em serviço nesta província" (Lichinga, June 2, 1977); APGGN, 1 A: Carta N.º 144/I/3 de Alfredo Lituri (Administração do Distrito de Lago) à Secretaria Provincial dos Serviços de Administração Civil do Niassa (Metangula, April 20, 1977).

could keep their jobs, at least in the beginning.⁷⁶ In their files we can read things like “[v]ery actively trying to adapt himself to the new political reality.”⁷⁷

Such continuities could do their part to provoke the view that government remained government, also after independence. The same is true for the question of taxation. In the district report of Metangula for July 1975, the first month after independence, the administrator in the state’s services since 1963 wrote the following:

In general, the people have been complying the directives transmitted directly or through the *Grupos Dinamizadores*. But they have not done so in the case of the payment of the tax, although insistent attempts have been made to explain to them the need and objective of its payment at this political moment of time.⁷⁸

Similarly, the administrator of the locality of Cobué lamented two months later that only nine people had paid the tax, even though he had made every effort to “elucidate” the people about the difference between the current tax and the one they had paid in colonial times.⁷⁹ However, there is no doubt that even the administrators were well aware of the fact that, in many respects, taxation remained taxation. For as late as 1978 they used still the pre-printed forms from colonial times in order to report to the provincial administration the number of taxes collected.⁸⁰ In line with this, a provincial report of 1976 stated that many people were

⁷⁶ See: APGGN, 1 A: Carta N.º 144/1/3 de Alfredo Lituri (Administração do Distrito de Lago) à Secretaria Provincial dos Serviços de Administração Civil do Niassa (Metangula, April 20, 1977); APGGN, 1 A: Paulino C. Hamela (Comandante Provincial das Forças Policiais do Niassa), “Relatório” (Lichinga, October 22, 1978), 5.

⁷⁷ One of these policemen was from Malango. See: APGGN, QJ: Administração do Distrito de Metangula, “Relação dos elementos de identificação completa, dos Guardas Administrativos em serviço nesta área administrativa, conforme Cir. Conf. 29/MI/75, de 13 de Dezembro de 1975,” March 10, 1976. See as well: APGGN, QJ: Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório da Administração do Distrito de Metangula, Julho 1975” (Metangula, August 4, 1975), 2.

⁷⁸ APGGN, QJ: Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório da Administração do Distrito de Metangula, Julho 1975” (Metangula, August 4, 1975), 2.

⁷⁹ APGGN, QJ: Acta da Reunião de todos os responsáveis das forças populares, dos grupos dinamizadores de círculo e localidade e ainda responsáveis da administração, realizada aos 12 de Outubro de 1975 (Cóbue, October 12, 1975).

⁸⁰ APGGN, QJ: Luciano da Fonseca Henriques, “Administração do Distrito de Metangula: Mapa comparativo da cobrança do Imposto Domciliário realizada no mês de Janeiro de 1978” (Metangula, February 10, 1978). On this point see as well Benedito Machava and Euclido Gonçalves, who have argued that “the format, form and style of bureaucratic documents continued almost unaltered” in general after independence: Machava and Gonçalves, “The Dead Archive,” 555–556.

unwilling to pay taxes because “some administrators were still the same as the colonial ones.”⁸¹

Health and Education

Frelimo is widely lauded for its successes in the sectors of health and education, both sectors that are usually said to have been widely ignored by the colonial government. This narrative needs some re-assessment from the perspective of Nkhlongue. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it was precisely during the last decade of colonialism that the Portuguese state did indeed make an effort to spread educational and health facilities on an unprecedented scale. In the case of Nkhlongue, the educational revolution thus did not start with independence, but rather with the Portuguese reaction to Frelimo’s armed struggle. It is during the time in the *aldeamento* that the knowledge of the Portuguese language among the population of Nkhlongue started to increase significantly. Independence witnessed a continuation of this process. More than 45 years after the closing of the Anglican missionary school, a school was re-opened in the village. Compared to the school in the *aldeamento*, there were now also more girls that visited this school.⁸²

However, reports from different sources leave little doubt that the health and educational sector in Lago District faced a severe shortage of resources and personnel in the years following independence.⁸³ Even the administrations had to

81 APGGN, 1 A: Relatório Político-Militar da Província do Niassa (Lichinga, March 24, 1976), 5.

82 PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:00:59–00:01:42, 00:10:31–00:12:22; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:05:41–00:06:43; PA, I015: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2010), min 00:44:28–00:49:48. The Anglican school of Nkhlongue was most probably closed in the early 1930s. See: “News from the Stations: IV. Msumba,” *NDC*, no. 107 (April 1930): 7.

83 Moira Dick, “If You Don’t Know Niassa, You Don’t Know Mozambique,” in *Mozambique: Towards a People’s Health Service*, ed. Gillian Walt and Angela Melamed (London: Zed Books, 1983), 56; AUNHCR, Box 1083, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.GEN.MOZ[b], f. 177: Sérgio Vieira de Mello, “Memorandum 460/MOZ/77: Report on Mission to the Provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado from 4 to 13 July 1977” (Maputo, July 14, 1977), 7; APGGN, 1 A: Júlio Reis and Alfredo Filimone Lituri, “Relatório do Distrito de Metangula,” Primeira Reunião de Administradores, Comissários Políticos e Grupos Dinamizadores dos Distritos da Província do Niassa (Metangula, May 16, 1976); FMS, AMPA, Pasta 04331.009.001, f. 33–43: Método da pesquisa: A fase preparatória. Anexo N° 8: Experiência da vida profissional dos informantes, A. Investigação Sociolinguística: O sistema nacional de educação e a situação multilingue do país (INDE, May 17, 1983); APGGN, QJ: Relatório Distrital de Lago, 3a Reunião do Conselho Provincial Coordenador de Saúde (Metangula, 1978).

