

“It Is Not Everyday That One Witnesses the Birth of a Country”:

The Independence of Mozambique as Seen on Portuguese

Television

By

Catarina Lobo Vasconcelos Letria

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of History

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Pedro Aires Oliveira

Second Reader: Professor Valeria Galimi

Statement of Copyright

Budapest, Hungary – Tokyo, Japan

2022

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

Abstract

Uma Lança em África (*A Spear in Africa*) was a special report aired by the Portuguese national television (RTP) on June 25, 1975, Mozambique's Independence Day, during the most turbulent phase of the Portuguese revolutionary period. It was part of more comprehensive programming the station devoted to the Portuguese decolonization process in 1974 and 1975. The role of television during this process has been absent from the historiography of Portuguese decolonization. Adopting a metropolitan rather than peripheral perspective, this thesis aims to analyze how RTP interpreted and mediated the independence of Mozambique, helping to make sense of it for domestic audiences.

This study focuses on analyzing the formal and discursive content of *Uma Lança em África*. However, the special report will be historically read from its insertion within the programming RTP devoted to Mozambican independence in June 1975, as well as from the wider context of RTP and Portugal during the revolutionary period. Apart from audiovisual sources available in the RTP Online Archives, written sources from the RTP Audiovisual Archives – Program Schedules, News Line Ups, Yearbooks, and Internal Directives issued by the RTP Administration – will be reviewed. In addition, the written press coverage of that time and four interviews with journalists who worked for RTP between 1974 and 1975 conducted for this thesis also were crucial sources.

RTP mirrored the general tendency to support decolonization and openly condemn colonialism, attuned to the decolonization policy defined by the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and as conveyed in the television and cinema productions in the first years following the Carnation Revolution. Nevertheless, *Uma Lança em África* does not present a univocal perspective on the Mozambican independence as it contains three interviews with prominent figures of Mozambican decolonization, which are included in dialogue through montage.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank my supervisor, Professor Pedro Aires Oliveira, for his enthusiasm for this thesis topic, as well as for his constant support and guidance. His exhaustive comments and suggestions on the text were crucial, along with the contacts of people who would be important for my work.

Thank you to my second reader, Professor Valeria Galimi, for welcoming me into her course at the University of Florence and for answering my questions about historians' work. As a non-Portuguese scholar, her attentive reading and exigent questions helped me not to take the knowledge of some parts of the Portuguese past for granted.

I pay my gratitude to my interviewees, António Borga, Cesário Borga, Joaquim Letria, and José Carlos de Vasconcelos, for their time and generosity, and for sharing fascinating stories of fascinating times I have not lived but can dream of through their words.

My thanks to Aurélio Rocha for introducing me to the recent Mozambican past and providing me with materials from the other side of the ocean. I am grateful to Rita Luís for the academic generosity, the guidance through the RTP Archives, and the bibliographical suggestions.

I extend my appreciation to Carla Baptista, José Pedro Castanheira, Nelson Ribeiro, and Sofia Sampaio for the bibliographical suggestions, and Manuel Lopes, from the RTP Audiovisual Archives, for providing access to sources essential for this thesis.

I also prize the valuable contributions that Charlotte de Castelnau-l'Estoile, Didier Nativel, George Alao, and Pedro Cardim made to my understanding of historical thought.

Last, thank you to the History in the Public Sphere Master's Program, which I feel so honored to be part of, for offering me so many different ways of thinking about the world.

Table of Contents

Introduction	9
1 <i>Uma Lança em África: How it was born and received</i>	16
1.1 <i>Uma Lança em África: The Context of Production</i>	18
1.2 <i>Uma Lança em África: The Context of Reception</i>	22
2 RTP from April 25, 1974 to the ‘Hot Summer’ of 1975	25
2.1. From the Origins to 1974	25
2.2. Changes in the Administration	27
2.3. Changes within the Personnel	28
2.4. Changes within the Programming	28
2.5. Party Disputes	30
3 Portugal and Mozambique from April 25, 1974 to June 1975	32
3.1. Background	32
3.2. The Revolutionary Period	35
3.3. Decolonization	36
4 Viewing <i>Uma Lança em África</i>	44
4.1. <i>Uma Lança em África: Formal Aspects</i>	45
4.2. <i>Uma Lança em África: Interviews</i>	56
Conclusion	75
Bibliography	78
Sources	83

List of Figures

- Figure 1:** António Borga presenting *Uma Lança em África* to the RTP audience. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/> ...44
- Figure 2:** Samora Machel exiting the plane from Zambia in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>47
- Figure 3:** Samora Machel among FRELIMO troops. *Uma Lança em África*. Parts I and II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>48
- Figure 4:** Opening shot: aerial view from Mozambique. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>49
- Figure 5:** Closing shot: aerial view from Mozambique. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>49
- Figure 6:** Marcelino dos Santos exiting the plane in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>50
- Figure 7 :** Samora Machel speaks at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>51
- Figure 8:** Shot of Samora Machel speaking at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>54
- Figure 9:** Reverse shot of the audience at the political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>54
- Figure 10:** Shot of Samora Machel speaking at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>54
- Figure 11:** Samora Machel's audience at a political rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>55
- Figure 12:** Mother attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>55

- Figure 13:** Old woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>55
- Figure 14:** Young woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>55
- Figure 15:** Girl attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>56
- Figure 16:** Young woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>56
- Figure 17:** Joaquim Chissano at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>57
- Figure 18:** Letria interviewing Joaquim Chissano. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>57
- Figure 19:** Vítor Crespo at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>58
- Figure 20:** Letria interviewing Vítor Crespo. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>58
- Figure 21:** Samora Machel at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>59
- Figure 22:** Letria interviewing Samora Machel. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>59
- Figure 24:** Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>60
- Figure 23:** Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>60
- Figure 25:** Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>60

Figure 27: Samora Machel touching Letria’s shoulder to signal the close of the interview. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>61

Figure 26: Samora Machel touching Letria’s shoulder and standing to mark the end of the interview. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>61

Introduction

In 2017, while randomly diving into the Online Archives of the Portuguese national television (RTP), I typed in the name of one of my grandfathers to see what came up. Since he is a journalist and worked for RTP, I expected to find some of his programs there. Among those I already knew or heard about, one program grabbed my attention. In the frame displayed on the web page, I recognized the face of Samora Machel, the leader of FRELIMO, the liberation movement that for ten years fought the Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique. *Uma Lança em África* (*A Spear in Africa*) was its name, and was a two-part special report that aired on June 25, 1975. Some references from the recent Portuguese past came to my mind – Carnation Revolution, the end of the colonial wars, the revolutionary period, independences, “returnees.” Naturally, I decided to watch it. As it begins, the program announces it includes the first interview ever given by Machel to a Portuguese journalist. I then realized the journalist was my grandfather, Joaquim Letria. And immediately after, I became mindful I was unaware of that.