fight with such banalities as lack of paper.⁸⁴ Evidence of this lack cannot just be found in the government reports of the time, but also remain visible on documents that I found at the administrative post of Maniamba. For among the few documents that were still “kept” from colonial times were those whose empty reverse side had been used for governmental affairs during the years after independence. In light of these facts, the quality of these services thus did not necessarily improve, but might also have worsened in some areas in those years.⁸⁵ A “community leader” in Tulo, for example, complained to an UNHCR official who visited the region in 1977 that “as refugees in Tanzania, his community [had] received more assistance than since they [had] returned to their country” and, thereby, explicitly referred to medical and educational facilities.⁸⁶ The respective official even commented that he was surprised that he had not heard more such complaints “given the indisputable readaptation difficulties faced in 1975/76.”⁸⁷ The situation seems to have further worsened in the early 1980s. In March 1983, the provincial health direction complained that “the operation of our health facilities, particularly those on the periphery, has been limited to a few palliative actions” because of the lack of drugs. The requisitions for medical material had not been answered at all since the last trimester of 1982. Because of lack of suture, the provincial hospital in Lichinga was not able to carry out surgeries anymore.⁸⁸

Time of Samora, Time of Lack

But, apart from these problems, the main reason for people’s dissatisfaction with Frelimo was certainly the economic situation. The time of Samora (*nyengo ya Sa-*

84 APGGN, QJ: Acta da Reunião de todos os responsáveis das forças populares, dos grupos dinamizadores de círculo e localidade e ainda responsáveis da administração, realizada aos 12 de outubro de 1975 (Cóbue, October 12, 1975), 2.

85 One health report from 1978 put it like this: “The medical assistance in this district is not very glorious [...]”. See: APGGN, QJ: Relatório Distrital de Lago, 3a Reunião do Conselho Provincial Coordenador de Saúde (Metangula, 1978), 1.

86 AUNHCR, Box 1083, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.GEN.MOZ[b], f. 177: Sérgio Vieira de Mello, “Memorandum 460/MOZ/77: Report on Mission to the Provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado from 4 to 13 July 1977” (Maputo, July 14, 1977), 7.

87 AUNHCR, Box 1083, ARC-2/A48, 11/2/61–610.GEN.MOZ[b], f. 177: Sérgio Vieira de Mello, “Memorandum 460/MOZ/77: Report on Mission to the Provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado from 4 to 13 July 1977” (Maputo, July 14, 1977), 7.

88 APGGN, 1 A: Carta N.º 352/37/B: Director Provincial de Saúde do Niassa ao Central de Medicamentos e Artigos Medicos da Beira (Lichinga, March 21, 1983).

mora) is unambiguously remembered as a time of lack and hardship.⁸⁹ As I have already mentioned in Section 6.2 (see pp. 225–226), goods like salt, clothes, sugar, or cooking oil were barely available during those years. People had to revert to subsistence alternatives where possible.⁹⁰ One interviewee put it like this:

Now, there was the 25 of June when Samora made our flag been hoisted. Then, the constitution of the republic, this People's Republic of Mozambique. That is when others began to say: "That's not it, that's not it." Now, as this one, Samora, was a cowboy, nobody could say "no." So, they began to isolate him economically. There was nudity here [...]! There was nudity! People washed their clothes with natural resources, trees, *njujo*, you know.⁹¹

The change was especially pronounced as many people had witnessed an improvement in the availability of precisely these goods in the years before independence. This fact even led some of my interviewees to openly prefer the late colonial to the early post-colonial time,⁹² as evidenced by this dialogue:

Q: Did the rule/leadership change between the time of the white people ('azungu') and the time of Samora?

A: Of course, it changed.

Q: What did change?

A: Comparing the colonial time with the time of Samora, it was better during that of the white people. For, we lived well. They gave us salt.⁹³

Another interviewee put it like this:

[Life] changed. At that time when Frelimo entered, when they removed the whites, there were problems. There was no salt, there were no clothes.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ This lack is also very well documented in various government reports: APGGN, 1 A: Departamento de Política Económica do Niassa, "Relatório do Departamento da Política Económica do Partido em Niassa, para a Sede Nacional do Partido" (Lichinga, May 28, 1979), 8–9; APGGN, 1 A: Departamento da Política Económica do Partido, "Relatório sobre a situação sócio-económica na província" (Lichinga, February 27, 1980).

⁹⁰ This was a common pattern in post-independence Mozambique. See: Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 555–57.

⁹¹ PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 02:14:12–02:15:34.

⁹² PA, I153: interview with P1477 (♂, ~1940) (Micucue, June 17, 2016), min 00:43:15–00:44:06; PA, I039: interview with P0898 (♀, 1960) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:24:39–00:26:08; PA, I088: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, December 23, 2015), min 00:02:14–00:04:02.

⁹³ PA, I109: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 01:02:02–01:02:24.

⁹⁴ PA, I055: interview with P0639 (♀, ~1952) (Nkholongue, August 27, 2013), min 00:21:51–00:22:02. For a similar type of nostalgia in the case of Tete, see: Harri Englund, "Waiting for the Portuguese: Nostalgia, Exploitation and the Meaning of Land in the Malawi-Mozambique Borderland," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 14, no. 2 (1996): 157–172. This kind of nostalgia can also be found in

These products were not just barely available. Many people also indicated that they lost purchasing power.⁹⁵ The new government set fixed prices, which were very unfavorable for most people of the region. This is shown by this excerpt from a party district report from 1977:

As for the combat of speculation: the people understand very well [the objectives], but they admire that the structures of the party and the government just let the capitalists exploit them; even more they do not understand why the prices of the products of the people [(produced by the people)] should be lowered if these people also want to develop themselves. In the shops, everything is expensive [...] one fish is sold for 30\$00 per kilo, while, in colonial times, the same fish was only 10\$00 per kilo [...]. And, then, they want to buy at ours [(our products)] at very low prices. Why, don't they pursue to lower their prices? The same send sugar and flour to the fishing posts, where they sell it for very high prices. [...] The people call for having equality at the sales and for having reasonable prices. Otherwise, the combat against speculation will be very difficult. For, that what they mobilize for is not what they are doing.⁹⁶

The evidence from Nkholongue illustrates the extent to which Frelimo's idea of economic transformation had been based on false premises, as the party looked at the agrarian structure through what Bridget O'Laughlin has called a "divided glass."⁹⁷ Frelimo believed that there was a traditional subsistence sector that could just continue to exist independently of the party's policies until the planned transformation would be ready to obliterate it. In doing so, the party underestimated the market integration, commodification and diversification of rural livelihoods, and thus the extent to which its policies would influence life in rural

government documents of the time. See for example: APGGN, QJ: Acta da Reunião realizada no Distrito de Majune aquando da visita de trabalho efectuada pelo Director Provincial do Comércio Interno (Lichinga, May 21, 1979), 2.

95 PA, I076: interview with P1449 (♂, ~1948) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:22:05–00:23:45; PA, I037: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, August 14, 2013), min 01:06:06–01:12:41; PA, I039: interview with P0898 (♀, 1960) (Malango, August 15, 2013), min 00:26:08–00:26:49; PA, I156: interview with P1478 (♀) (Metangula, June 18, 2016), min 00:23:13–00:23:45. This confirms the observations made by Juergensen in Tete's Angonia district and by the *Oficina de História* in Cabo Delgado's "liberated areas." See: Juergensen, "Peasants on the Periphery," 222; Bragança et al., "A situação nas antigas zonas libertadas de Cabo Delgado," 55–56. On Frelimo's price policy in general, see: Steven Kyle, "Economic Reform and Armed Conflict in Mozambique," *World Development* 19, no. 6 (1991): 640.

96 APGGN, 1 A: Frelimo, "Relatório do Distrito de Metangula, por ocasião do Conselho Provincial" (Metangula, January 1, 1977), 3.

97 Bridget O'Laughlin, "Through a Divided Glass: Dualism, Class and the Agrarian Question in Mozambique," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 23, no. 4 (1996): 17. On this point, see as well: Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry*, 55–57; Marc Wuyts, "Money, Planning and Rural Transformation in Mozambique," *The Journal of Development Studies* 22, no. 1 (1985): 180–207.

areas in general (on this point see also Chapter 6). The retreat to subsistence now came at a price of deteriorating standards of living and, connected to this, a growing anti-Frelimo sentiment.⁹⁸

Socializing the Countryside

It was not only the lack of goods like salt or clothes and Frelimo's unfavorable price policy that alienated the people from the government, but also Frelimo's plan to "socialize" the countryside. One of the main complaints of my interviewees in this regard was Frelimo's demand to cultivate a *machamba de povo*, a collective maize field. With one exception, my interviewees were unanimous in condemning this policy.⁹⁹ One interviewee, who was still quite young at that time, put it like this:

What concerns the *machamba de povo*, there was nobody who liked it. We saw that this was like slavery as we were made to do the work if we liked or not.¹⁰⁰

While one of the village's older women said:

We were against it, we were against Samora. We did not want these things here. Here, in this village, we did not want them. It was bad.¹⁰¹

It was not only the collective mode of production that people took exception to, but also the fact that it was required that the field was always watched over by one man and one woman who were not married to each other. This idea irritated at

⁹⁸ Helena Pérez-Niño made a similar observation in her study on tobacco farmers in Angónia (Tete). See: Pérez-Niño, "Post-Conflict Agrarian Change in Angónia," 162, 170.

⁹⁹ PA, I073: interview with P1012 (♂, 1955) (Malango, September 5, 2013), min 00:28:14–00:33:05; PA, I080: interview with P0641 (♂, 1952) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:49:46–00:50:45; PA, I078: interview with P0258 (♂, 1953) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:29:28–00:30:40; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:34:17–01:34:44; PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:58:35–02:00:30. The exception claimed that people simply did not understand the idea: PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 02:01:02–02:06:22. In Lussefa, people even had to grow cotton in their collective field, as in colonial times. See: PA, I150: interview with P1483 (♀, 1950), P1481 (♂, 1954) (Lussefa, June 15, 2016), min 00:27:19–00:28:53.

¹⁰⁰ PA, I124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkhlongue, April 26, 2016), min 01:11:15–01:11:27.

¹⁰¹ PA, I106: interview with P0262 (♀, ~1940) (Malango, April 4, 2016), min 02:06:38–02:09:04.

least some villagers.¹⁰² Furthermore, people never saw anything of the produce.¹⁰³ One interviewee from a neighboring village described the *machamba de povo* at his village like this:

It was a large field. But who ate that maize I don't know.¹⁰⁴

My interviewees' retrospective view of the economic situation fully corresponds to the assessment made at the time by Eileen and Ken Hamilton, two British missionaries working in Messumba:

It was distressing to see the local people suffering due to lack of provisions—no soap, maize, sugar, salt, cooking oil—and forced to work on communal farms, the produce from which was destined for army use.¹⁰⁵

However, as in the case of the colonial government of the 1940s, the post-colonial government's capacity to enforce its policies was similarly limited. Like the fields of the Portuguese cotton regime (see pp. 168–171), the *machamba de povo* of Nkhlongue's population was cultivated for only one or two years.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Frelimo's plan to have people live in a "light version" of a communal village, that is, closer together on one and the same street (*nas linhas*, 'on the lines'), was not really implemented and abandoned rather quickly.¹⁰⁷

102 PA, I083: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932), P1074 (♀, ~1940), P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, September 8, 2013), min 01:05:01–01:10:25; PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:03:09–01:04:54.

103 PA, I083: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932), P1074 (♀, ~1940), P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, September 8, 2013), min 01:10:25–01:13:21; PA, I085: interview with P0147 (♀, ~1928) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:24:54–00:25:39; PA, I117: interview with P1458 (♂, ~1945) (Micundi, April 20, 2016), min 01:34:44–01:35:00.