Forty-two years after its broadcast, I found it tough to grasp what I saw. Less than a century passed, and I lacked the context of the program. As a student from the last European colonial empire, the Portuguese educational system only taught me about the empire’s demise in a few pages toward the end of school textbook chapters. And the special report did not provide much help in giving explanations to make itself understandable. Was it difficult for the Portuguese audiences in 1975 to make sense of the program as it was for me in 2017, I wondered? Yet, the absence of context did not overshadow the symbolic meaning of the interview with Machel or what I saw as an experimental formal language of the report. It was the first time the ex-colonized, formerly described as a “terrorist,” was interviewed by the ex-colonizer. And the program was aired when the prefix “ex” could be used for the first time, on the day of the Mozambican independence.

More than answers, *Uma Lança em África* raised questions for me. So, five years after I initially watched it, I am forwarding a contextualization and interpretation for it in this thesis. It would be dishonest not to acknowledge from the beginning that part of my curiosity about the report also is motivated by family history. However, the reasons that made me choose it as the focus of this thesis go beyond those, as I hope to make clear.

Through *Uma Lança em África*, I intend to study how RTP, the public and only existing television station in Portugal, depicted a historical event such as the independence of Mozambique from the Portuguese rule in 1975, during a revolutionary process that also impacted the media. Simply put, I will show how Mozambican independence was interpreted at the metropolitan heart of the empire by examining its portrayal in Portuguese television. More than the independence itself as a political process, this thesis is interested in analyzing how RTP interpreted and mediated such an event, helping to make sense of it for domestic audiences¹. This work will thus take a metropolitan perspective, rather than peripheral, on the Mozambican independence².

Mediation being the focus of this thesis, it is crucial to reflect on the medium itself. Television not only can be seen as discourse, but also as an instrument of information, legitimization, and mobilization³. According to John Ellis,

“For the historian, however, the prime importance of television lies in the temporary meaningfulness of programs at their initial broadcast. Like any other ephemera, it provides a means of grasping the texture of a particular moment in history, what it felt like to be alive at that moment, what the experience of the everyday might have been.”⁴

¹ Berny Sèbe and Matthew G. Stanard (eds.). *Decolonising Europe? Popular Responses to the End of Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 10.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

³ Dana Mustata, “«The Revolution Has Been Televised...». Television as Historical Agent in the Romanian Revolution”. In *Journal of Modern European History* 10, no. 1 (2012): 78.

⁴ John Ellis, “Television and History.” In *History Workshop Journal* 56, no 1 (2003): 283.

The same author reminds us that television's "universality of address and understanding crosses class boundaries but remains within national ones."⁵ This universality can be more evident in the Portuguese case, as there was a single television broadcaster in the country in 1975, which was not concurred by other television stations presenting their own narratives on decolonization. For its universality, and since television is also an agent in the public sphere, I believe my topic is worth being developed in a master's such as HIPS. Although, as a journalistic piece, *Uma Lança em África* reflects on the present during which the report was made, it also can be seen as a source for the political history of the time, particularly for the interviews conveyed with prominent figures of Mozambican independence. After Peter Burke, "[. . .] images, like texts and oral testimonies, are an important form of historical evidence. They record acts of eyewitnessing."⁶ Consequently, that particular report can be perceived as a "first draft of history," as history in the making⁷. Moreover, there seemed to have existed a consciousness on the part of journalists who covered the Mozambican independence on the historical importance of the moment, as the headlines of the Portuguese written press of the time also show⁸. In some cases, journalists even presented themselves as witnesses of such historically significant events:

"For the hundreds of foreign journalists working in the capital, the experience is perhaps unprecedented. It is certainly exciting, and it is difficult to cover in the prose that they send to their newspapers, radio, and television stations in all languages. [. . .]. Can Phumo [formerly Lourenço Marques] has been the center of attention of several million readers for several days now, and for Portuguese journalists, the experience is particularly relevant: it is not every day that one witnesses the birth of a country, and few among us have had the privilege of witnessing the emergence of a nation brimming with strength and hopelessly set on the paths of the future, which will, by right, and by merit, replace the execrable image left behind by dying colonialism."⁹

⁵ Ibid., 284.

⁶ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images As Historical Evidence* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 14.

⁷ Ibid., 279.

⁸ "Today is a historical day: Mozambique becomes independent.", *O Jornal*, 06.25.1975; "A turn in History: Mozambique independent at midnight", *Diário de Lisboa*, 06.24.1975; "Mozambique: unique and supreme moment of a free nation's birth", *Diário Popular*, 06.25.1975.; "The raising of a new flag put an end to 500 years of colonialism", *Diário de Notícias*, 06.25.1975.

⁹ Victor Dimas, "Independência de Moçambique: construir o futuro e continuar a luta", *Expresso*, 06.28.1975.

The sense of witnessing an event is amplified when it comes to film, says Burke¹⁰, and that is an inherent danger of the medium itself since it gives an illusory impression of reality. There is always a mediation since what is shown is always the director's choice. As Dana Mustata adds,

“Television is by default a figurative medium, rendering visible representations of action without necessarily disclosing the actions that work behind the scenes at their construction.”¹¹

More than recording the events, television is also a historical agent, which might have influenced how Portuguese audiences viewed Mozambican independence in 1975 and how they remember it today¹². First, however, an audience history would have to be made to grasp it. Yet, Jérôme Bourdon points out the difficulties in locating audiences as specific historical objects for their diffuse and fragmentary character¹³, which helps to explain why historical research on media audiences is still at an initial stage¹⁴. This paucity becomes even more evident in what concerns existing research on television, as most historical research on media audiences focuses on film and cinema¹⁵. For the complexities of writing an audience history, the reception of *Uma Lança em África* was left to a secondary plan in this thesis. Nevertheless, some reviews on the special report as published in the written press of the time were included.

Within the historiography of Portuguese decolonization, there have been few attempts to understand the television's agency during the process. Moreover, the inexistence of “television studies” as field of research in Portugal has made it impossible to fathom the role played by television in the structural changes that occurred in Portuguese culture in the second half of the twentieth century¹⁶. In a 2013 article, Carlos Maurício makes an inventory of the television and

¹⁰ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 159.

¹¹ Dana Mustata, “«The Revolution Has Been Televised...»”, 90.

¹² Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 145.

¹³ Jérôme Bourdon, “Detextualizing: How to write a history of audiences.” In *European Journal of Communication* 30, no 1 (2015): 8.

¹⁴ Sabina Mihelj, “Doing audience history: Questions, sources, methods.” In *European Journal of Communication* 30, no 1 (2015): 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁶ Cardão, Marcos, “A grande aventura. Televisão, nacionalismo e as comemorações dos Descobrimentos portugueses.” In *Práticas da História* no. 8 (2019): 21.

cinema productions – excluding the news – reflecting on the Portuguese colonial wars and decolonization between 1974 and 1994¹⁷. According to Maurício, from the 383 documentaries made in Portugal between 1974 and 1980, 83 concerned the Carnation Revolution and the revolutionary period. Of those 83, only 12 (3 percent of the total number of documentaries) had the colonial wars or the birth of new African nations as their subject. The numbers lead Maurício to conclude that domestic affairs attracted more attention from authors and the national public opinion in the two decades that followed the end of the dictatorship.¹⁸ Soon after the transfers of powers to the new African nations, Maurício adds, the imperial past became a burden for memory that needed to be eliminated.¹⁹ That became more evident from 1977 as RTP started devoting less programming to the colonial wars, decolonization, and the “returnees”²⁰. Nevertheless, the productions of the first years after the revolution showed a clear anticolonial perspective attuned to the decolonization process²¹. However, Maurício’s article lacks exhaustivity, with some broadcasts currently available on the RTP Online Archives – such as the ones analyzed in this thesis – absent from the catalog.

Rita Ribeiro and Joaquim Costa’s chapter (2017) focuses on the journalistic coverage of the social movement in Portugal for the independence of East Timor at the end of the 1990s, but strictly refers to the press and two Portuguese newspapers in particular²². A recent book chapter by Rita Luís (2021) analyzes the presence of the Portuguese empire within RTP’s programming and the role of public television in the persistence of the Portuguese colonial empire, thus not addressing the period after 1974²³. Nevertheless, a study like Philip Wood’s²⁴ on the British

¹⁷ Carlos Maurício, “Um longo degelo: a guerra colonial e a descolonização nos ecrãs portugueses (1974-1994)”. In *Ler História* 65 (2013). <https://journals.openedition.org/lerhistoria/512> 159-177 (accessed June 3, 2022).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Rita Ribeiro and Joaquim Costa, “East Timor and Portugal: The Ending of Empire in the Media.” In *Media and the Portuguese Empire*, ed. José Luís García et al, 327-344 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

²³ Rita Luís, “O império colonial português e a televisão,” in *Cultura popular e império. As lutas pela conquista do consumo cultural em Portugal e nas suas colónias*, ed. Nuno Domingos, 241-279 (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2021).

²⁴ Philip Woods, “Business as Usual? British Newsreel Coverage of Indian Independence and Partition, 1947-1948.” In *Media and the British Empire*, ed. Chandrika Kaul, 145-159 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

newsreel coverage of Indian independence and partition seems to be lacking as far as the RTP coverage of the end of the Portuguese empire is concerned.

Despite that, the RTP Online Archives (created in March 2017) make dozens of audiovisual sources publicly available, mainly News extracts, related to the topic. Although writing about audiovisual sources that readers can access from their laptops and smartphones can change the ways historians approach them²⁵, we also have to remember the content available online is the result of the selection from the archive²⁶. As the RTP Online Archives is permanently updated with new materials, it is hard for scholars to develop exhaustive research. The absence of exhaustiveness is also explained by the fact that some broadcasts were never recorded but only aired live and the station reutilized tapes.

As previously stated, *Uma Lança em África* is the focus of this thesis, with all the challenges passing from an audiovisual to a written medium may imply. Besides analyzing its formal and discursive content, the special report will be historically readable from its insertion within the programming RTP devoted to Mozambican independence in June 1975²⁷. Therefore, written sources from the RTP Audiovisual Archives are essential for reconstituting that programming and its context of production. Program Schedules²⁸, News Line Ups²⁹, Yearbooks³⁰, and Internal Directives issued by the RTP Administration³¹ proved to be an indispensable complement to the audiovisual sources available in the Online Archives. More than providing an idea of the *zeitgeist*, Portuguese and Mozambican written press of the time also are used here as sources for grasping the reception of the television programming devoted to Mozambican independence. Finally, four interviews with journalists who worked for RTP between 1974 and 1975 were conducted for this

²⁵ Charlotte Brundson, "Television Criticism and the Transformation of the Archive." In *Television & New Media* 10, no.1 (2009): 29.

²⁶ John Corner, "Finding data, reading patterns, telling stories: issues in the historiography of television." In *Media, Culture & Society* 25 (2003): 277.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Alinhamento de Emissão", in the original.

²⁹ "Alinhamento do Telejornal", in the original.

³⁰ "Anuário", in the original.