104 PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M'chepa, January 27, 2016), min 01:10:37–01:10:41.

105 Ken Hamilton and Eileen Hamilton, "Flashback – Early Days of Independence," *Lebombo Leaves* 69, no. 19 (1978): 20.

106 PA, I073: interview with P1012 (♂, 1955) (Malango, September 5, 2013), min 00:28:14–00:33:05; PA, I080: interview with P0641 (♂, 1952) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:49:46–00:50:45; PA, I109: interview with P1081 (♀, 1945) (Malango, April 6, 2016), min 01:03:51–01:05:04; PA, I125: interview with P1463 (♂, 1951) (Ngala, April 27, 2016), min 00:47:11–00:47:17. For the government's limited capacity to enforce it against the will of the people, see as well: PA, I157: interview with P1455 (♂, 1952) (Tulo, June 18, 2016), min 00:36:21–00:38:29. In Chinuni, which is far from Metangula and difficult to reach, people obviously did not cultivate a *machamba de povo* at all, even though they were ordered to do so. See: PA, I149: interview with P1501 (♂, 1949), P1513 (♂, 1943) (Chinuni, June 11, 2016), min 00:24:32–00:25:11.

107 PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:44:16–00:46:35; PA, I164: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 23, 2016), min 00:37:33–00:41:36; PA, I155:

Furthermore, it is important to not just portray the villagers of Nkhlongue as helpless victims of the state's policies. First, we can expect that people's viewpoints were not as uniform as they might be presented now in retrospect. Some might have been initially more enthusiastic about certain policies than others. Also, the role of local state intermediaries was similarly ambiguous as in colonial times.¹⁰⁸ Second, people at times tried their own ways to bypass state policies or to adapt them to their needs. Smuggling was one way to do so,¹⁰⁹ misappropriating the goods obtained through consumer cooperatives another: consumer cooperatives had been introduced by the government as part of the attempt to socialize the retail trade system. No such cooperative was formed in Nkhlongue, but at least two were in Metangula. During the time of the Samora they were one of the few places you could get at least some products. The information from the interviews show now that members of these cooperatives sometimes resold the products they had acquired through the cooperatives. Such sales also took place in Nkhlongue.¹¹⁰

The Top-down Way of Governing

Frelimo continued with many policies from colonial times. This included the need to have a *guia de marcha*, a kind of travel permit for journeys. Such forms of pass laws had been introduced by both Frelimo and the Portuguese government during the war in order to better control the people. After the war they were continued by the new government. A person intending to travel needed to take a declaration

interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:13:23–00:15:25; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:42:02–00:42:34; PA, I163: interview with P0028 (♂, 1969) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:21:51–00:22:54. The limited reach of this policy is also demonstrated by the fact that other interviewees denied that there was such a policy in the case of Nkhlongue: PA, I153: interview with P1477 (♂, ~1940) (Micucue, June 17, 2016), min 00:46:07–00:46:58; PA, I161: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, June 22, 2016), min 00:33:12–00:35:08.

108 On the role of intermediaries in post-colonial Mozambique, see: PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:04:54–01:05:20; PA, I154: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936), P0373 (♀, 1940) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:27:02–00:28:57.

109 PA, I161: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, June 22, 2016), min 00:19:13–00:23:50; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:51:13–00:57:43; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:51:10–00:56:05; PA, I163: interview with P0028 (♂, 1969) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:16:35–00:16:56.

110 PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:23:39–00:25:00; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:15:07–00:16:43.

from the village secretary and apply for a *guia* at the district level. It seems that, in theory, it would even have been necessary to have a *guia* to travel from Nkholongue to Metangula. But as there was no permanent police checkpoint between the two places, people went without. There was, however, one checkpoint north of Metangula in the direction of Messumba, so that people traveling there were compelled to have a *guia*.¹¹¹ Harry West has argued that, by using the *guias*, Frelimo “marked its populations much as the colonial state that it had defeated had.”¹¹² It is noteworthy that many scholars have depicted the *guia de marcha* system as one that was (re-)introduced only in the 1980s as a consequence of the Civil War.¹¹³ Proper *guias* from the archives in Lichinga and information from my interviews show however that around Nkholongue this system was already in use in the 1970s, even if it might have been handled differently for different groups of people at different times.¹¹⁴

It was not only the type of policies that resembled much of the colonial precedents but also the way these policies were implemented. Frelimo’s approach was very much a top-down approach in which the party promoted its policies in a high-handed and “triumphalist”¹¹⁵ fashion. Various reports show that the post-colonial divide between Frelimo’s urban elites (from the “south”) and Niassa’s population

111 PA, I161: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, June 22, 2016), min 00:10:06–00:14:28; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkholongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:10:19–00:12:33; PA, I160: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M’chepe, June 22, 2016), min 00:05:36–00:07:23; PA, I164: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkholongue, June 23, 2016), min 00:05:24–00:09:35; PA, I163: interview with P0028 (♂, 1969) (Nkholongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:10:54–00:11:37; Litumbe, “Bishop Paulo Litumbe’s Memoirs,” 149.

112 West, “Who Rules Us Now?,” 107.

113 Corrado Tornimbeni, “‘Isto foi sempre assim’: The Politics of Land and Human Mobility in Chimanimani, Central Mozambique,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 3 (2007): 489; Corrado Tornimbeni, “The Informalization of Formal Portuguese Controls on People’s Movements and Identity in the Colony of Mozambique: The Heritage of Portuguese Colonialism in Current Local African Politics,” *Portuguese Studies* 28, no. 2 (2012): 226; Hanlon, *The Revolution under Fire*, 262; West, “Who Rules Us Now?,” 107.

114 APGGN, 1 A: Administração do Distrito de Metangula, “Guia de Marcha N.º 65/977,” August 14, 1977; APGGN, QJ: Administração do Distrito de Metangula, “Guia de Marcha N.º 18/1/6/1,” March 27, 1976; APGGN, QJ: Governo da Província do Niassa: Gabinete do Governador, “Guia N. 86/79,” March 31, 1979; PA, I160: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M’chepe, June 22, 2016), min 00:07:18–00:09:00; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkholongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:07:39–00:08:54. See as well: AIMC, VIII-8, 4, N. 43: Acontecimentos da vida missionária no Niassa, 1977; AIMC, VIII-8, 4, N. 26: Comunicado aos missionários da Diocese de Lichinga (Lichinga, September 29, 1978).

115 Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry*, 53.

living in rural zones was huge.¹¹⁶ For the people living in Nkhlongue, these characteristics of Frelimo's style of governance might have been especially pronounced out of two reasons: first, because many people had hoped for a change for the better, and, second, because the Portuguese forces had indeed made a certain effort to win the people for their aims in the very last stage of colonialism (as argued in the previous chapter). It is probably one of the most tragic ironies of history that while the Portuguese forces thus finally showed an awareness for the fact that the continuation of their rule could not be taken for granted, most government representatives of post-independence Mozambique apparently had no doubts about being the natural rulers of the country.

Consequently, they did not "link" very much with the people, as one interviewee put it.¹¹⁷ While, for example, the Portuguese soldiers were said to have given people a lift whenever possible, the same would not be done any more by the post-colonial forces.¹¹⁸ A former Frelimo fighter (who did not desert) described Machel's high-handedness by contrasting him to Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo's first president, who was killed during the war. He characterized Mondlane as a man of the people who ate together with them at the same table and played soccer with them. If we follow his words, this togetherness was lost with Machel.¹¹⁹ In general, my interviewees portrayed Samora Machel as the opposite of the selfless, well-meaning, visionary leader he remains to certain circles in Maputo.¹²⁰

As I highlight elsewhere, little of the alleged democratic content of Frelimo's revolution seems to have arrived in Niassa. Rather, Frelimo's ideas were transmit-

116 In an examination of the educational system, many of the teachers of the lakeshore area indicated, for example, how they felt left out by the developments. See: FMS, AMPA, Pasta 04331.009.001, f. 33–43: Método da pesquisa: A fase preparatória. Anexo N° 8: Experiência da vida profissional dos informantes, A. Investigação Sociolinguística: O sistema nacional de educação e a situação multilingue do país (INDE, May 17, 1983), 1–2. For a description of how "urban elites" behaved in Niassa after independence see as well the statements of the Italian educationalist Lavinia Gasperini, who worked in Mozambique from 1977 to 1985: Lavinia Gasperini, *Moçambique: Educação e desenvolvimento rural* (Roma: Lavoro, 1989), 36.

117 PA, I078: interview with P0258 (♂, 1953) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:30:40–00:31:19.

118 PA, I097: interview with P1454 (♂, ~1951) (Malango, February 5, 2016), min 02:28:09–02:29:14; PA, I078: interview with P0258 (♂, 1953) (Nkhlongue, September 7, 2013), min 00:25:38–00:26:24.

119 PA, I087: interview with P1452 (♂, 1927) (Lichinga, September 10, 2013), min 00:48:33–00:51:59. For Frelimo's post-colonial "high-handedness," see as well: Hanlon, *The Revolution under Fire*, 198–201, 262.

120 On Machel's status in modern-day Maputo, see: Jason Sumich, *The Middle Class in Mozambique: The State and the Politics of Transformation in Southern Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 14.

ted in a decidedly authoritarian way.¹²¹ Different interviewees answered the question of whether they were in favor of Frelimo's socialist policies that this was not a question of liking or not liking, but that this was an order.¹²² To make people follow its orders, the party also did not shy away from using violence and fear.

***Fanya Fujo* or the Production of Fear**

In the third quarter of 1979, the population of Nkhlongue and the surrounding villages were all ordered to attend a gathering in Meluluca. The gathering is locally called *fanya fujo*, after the name given to the group that organized it. It is equally identified by the apparent aim of the gathering, which is given as *kuchapa mutu* or *lavar cabeça*, which translates as "brainwashing."¹²³ An identical gathering took place in Metangula for the villages north of the town.¹²⁴

It is not entirely clear what kind of unit it was that "perpetrated" these gatherings. *Fanya fujo* is Kiswahili, and most probably derives from the name that was given by people in Tanzania to the Field Force Unit (FFU), which is a long-standing paramilitary unit of the Tanzanian police. Instead of FFU, people have been calling it the *Fanya Fujo Utaone* or *Fanya Fujo Uone*, which means "Make trouble, and you (will) see."¹²⁵ It is possible that the *fanya fujo* unit deployed to Meluluca was some sort of precursor of what was to become the Mozambican equivalent of the FFU,

121 Zeman, "Flag Independence without Flags?"

122 PA, I112: interview with P0129 (♀, 1930), P0128 (♂, 1928) (Nkhlongue, April 12, 2016), min 01:58:35–01:59:22; PA, I148: interview with P1500 (♂, ~1946) (Bandeze, June 10, 2016), min 00:16:48–00:16:57.

123 PA, I086: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:16:54–00:23:34; PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:06:06–01:08:20, 01:13:57–01:18:01; PA, I124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkhlongue, April 26, 2016), min 00:50:33–00:58:20; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀, ~1935), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 01:43:52–01:46:39; PA, I144: interview with P0411 (♂, 1965) (Nkhlongue, June 8, 2016), min 00:15:57–00:16:57; PA, I152: interview with P1476 (♂, ~1935) (Milombe, June 16, 2016), min 01:02:23–01:04:56; PA, I156: interview with P1478 (♀) (Metangula, June 18, 2016), min 00:32:37–00:33:35; PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:43:43–00:44:58; PA, I115: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, April 18, 2016), min 00:15:05–00:15:40; PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:20:17–00:21:22.