³¹ "Ordem de Serviço", in the original.

thesis, including one with the author of *Uma Lança em África*. These oral sources provide interesting material on the context of the production of *Uma Lança em África* and on the more general question of how RTP addressed decolonization shortly after the revolution. Furthermore, they also help understand the context of the Portuguese media between 1974 and 1975, as RTP will be seen in this thesis as a historical actor with its own history instead of a mere producer of audiovisual sources.

Therefore, this thesis aims to place *Uma Lança em África* within its context of production and reception and, more generally, in the context of RTP and Portugal in 1974 and 1975. As a case study, it aims to contribute to the more general and still scarce discussion of the role played by Portuguese television in the decolonization process.

The first chapter introduces the special report, looking at its context of production and reception. As in a zooming-out, the second and the third chapters investigate the more general context in which that specific audiovisual source was produced. While the second chapter examines the context of RTP between the Carnation Revolution and June 1975, the third chapter reflects on Portugal and Mozambique's political and social situation during the same period. Finally, the fourth and last chapter dives into *Uma Lança em África*, analyzing its formal content aspects.

1 *Uma Lança em África: How it was born and received*

On the night of June 24, 1975, the Portuguese television station RTP³² announced special programming devoted to Mozambique for the following day. At midnight, Mozambique would become an independent country after a 10-year independence war against Portuguese colonialism began in 1964³³.

Due to technical limitations, RTP did not live air the independence ceremony at the Machava Stadium in the capital Lourenço Marques (later Maputo). Although the station became a member of the European Broadcasting Union in 1959, gained access to the Eurovision network ever since, and adopted videotape for the first time in 1964, it was not possible to live broadcast from the Portuguese colonies³⁴. Simultaneously, despite the projects for expanding the station since the end of the 1950s, the RTP broadcast never reached the colonies³⁵. For this reason, there was no television in Mozambique in 1975, where the radio landscape was fully controlled by private radio stations³⁶. Only the local radio broadcast and printed media covered the independence for the Mozambican audience³⁷.

³² At the time, and until the launch of the first Portuguese private television channel in 1992, RTP was the only existing Portuguese television station. It had two channels, “1st Program” and “2nd Program”. In June 1975, RTP had a military administration appointed by the Government. It would be nationalized in December of the same year (see p. 27).

³³ The war opposed the Mozambican liberation movement FRELIMO (“Liberation Front of Mozambique”, Engl. transl.) and the Portuguese colonial army. Designated by the Portuguese dictatorial regime *Estado Novo* as the “Overseas War,” known as the “War of Independence” on the Mozambican side (see p. 33).

³⁴ The Eurovision network allowed its member countries to live broadcast from and to the other member countries. In 1960, RTP live broadcast from abroad (Spain) for the first time. It would be the first time for RTP to live broadcast for the other Eurovision members three years later. Videotape brought the possibility of recording images and sound on the same magnetic tape. See João Ricardo da Silva Pinto. “‘Onde, Como, Quanto, Quando’—a produção musical nos primórdios da Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (1956-1964).” PhD Dissertation (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2018), 103-108.

³⁵ Rita Luís, “O império colonial português e a televisão,” in *Cultura popular e império*, 242.

³⁶ Nelson Ribeiro, “Colonisation Through Broadcasting: Rádio Clube de Moçambique and the Promotion of Portuguese Colonial Policy, 1932-1964.” In *Media and the Portuguese Empire*, ed. José Luís García et al (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 180.

³⁷ Fernando Dava (ed.), *Samora Moisés Machel – História de uma vida dedicada ao povo moçambicano* (Maputo: ARPAC – Instituto de Investigação Sócio-Cultural, 2014), 118.

Even excluding the possibility of live broadcasting from Mozambique, RTP sent the special correspondent Cesário Borga³⁸, a sound recordist and a camera operator, to cover the independence. Borga was previously sent to Mozambique in the summer of 1974 and then to Zambia to report the Lusaka Agreement of September 1974³⁹. According to the journalist, the station chose him because of his close ties with Mozambique after spending two years in the Tete region as a militia sergeant in the Portuguese colonial army⁴⁰.

The raw material of the independence ceremony recorded at the Machava Stadium and the commemorations of independence at the Presidential Palace in Lourenço Marques on June 25, 1975 were later brought to Lisbon⁴¹, where the film was developed and edited. A program was made from the images of these two events. Still, for obvious reasons, it was not included in the broadcast providing in-depth coverage of the independence of Mozambique on June 25⁴².

Although it was impossible to show live images of Mozambique on the eve of independence and independence itself, the issue of Mozambican independence opened the RTP NewsHour⁴³ from June 24 – 26⁴⁴. The anchors of the two nightly Newscasts of June 24 did a countdown for independence for the lack of images. In addition, they explained the ceremony in which the new Mozambican flag would replace the Portuguese one. As the sole special correspondent sent by RTP to cover the independence, Borga reported the course of events on

³⁸ Born in 1944, Cesário Borga worked in the Portuguese written press before joining RTP in August 1974 (“Internal Directive 41/74”).

³⁹ The Lusaka Agreement established that Mozambique would be ruled by a Transitional Government composed of Portuguese and Mozambican elements until the date of its independence, the 25th of June 1975, which the Agreement also settled (see p. 39).

⁴⁰ Cesário Borga, interview by Catarina Letria, 01.19.2022.

⁴¹ Borga believes the raw material was brought to Lisbon by himself and his crew but cannot remember his exact date of return from Mozambique.

⁴² The RTP online archives label this program under the date 25.06.1975. However, for technical reasons, it is impossible that it was aired on that day. Nevertheless, I could not trace the exact date of its broadcast, but I could verify that it was not in June.

⁴³ The Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński (1932-2007) believed that “[daily news] is a fundamental weapon for the formation of public opinion. If we do not talk about an event, it simply does not exist. Actually, for the majority of people, ‘daily news’ is the only way to know something about the world.” See: Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Os Cínicos Não Servem para Este Ofício. Conversas sobre Bom Jornalismo* (Lisbon: Relógio d’Água, 2008), 43.

⁴⁴ “News Line Up”, 06.24.1975; 06.25.1975; 06.26.1975.