124 PA, I157: interview with P1455 (♂, 1952) (Tulo, June 18, 2016), min 00:08:52–00:11:47.

125 Roderick P. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 147; Issa G. Shivji, *State Coercion and Freedom in Tanzania* (Roma, Lesotho: Institute of Southern African Studies, 1990), 19.

today commonly known as the anti-riot police *Força de Intervenção Rápida* (“Rapid Intervention Force,” FIR).¹²⁶

What was *fanya fujo*? In short, or in the words of one interviewee, “it was about beating the people.”¹²⁷ At the gathering, people, and especially religious dignitaries, were humiliated. One interviewee described it as follows:

Now, there, in Meluluca, they made it like this: [they asked:] “Who, who, is with Ramadan?” *Pronto*, this one was beaten. “You, you are with what?”—“I am an imam.” He was beaten.¹²⁸

A further central characteristic of the gathering was the dancing. People had to dance all night until daybreak. Those who fell asleep were punished. Some people were beaten, others tormented with the extremely itchy velvet bean (*mucuna pruriens*, *chitedze*).¹²⁹

What was the purpose of *fanya fujo*? This question is somewhat more difficult to answer, at least in relation to the imminent reason for the gathering. Many people denied having gained much content from the gathering. As this meeting happened shortly before Samora Machel’s visit to Metangula, several interviewees perceived that it was carried out in preparation of the president’s visit, so that nobody would speak up at this occasion.¹³⁰ One said for example:

They said that the president will come. That’s the time of Samora, isn’t it? Now, they wanted people to live with fear so that they don’t make any confusion.¹³¹

126 Today, the official name of this police unit is *Unidade de Intervenção Rápida* (“Rapid Intervention Unit”). On the formation of the Mozambican FIR and the possible connection to the Tanzanian FFU, see: Renato Matusse, *Guebuza: A paixão pela terra* (Maputo: Macmillan Moçambique, 2004), 150–151.

127 PA, I156: interview with P1478 (♀) (Metangula, June 18, 2016), min 00:32:57–00:32:59.

128 PA, I158: interview with P0764 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 20, 2016), min 00:44:24–00:44:39.

129 PA, I133: interview with P1473 (♂ ~1938), P1504 (♀) (Limbi, June 1, 2016), min 00:49:57–00:52:35; PA, I124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkhlongue, April 26, 2016), min 00:48:10–00:55:53; PA, I123: interview with P1460 (♀), P1461 (♂, ~1935), P1462 (♂, ~1935) (Meluluca, April 25, 2016), min 01:43:52–01:46:30; PA, I162: interview with P0512 (♀, 1967) (Nkhlongue, June 22, 2016), min 00:20:17–00:21:22; PA, I141: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, June 6, 2016), min 00:16:54–00:23:34; PA, I152: interview with P1476 (♂, ~1935) (Milombe, June 16, 2016), min 01:02:23–01:05:52.

130 PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:06:53–01:07:04; PA, I155: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:27:56–00:28:14; PA, I157: interview with P1455 (♂, 1952) (Tulo, June 18, 2016), min 00:11:13–00:11:47; PA, I133: interview with P1473 (♂ ~1938), P1504 (♀) (Limbi, June 1, 2016), min 00:52:57–00:54:32.

131 PA, I155: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:27:56–00:28:14.

However, there are clear indications that the gathering's aim was not only to intimidate people into not speaking against the president, but also to prevent them from lending support to the armed opposition in Mozambique. Thus, another interviewee stated:

They said that, "in this country, we don't want a plot/conspiracy. In this country, we don't want bandits. In this country, it is important to live in peace. For the bandits, there will be no excuse, there will be nothing."¹³²

I was unable to encounter descriptions of comparable events in existing literature on Mozambican history, but a similar gathering was witnessed by the Italian missionary Adriano Severin in the town of Mecanhelas, in the southern part of Niassa, in the middle of 1980. According to Severin, the commander in charge of the gathering opened it by saying, "I have been given *carte blanche* by President Samora Moises Machel himself; I can do whatever I want, even kill."¹³³ In Severin's description of the event, which I found in the archives of the Consolata missionaries in Rome, he referred to the fact that the same commander had previously led an identical "operation" in Mandimba and Metangula.¹³⁴

Meluluca, Metangula, Mandimba and Mecanhelas do have one important thing in common: they all lie in border regions to Malawi. It seems plausible that they were all targeted by the government exactly because of their proximity to Malawi. The years between 1978 and 1981 were characterized by the increasing activities of the *Partido Revolucionário de Moçambique* (Revolutionary Party of Mozambique, PRM). PRM was an armed opposition movement, operating mainly from Malawi. It merged with Renamo in 1982.¹³⁵ There is little evidence that PRM indeed pursued military activities in Niassa at this moment in time. A police report from 1980 merely mentioned the presence of 80 armed enemies in Mepanhira near Mecanhelas. But the same police report leaves little doubt that the Mozambican authorities were highly concerned by the attitude of the people living along the border:

¹³² PA, 1124: interview with P0376 (♂, 1968) (Nkhologue, April 26, 2016), min 00:56:40–00:56:59.

¹³³ "[H]o ricevuto carta bianca dallo stesso Signor Presidente Samora Moises Machel; posso fare quello che voglio, anche uccidere," AIMC, VIII-8, 5, N. 1: Adriano Severin, "Relazione degli avvenimenti accaduti a Mecanhelas nei giorni 21–22 Giugno 1980," n.d., 1.

¹³⁴ AIMC, VIII-8, 5, N. 1: Adriano Severin, "Relazione degli avvenimenti accaduti a Mecanhelas nei giorni 21–22 Giugno 1980," n.d., 1.

¹³⁵ PRM's history has been neglected so far. For an exception, see: Sérgio Chichava, "The Anti-Frelimo Movements & the War in Zambezia," in *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique, 1976–1992*, ed. Eric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingos Manuel do Rosário (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2018), 17–45.

[The situation as it concerns the enemy] is alarming as the enemy's infiltration can be noted, above all in the border regions to Malawi [...]. The elements in question infiltrate into our country, and aim at demobilizing the populations living along the borders by [politically] exploiting the lack of basic necessities.¹³⁶

It seems that the government suspected the people living in these regions of not being true Mozambicans. One interviewee said that Aurélio Manave, the first governor of post-independence Niassa, had come to Meluluca about a year before the *fanya fujo* gathering to tell them that they were not full Mozambicans, but half Malawians.¹³⁷ What Manave meant by this becomes evident from an interview he gave to the *Tempo* magazine in 1976:

[T]he enemy is also operating in the Province of Niassa. Because we have a border here with a country with which our relations are still very cold [Malawi]. We consider this border like a breach for the penetration of the enemy into our bosom. [...] The populations who were there [during the war] were not considered refugees.¹³⁸ Now, they are returning in an unorganized manner, using sinuous paths, and, thus, much the way as they left when they had to flee from the colonial repression [...]. We really have to ask: Is it that they are all Mozambicans? There, we doubt. In fact, one part is Mozambican, but the other is the proper enemy entering physically.¹³⁹

The suspicion of the Mozambican authorities might also have been nurtured by the fact that the founder of PRM, Amós Sumane, was from the lakeside area. He had been a head teacher of the Anglican Mission of Messumba until 1963 when he disappeared to Tanzania to become one of the first members of Frelimo from the region.¹⁴⁰ He, however, deserted Frelimo after the beginning of the war, moved to Malawi where he was briefly a member of the *Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique* (COREMO) and then founded a new nationalist movement, the *União Nacional Africana de Rumbézia* (UNAR).¹⁴¹ UNAR's objective was to achieve the inde-

136 APGGN, 1 A: Relatório sobre a reunião alargada com os Comandantes Distritais da P.P.M. do Niassa, de 27 a 29 de Março 1980 (Lichinga, March 29, 1980), 4.

137 PA, I086: interview with P0375 (♂, 1962) (Nkhlongue, September 9, 2013), min 00:23:34–00:24:36.

138 This refers to the fact that most refugees to Malawi had not lived in official refugee camps like those in Tanzania. Rather, they were as a rule mostly integrated into existing villages.

139 “Entrevista com o Governador do Niassa: Aurélio Manave analisa problemas políticos da província,” *Tempo*, no. 319 (November 14, 1976): 22–27.

140 Paul, *Memoirs of a Revolution*, 79, 97–98.

141 Frelimo and some scholars have claimed that UNAR was in fact a common project of PIDE/DGS, Jorge Jardim and the Malawian government. The PIDE files at the ANTT, however, give no real evidence to support such a theory even though PIDE/DGS seems to have seen the existence of UNAR as a welcome means to create further disharmony among Mozambique's nationalists.

pendence of northern Mozambique (the area between the Zambezi and Ruvuma river, so-called Rumbézia) by peaceful means. The name was later changed to *União Nacional Africana de Moçambique* (UNAMO) and the movement began to focus on achieving independence for the entirety of Mozambique, at least nominally.¹⁴² PIDE/DGS reports show that Sumane and UNAR tried to mobilize support among the refugees from Lago District, remaining however ambiguous with regard to the success of this mobilization. According to PIDE/DGS, one of UNAR's supporters was Metangula's former chief Chilombe, who lived in Nkhotakota at the time.¹⁴³

As we will see in the next chapter, the Mozambican government's fears were rather unfounded, at least as far as a possible "collaboration" with the armed opposition was concerned. Certainly, it is true that people were not very much in favor of Frelimo. But we have no indication that the PRM or Renamo were able to mobilize the people of the region in any significant way. Rather, the opposite was the case as people living in Nkhlongue and Malango were to become major victims of attacks by Renamo. However, we can of course also assume that incidents like that of *fanya fujo* contributed to the fact that resistance to government policies and demands remained rather limited.

Manave's comment is interesting as it very much shows that, as in colonial times, people from Nkhlongue again found themselves not viewed as true citizens in the state they were living in. Obviously, the new government considered them Malawians at heart. Certainly, this was not without historical and cultural foundation. It is telling that, around the same time, the "Malawiness" of the eastern lake-side was claimed by Henry Masauko Chipembere in his battle for the leadership of Malawian nationalism. Chipembere had been born in Messumba to an Anglican clergyman who later emigrated to Malawi with his family. Chipembere's "Mozambican" origins were welcome fodder for his opponents, who used them to claim

For the theory of UNAR being a plot by PIDE/DGS etc., see: Chichava, "The Anti-Frelimo Movements," 18–19.

142 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, 2ª Divisão de Informação, CI (2) 9713, f. 315–319: PIDE Delegação de Moçambique, "Informação N.º 416-SC/CI(2): Alteração da designação de 'UNAR' para 'UNAMO,'" April 16, 1969.

143 ANTT, SCCIM N.º 1165, f. 156: PIDE Delegação de Moçambique, "Relatório N.º 1328/69-GAB: Organização político-administrativa da UNAMO," August 4, 1969; ANTT, PIDE/DGS, 2ª Divisão de Informação, CI (2) 9713, f. 106: DGS Delegação de Moçambique, "Relatório Imediato N.º 1213/70/DI/2/SC: UNAMO – Dificuldades na área de Nkhotakota," June 20, 1970; ANTT, PIDE/DGS, 2ª Divisão de Informação, CI (2) 9713, f. 385–389: PIDE Delegação de Moçambique, "Relatório N.º 1704/68-GAB: UNAR – Actividades," October 2, 1968. The Anglican missionary John Paul met Sumane in Malawi in 1968 and wrote in his memoirs that UNAR attracted many Anyanja. See: Paul, *Memoirs of a Revolution*, 207.

that he was not a true Malawian. In response to this claim, Chipembere wrote a small booklet entitled *My Malawian Ancestors*. In it he stressed the common culture and origins of the people living on both sides of the lake and even explicitly singled out the inhabitants of Nkhlongue as an example of the close affinities between the two shores, emphasizing their recent immigration and close ties to Nkhotakota.¹⁴⁴ The process of colonization and the success of colonial-border-nationalism on both sides of the lake had made such cultural and historical commonalities become problems for those affected.