“telephoned chronicles,” which could be recorded a while before the NewsHour or aired live according to the circumstances⁴⁵.

Thus, the only images of Mozambique seen by the Portuguese metropolitan audience were those deferred and included in the special programming for June 25. As announced by the anchor, it consisted of three programs: *História de uma Cidade: Beira é o seu Nome* (scheduled from 7:52 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.); *Programa sobre Moçambique* (scheduled from 9:08 p.m. to 9:46 p.m.); and *Uma Lança em África* (scheduled from 9:58 p.m. to 11:23 p.m., interrupted by six minutes of advertisements)⁴⁶. While the first was about Mozambique’s second-largest city, Beira, the second was a production of the cinema cooperative Cinequanon on the “action of FRELIMO in the struggle for the liberation of Mozambique.” *Uma Lança em África* was a special report that contained interviews with Joaquim Chissano, Vítor Crespo, and the first interview ever given by the leader of FRELIMO, Samora Machel, to a Portuguese journalist. This thesis aims to analyze this report.

1.1 *Uma Lança em África*: The Context of Production

The author of *Uma Lança em África* was the renowned journalist Joaquim Letria. He was invited to join RTP after the Carnation Revolution in August 1974⁴⁷, and in February 1975, was appointed subdirector of the Information Department⁴⁸. In 1974, he won the “Figura TV do Ano” award (“Figure TV of the Year”) given by Casa da Imprensa⁴⁹. Letria had worked for the BBC Portuguese Service in London since 1970⁵⁰. Prior to the BBC, he worked in radio and the written press in Portugal and Associated Press from 1963⁵¹.

⁴⁵ Cesário Borga, interview; This is also verifiable on the News Line Up.

⁴⁶ *History of a City: Beira is its name, Program about Mozambique, A Spear in Africa*, in English. They are available at the RTP online archives. “Program Schedule”, 06.08.1975. See also: RTP, 1975, “Yearbook”.

⁴⁷ “Internal Directive 41/74”.

⁴⁸ “Internal Directive 64/74”.

⁴⁹ *Gente*, 06.17.1975, 45.

⁵⁰ Dora Santos Rosa, *Joaquim Letria sem papas na língua* (Lisbon: Âncora, 2014), 46.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

Before returning from England, one of Letria's first assignments for RTP was to cover the negotiations between Portugal and PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) in London at the end of May 1974⁵². Then, in August, RTP sent him to Argel to cover the agreement signed between the Portuguese state and PAIGC. Portugal pledged to recognize the independence of Guinea-Bissau and to withdraw the Portuguese troops from that country. According to the journalist, RTP chose him for this assignment because of his close relationship with Amílcar Cabral, the African leader, while working at the BBC⁵³.

Later, the RTP Military Administration sent Letria, the sound recordist Jorge Teófilo, and the camera operator Pozal Domingues to cover the events in Mozambique. Although he had been in the country before as a BBC correspondent, Letria was never told why RTP chose him to go there⁵⁴. In accord with the journalist, he was not given any directives by the RTP Military Administration about what or not to do:

“I was the one in charge. I chose what to do, where to go, and the money I had in my pocket. I was the leader of the crew.”⁵⁵

Letria accumulated his functions at RTP with the direction of the new weekly newspaper *O Jornal (The Newspaper)*, launched on May 2, 1975. For this reason, he also reported the events for the newspaper, sending his writings via teletype and telephone to Lisbon⁵⁶. However, this did not bring him any problems with the RTP Administration because the station had difficulties finding journalists willing to go to Africa⁵⁷.

⁵² Ibid., 39.

⁵³ Joaquim Letria, interview by Catarina Letria, 09.14.2021. According to the journalist (born in 1943), Amílcar Cabral was interviewed several times for the BBC African Sections. However, Cabral could never be interviewed for the BBC Portuguese Section since the BBC wanted to avoid antagonizing the Portuguese dictatorial regime *Estado Novo*.

⁵⁴ Joaquim Letria, interview by Catarina Letria, 09.13.2021.

⁵⁵ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁵⁶ Joaquim Letria, “Moçambique: a tranquila marcha para a alegria da independência,” *O Jornal*, 05.16.1975; Joaquim Letria, “Joaquim Chissano: ‘a Frelimo nunca procurou modelos estrangeiros para aplicar em Moçambique,’” *O Jornal*, 05.23.1975; Joaquim Letria, “Samora Machel fala a ‘O Jornal’: ‘Moçambique será o modelo de transformação da África Austral,’” *O Jornal*, 05.30.05.1975; Joaquim Letria, “Machala Uti! Bom dia, Moçambique,” *O Jornal*, 06.06.1975;

⁵⁷ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

The journalist says the first thing he did when he arrived in Lourenço Marques with the television crew was to go to the *Notícias (News)* newspaper newsroom and ask his colleagues what was happening in the country to understand where a story might be found⁵⁸. Letria finally decided to head to the Tete region, in the extreme Northwest of Mozambique, where the last Portuguese troops were leaving and he met young FRELIMO guerrillas. From there, he rented a plane to Nampula and went on to Cahora Bassa.

Eventually, the television crew went to the Cabo Delgado province, where most so-called “liberated zones” were located, and FRELIMO had its headquarters. That was the first time a Portuguese journalist visited the regions the Front had liberated⁵⁹. According to Letria, he was never poorly received by the FRELIMO guerrillas. Instead, he presented himself, saying he worked for Portuguese television, and people accepted him⁶⁰.

On May 24, 1975, Letria and his crew filmed the arrival in Mozambique of the president of FRELIMO, Samora Machel, who came from Zambia on a plane lent by the Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda⁶¹. He was welcomed by Marcelino dos Santos, the FRELIMO vice-president; Joaquim Chissano, the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government; and Armando Guebuza, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Transitional Government⁶². *Uma Lança em África* begins with images of this arrival, which marks the beginning of the “Triumphal Journey” Machel did from the North to the South of Mozambique, from May 24 to June 23, 1975⁶³.

⁵⁸ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁵⁹ According to Joaquim Letria, “Samora Machel fala a O Jornal”, *O Jornal*, 05.30.1975, 22.

⁶⁰ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁶¹ Samora Machel had been outside Mozambique since the signature of the Lusaka Agreement, period during which he visited GDR, Bulgaria, Romania, Tanzania and Zambia. See: Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Inscrevendo a nação?” *A Viagem Triunfal no fim do período de transição em Moçambique, maio a junho de 1975*,” in *Lutas pela memória em África*, edited by Livio Sansone and Cláudio Alves Furtado (Salvador: EDUFBA, 2019), 402.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 409.

⁶³ See: Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Inscrevendo a nação?” According to them, the “Triumphal Journey” has been largely ignored by scholars.

On that occasion, Letria met Samora Machel for the first time. According to the journalist, Machel asked him:

“‘Who do you work for? Where are you from?’ And I said: I am from Lisbon. I work for RTP. He had an explosion of sympathy, of joy [. . .].”⁶⁴

Letria followed Machel in part of his “Triumphal Journey” from Rovuma to Maputo, and *Uma Lança em África* includes some parts of the route. However, since RTP later sent the camera operator and the sound recordist from Cabo Delgado to Lourenço Marques, Letria stayed alone with Machel and the FRELIMO troops in the North, being the only Portuguese journalist to accompany the journey⁶⁵. For this reason, RTP has no images of this time Letria spent with Machel. Nevertheless, Letria would later rejoin his RTP colleagues in the capital, where he had already interviewed Joaquim Chissano and Admiral Vítor Crespo, the Portuguese High Commissioner, for the special report.

In accord with the journalist, Machel no longer regarded him as a mere reporter during the journey. Instead, the FRELIMO leader saw and treated Letria as a friend, as someone who, although not belonging to the Front, was a witness of that journey⁶⁶. In this context, close to Nangade, four days after arriving in Mueda⁶⁷, Machel gave his first interview to a Portuguese journalist⁶⁸. Though the interview was not easy to obtain, as Letria explains:

“I carried on walking, and I asked him for an interview, and he said: ‘We’ll think about it someday,’ and he never came back to me. I had to be pretty adamant to secure the interview: ‘Mr. President, either you give me an interview now or never, because I’ll leave for Lisbon.’ And he agreed to it. That’s how it happened, with me playing rough.”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁶⁵ Collin Darch and David Hedges, “‘Inscrevendo a nação?’”, 413.

⁶⁶ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.14.2021.

⁶⁷ See Joaquim Letria, “Samora Machel fala a O Jornal”, *O Jornal*, 05.30.1975, 22.

⁶⁸ The RTP special correspondent Cesário Borga had been unable to interview members of FRELIMO during his stay in Mozambique before the signature of the Lusaka Agreement (Cesário Borga, interview).

⁶⁹ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

However, the journalist did not stay in Mozambique to cover the independence ceremony since RTP sent him to report on the Macao Summit on June, launched by Portugal to reach an agreement between the different East-Timorese political movements⁷⁰. On his return from Mozambique⁷¹, Letria brought the raw material, which he edited at the RTP studios with an editor. And so, *Uma Lança em África* was born. According to the journalist, the broadcaster never interfered with what to or not to include in the report. Letria had already conceived how he wanted the report to be and was mindful of that during the editing process. One objective was to show the Portuguese audience that:

“[. . .] the liberation movements were nice guys, that they knew what they were doing and had every right to do that.”⁷²

1.2 *Uma Lança em África: The Context of Reception*

With the hindsight offered by 47 years, Letria considers that *Uma Lança em África* is “old fashioned, it’s heavy, badly done. I wouldn’t do like it today. As a document, it exists.”⁷³ However, according to the journalist, for the television standards of 1975, “it was an evening’s worth of television. It was a TV success.”⁷⁴

Even so, Letria recognizes that many people in Portugal did not like the report:

“I was insulted by ‘retornados’⁷⁵ for doing these interviews. Once, I entered the Churrasqueira do Campo Grande [restaurant in Lisbon], and four guys threatened to hit me. ‘Communist, go work there with your *nigger* friends!’ The environment in Lisbon wasn’t easy [. . .].”

⁷⁰ See *O Jornal*, 27.06.1975. For this reason, Letria had never watched the report until our interview in 2021.

⁷¹ Letria cannot remember the exact date.

⁷² Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.14.2021.

⁷³ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁷⁴ Joaquim Letria, interview, 09.13.2021.

⁷⁵ “Returnees”, Eng. Transl. Around 550 000 people arrived in Portugal from its former colonies between the summers of 1974 and 1975. See Mário Artur Machaqueiro, “Memórias em conflito ou o mal-estar da descolonização,” in *O Adeus ao Império: 40 Anos de Descolonização Portuguesa*, ed. by Fernando Rosas, Mário Machaqueiro, and Pedro Aires de Oliveira (Lisbon: Nova Vega, 2017), 228.

The journalist's interview with Samora Machel for *Uma Lança em África* was published in advance on May 30, both in *O Jornal*⁷⁶ and in the Mozambican daily newspaper *Notícias*⁷⁷. It also aired by RTP on June 8 as part of the *Teledomingo (Tele Sunday)* program, two weeks before the station broadcast the full special report. On that day, Letria and José Carlos de Vasconcelos, also the subdirector of the Information Department⁷⁸, were in the studio to comment on the interview and “exchange impressions about Letria's journey to Africa.”⁷⁹ On June 17, the Armed Forces bi-weekly bulletin reproduced the full interview, introduced as follows:

“An important interview given by Samora Machel to Joaquim Letria was broadcast by RTP on Teledomingo. The interview was important not only because it was the first interview the FRELIMO leader gave to a Portuguese journalist. Samora Machel was, in fact, a surprise to those who followed less well the evolution of the struggle in Mozambique and largely corresponded to what other, better-informed people thought of him.”⁸⁰

On June 20, it was time for the Portuguese television magazine *Telesemana (Tele Week)* to transcribe the full interview for the “actuality and the interest of this journalistic document.”⁸¹ Seven days later, after the broadcast of the special report, the weekly news magazine *Flama (Flame)* commented on the impact of the interview with Samora Machel:

“The interview given by FRELIMO's president to Joaquim Letria, recently broadcast by RTP, had an undeniable impact on the surprised viewers. In fact, Samora Machel spoke in a way that was both so simple and so direct, about things that many people think and about which even more people talk, that the first sensation was one of astonishment, followed soon after by invaluable admiration, as can be gleaned from the comments written in various newspapers, in group discussions, in workplaces, and cafés.