In light of Frelimo's authoritarianism, the villagers of Nkhlongue once again had to comply with the directives from above, rather than now belonging to the body of decision makers themselves. As throughout much of the colonial times, intimidation seemed to have played an important role for the state to be able to impose its rules. One interviewee commented rather unambiguously on the question of how they were convinced to cultivate maize:

Q: And how did Samora convince the people to cultivate maize?¹⁴⁵

A: This one of *fanya fujo*. Yes, we were afraid of this group of *fanya fujo*.¹⁴⁶

While different reports show that maize production began to be promoted before 1979, it is more than noteworthy that a district report of 1983 stated that it was Samora Machel who personally ordered the introduction of maize cultivation in the district during his 1979 visit.¹⁴⁷ It can, thus, be assumed that this interviewee reproduced people's perception of things of that time correctly, or that he at least reflected the atmosphere reigning in the years after independence pretty well.¹⁴⁸

Frelimo's way of governing did, doubtlessly, not contribute to the fact that people felt part of Frelimo's nation-building project. How far, in fact, the ideas of the people of Nkhlongue and Frelimo's elite were set apart is also shown by the way

144 Chipembere, *My Malawian Ancestors*, 11.

145 PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:23:25–01:24:06.

146 PA, I119: interview with P0855 (♂, 1954) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:25:34–01:25:53.

147 APGGN, 1 A: Relatório resumido da situação sócioeconómica e cultural do Distrito do Lago, 1983, July 20, 1983, 3.

148 For the importance of intimidation in the years after independence, see as well: PA, I094: interview with P0727 (♂, ~1940) (M'chepa, January 27, 2016), min 01:06:17–01:08:02; PA, I161: interview with P0160 (♂, 1952) (Metangula, June 22, 2016), min 00:13:37–00:15:28; PA, I068: interview with P0367 (♂, 1936) (Nkhlongue, September 2, 2013), min 01:24:17–01:24:34; PA, I145: interview with P0284 (♂, 1966), P0273 (♀, 1950) (Metangula, June 9, 2016), min 00:05:25–00:06:30. This is also supported by observations from missionaries for other regions. See: David Bruno, "The Church in Moçambique Revisited," *Lebombo Leaves* 68, no. 23 (1980): 18; AIMC, X-406, N. 7: Diário de Unango, entry dated October 15, 1974.

various interviewees recalled the announcement by Samora Machel that the war against Renamo would be fought until the blood of the people formed a river and until the mothers stopped giving birth to boys. People's statements leave little doubt that what Machel probably meant as a stylistic device to strengthen people's morale had the opposite effect. For the people living in such areas like Nkhlongue, the war, that will be discussed in the next chapter, was not about rhetoric but about bitter realities.¹⁴⁹

8.4 Conclusion

The starting point of this chapter was the observation that we still know very little about how “ordinary” Mozambicans actually experienced the process of decolonization, and how they saw the moment of independence. Mozambique is no exception in this respect. Elsewhere, the social history of decolonization across the dividing point of the moment of independence has also been examined only unsatisfactorily.

The analysis of the experiences of decolonization in the case of the population of Nkhlongue reveals two central points, first, that not everybody was looking forward to Mozambique's political independence, and, second, that the hopes for change were dampened rather quickly. The first point has to be explained by the fact that by the end of the war many of Nkhlongue's inhabitants stood on the wrong side of the conflict. In this regard, the experiences of Nkhlongue's inhabitants were not exceptional; rather, as has been shown in the previous chapter, only a few people lived inside Niassa under the control of Frelimo until the end of the war. From the perspective of Niassa, it did not appear so natural that Frelimo should take over the leadership of independent Mozambique. This is also suggested by the statements of several female Frelimo veterans from Niassa interviewed by Jonna Katto, who said that after independence they had “to organize meetings for the population to make them understand that Frelimo had liberated Mozambique.”¹⁵⁰

The causes for the second point are somewhat more complicated to examine. There is, however, no doubt that people's main complaint was the economic situa-

149 PA, I155: interview with P0713 (♂, 1944) (Nkhlongue, June 18, 2016), min 00:28:52–00:29:31; PA, I083: interview with P1102 (♂, 1932), P1074 (♀, ~1940), P1141 (♂, 1932) (Malango, September 8, 2013), min 01:22:03–01:23:11; PA, I076: interview with P1449 (♂, ~1948) (Metangula, September 6, 2013), min 00:27:52–00:30:52; PA, I118: interview with P1218 (♀, 1930) (Malango, April 21, 2016), min 01:34:52–01:35:30.

150 Katto, “Grandma Was a Guerrilla Fighter,” 58. See as well: Katto, 68, 215.

tion. In the case of Nkhlongue, the disappearance of such goods like salt, soap, or clothes was especially pronounced as the years before independence had been marked by a very good supply of these products. In this respect, my findings also confirm previous research on Tete and Cabo Delgado that have argued that many people lost purchasing power after independence.¹⁵¹

Another important reason for the alienation of Nkhlongue's inhabitants from Frelimo was the party's highly authoritarian rule. The alleged "democratic content of Frelimo's reforms at the local level"¹⁵² seems to have been limited in the case of Nkhlongue, and, in fact, of the whole larger region. My research shows that Frelimo was readily prepared to use intimidation and violence to impose its policies. The gathering of *fanya fujo* is a telling example in this respect.

A third reason was the negative impact of the gap between propaganda and reality. One party report mirrored people's complaints in this regard by stating that "what [the leaders] mobilize for, is not what they are doing."¹⁵³ There is no doubt that this lack of political coherence heavily damaged Frelimo's credibility in manifold ways, and, thus, contributed to the party's unpopularity. In this respect, one also has to consider the many continuities from the colonial time that have been discussed in this chapter.

Seen from the perspective of Nkhlongue, this was not the independence people had longed for. In many ways, the difference between Lisbon and Maputo proved to be pretty small. The emperor had just put on new clothes.¹⁵⁴ This also explains the indifference of many of my interviewees to this supposedly so important moment of Mozambican history: "Maybe, the government knows [what changed]."¹⁵⁵

151 Juergensen, "Peasants on the Periphery," 222; Bragança et al., "A situação nas antigas zonas libertadas de Cabo Delgado," 55–56.

152 O'Laughlin, "Class and the Customary," 30.

153 APGGN, 1 A: Frelimo, "Relatório do Distrito de Metangula, por ocasião do Conselho Provincial" (Metangula, January 1, 1977), 2–3.

154 Burton and Jennings, "The Emperor's New Clothes?"

155 PA, I046: interview with P1045 (♀, 1932) (Malango, August 20, 2013), min 00:35:58–00:36:04.