[. . .]

“And perhaps they [those words] had such a great resonance, besides their immediately revolutionary character [. . .] also because they reveal an open and

⁷⁶ See Joaquim Letria, “Samora Machel fala a O Jornal”, *O Jornal*, 05.30.1975, 22-23.

⁷⁷ Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Inscrevendo a nação?”, 413.

⁷⁸ Since April 29, 1975 (“Internal Directive 55/75”). José Carlos de Vasconcelos was 34 years at the time.

⁷⁹ “Program Schedule”, 06.08.1975.

⁸⁰ *Movimento, Boletim Informativo das Forças Armadas*, 06.17.1975, 8.

⁸¹ *Telesemana*, 06.20.1975, 38.

fraternal spirit that hardly many would suspect in those who had to fight for ten years, arms in hand, against the sons of the people.”⁸²

Then, on June 26, the television review section of the Portuguese daily newspaper *Diário Popular* (*Popular Daily*)⁸³ mentioned the special programming devoted to Mozambican independence RTP aired the day before. The review considered the broadcast composed of the documentary made by Cinequanon and *Uma Lança em África* to be a “little attractive,” adding that the interview with Machel had been “very recently” aired by RTP. According to the review,

“In the historical hour lived yesterday by Portugal and Mozambique, television would necessarily have to be present. However, it was present as it could and not as it would have wished: broadcasting on the small screen the images of the solemn independence ceremony of our former colony on the Indian Ocean. Mozambique is far away, and broadcast times are unforgiving.”⁸⁴

However, the newspaper praised RTP for the intended coverage of Mozambique, adding that “what matters is the historical moment itself.”

⁸² *Flama*, 06.27.1975, 18.

⁸³ *Diário Popular*, 06.26.1975, 5.

⁸⁴ *Diário Popular*, 06.26.1975, 5.

2 RTP from April 25, 1974 to the ‘Hot Summer’ of 1975

2.1. From the Origins to 1974

Uma Lança em África was broadcast during the Portuguese revolutionary period (PREC)⁸⁵. The number of television sets in the country increased from 674,686 in 1974 to 722,316 within the following year⁸⁶. However, until the beginning of the 1970s, outside Lisbon and Oporto, cafés were still where most of the population watched television⁸⁷, whose network covered 90 percent of the continental Portuguese territory in 1970⁸⁸. The fact that television did not require literacy skills was relevant in a country where 25.7 percent of the 8.6 million inhabitants were illiterate in 1970⁸⁹. Nonetheless, it seems impossible to measure which media (radio, television, the press) had the most substantial social impact during the revolution⁹⁰.

To better interpret the special report and the special programming devoted to Mozambican independence, we need to examine the context of RTP after the Carnation Revolution and during PREC. Therefore, although I am looking at *Uma Lança em África* as a historical source, the media themselves also are an object of study⁹¹. Some authors have emphasized that the history of the Portuguese media is under explored, with a few studies considering the media as their object of study, preferring instead to focus on their discourse⁹².

⁸⁵ “Período Revolucionário em Curso”, in the Portuguese original. “Ongoing Revolutionary Period”, Engl. Transl. From the March 11 to November 25, 1975.

⁸⁶ In 1974 and 1975, there were respectively 1,516,273 and 1,510,703 radio receivers in Portugal. See Rita Luís, “O império colonial português e a televisão” in *Cultura popular e império*, 249.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 248.

⁸⁸ Madalena Soares dos Reis, “A programação televisiva revolucionária – RTP 1974-1975”. Master’s Dissertation (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2008), 31.

⁸⁹In <https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Taxa+de+analfabetismo+segundo+os+Censos+total+e+por+sexo-2517>. In September 1974, the RTP Military Administration issued an Internal Directive reminding the workers to be “aware that its [RTP] broadcast is mainly devoted to the Portuguese population of the nonurban areas for whom television is the almost only existing medium.” (See “Internal Directive 52/74”).

⁹⁰ Madalena Soares dos Reis, “A programação televisiva revolucionária”, 6.

⁹¹ Pedro Marques Gomes, *A Imprensa na Revolução. Os Novos Jornais e as Lutas políticas de 1975* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 2021), 39-40.

⁹² Ibid., 34. Cf. Jérôme Bourdon, “Detextualizing: How to write a history of audiences”, 16.

RTP started its regular broadcast in 1957, and until the Carnation Revolution remained the “*Estado Novo*’s information policy bastion.”⁹³ Two years before, the station had been created as a public limited company whose capital was divided among the Portuguese state, private radio stations, and private shareholders (mainly banks). The state granted RTP the concession to develop the public television service in Portugal until January 1976⁹⁴. The station became a public company and was ruled by its own statutes from its nationalization in December 1975⁹⁵.

After the military coup on April 25, 1974, journalists had to adapt their *métier* to the new context. From being subjected to the censorship of a dictatorial regime for 48 years, journalists from the printed media, radio, and RTP who had never experienced the freedom of speech had to learn how to work in a highly volatile revolutionary process⁹⁶. As stated in the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) program, censorship was immediately abolished after April 25. Since the Portuguese Journalists’ Code of Ethics would only be issued in 1976, the journalistic practices had to be adjusted in accordance with the revolutionary circumstances⁹⁷. The journalist António Borga recalls that, at the time, RTP had no law or constitution nor a juridical framework regulating it⁹⁸.

Nevertheless, in June 1974, according to the MFA program, an Ad Hoc Commission for the printed media, radio, and television was created to control the media. Its creation was justified by the MFA with the paramount public interest – certain military issues had to be kept secret and public opinion “protected from reactionary aggressions.” Exclusively composed of military personnel, the Commission was under the authority of the Junta of National Salvation⁹⁹. It carried

⁹³ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária: a RTP durante o PREC (1974-1975),” in *Revista Media & Jornalismo* 19, no. 35 (2019): 244.

⁹⁴ Madalena Soares dos Reis, “A programação televisiva revolucionária”, 13-15.

⁹⁵ Francisco Rui Cádima, “Os media na revolução (1974-1976),” in *O país em revolução*, ed. J.M. Brandão de Brito (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2001), 353.

⁹⁶ Pedro Marques Gomes, “Os jornalistas na revolução portuguesa (1974-1975),” in *Revista brasileira de história da mídia* 17, no. 2 (2018): 116.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁹⁸ António Borga, interview. Borga joined RTP in October 1974 (“Internal Directive 64/74”). He had worked in the BBC Portuguese Section in London from 1970 to 1974. In January 1975, the journalist covered the Alvor Agreement on the independence of Angola for RTP.

⁹⁹ The Junta of National Salvation was a provisional government body only composed of military officers with the objective of implementing the MFA program in Portugal. It assumed power on April 26, 1974 and would be replaced by the Revolutionary Council in March 1975.

out some censorship acts, which led to contestation among journalists. Still, the Commission would be dismantled in October 1975, after the promulgation of the new Press Law in February that same year¹⁰⁰.

2.2. Changes in the Administration

In the aftermath of the revolution, Ramiro Valadão, the RTP's chairman since 1969, was discharged. In May 1974, a new administration was appointed, consisting only of military personnel¹⁰¹. Until October 1975, the station had six different administrations, five ruled by the armed forces¹⁰². Having a military administration was intended as a strategy to protect television from the influence of the political parties and guarantee its pluralistic dimension¹⁰³. From June 1974, RTP was run by the government, and from then on, the Prime Minister appointed the administration¹⁰⁴. The administration would then choose the directors for the different RTP sections, who could be military or civilian. At the time of the special broadcast on the Mozambican independence in June 1975, Lieutenant Colonel Tavares Galhardo was the chairman of the RTP Administration, and Lieutenant Bargão dos Santos was the chief of the Information Department¹⁰⁵. According to Cesário Borga and José Carlos de Vasconcelos, journalists needed Dos Santos' approval to send correspondents outside Lisbon – as happened with the special correspondent sent to cover the independence of Mozambique – since that required monetary costs¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁰ Francisco Rui Cádima, “Os media na revolução (1974-1976)”, 329.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁰² Vasco Hogan Teves, “RTP: 50 anos de História.” RTP. 2017. RTP would have military administration until 1977.

¹⁰³ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 243.

¹⁰⁴ Francisco Rui Cádima, “Os media na revolução (1974-1976)”, 324.

¹⁰⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Tavares Galhardo would remain in charge from March (“Internal Directive 46/75”) to September 1975 (“Internal Directive 86/75”), while Lieutenant Bargão dos Santos would rule the information department from February (“Internal Directive 19/75”) to July 1975 (“Internal Directive 79/75”).

¹⁰⁶ Cesário Borga, interview by Catarina Letria, 01.19.2022; José Carlos de Vasconcelos, interview by Catarina Letria, 01.14.01.2022.

2.3. Changes within the Personnel

The revolution not only brought changes in the RTP Administration, but also among its journalists and workers. From April to August 1974, 50 workers accused of having connections with the dictatorship were suspended for political reasons, and two were fired¹⁰⁷. In October 1974, pressured by the RTP workers, the Military Administration created the “Comissão de Saneamento e Reclassificação” (“Purges and Reclassification Commission”)¹⁰⁸. Its main goal was to collect facts and institute proceedings against the workers denounced by colleagues for their alleged connections with the deposed regime¹⁰⁹.

Carla Baptista states that while RTP was suspending or firing workers for political reasons, the station also hired new journalists¹¹⁰. In July 1974, the Administration authorized hiring new reporters and trainees to be admitted in August¹¹¹. Most of them, such as Cesário Borga and Manuela Alves, were recruited among the printed media, while others, including Joaquim Letria, José Gabriel Viegas, and António Borga came from the radio¹¹². The latter mentions the important contribution of the “exiled journalists” to RTP since they brought the experience usually acquired in democratic countries with press freedom. According to Borga, they were generally well-received by their colleagues at RTP¹¹³.

2.4. Changes within the Programming

It was not only the internal structure of RTP that was affected by the Carnation Revolution, but also the programming, regarding its formal and content aspects. Madalena Soares dos Reis

¹⁰⁷ Maria Inácia Rezola and Pedro Marques Gomes (eds.), *A revolução nos média* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2014), 27.

¹⁰⁸ See: António Costa Pinto, “Political Purges and State Crisis in Portugal’s Transition to Democracy, 1975-76,” in *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no 43 (2008): 305-332.

¹⁰⁹ “Internal Directive 59/74”.

¹¹⁰ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 242.

¹¹¹ “Internal Directive 28/74”; “Internal Directive 41/74”.

¹¹² Cesário Borga, interview.

¹¹³ António Borga, interview.

argues that through its programs, RTP made the revolution *visible* and defends that the station adopted a “revolutionary broadcast.”¹¹⁴ The same author identifies parallelism between the evolution of the sociopolitical process in Portugal and the changes in the RTP broadcast, arguing that each phase of the revolutionary process corresponded to a different type of program schedule¹¹⁵. The television report format assumed a central role within the information programs, allowing journalists to listen to the streets and give voice to the “people.” Although RTP was not unfamiliar with television formats, such as studio interviews and debates, during the revolutionary period, these programs started to address topics that could not be discussed before, such as poverty, illiteracy, and contraception¹¹⁶. Also, for the first time, RTP gave voice to the social groups that the dictatorship banned from television: left-wing intellectuals, feminists, factory and rural workers¹¹⁷. Finally, some programs adopted a new language inspired by documental cinema and theatre¹¹⁸.

The broadcaster assumed the mission of giving voice to and educating the masses. The in-house productions were intended to unveil the real Portuguese social and political reality never shown by television until then¹¹⁹. The country’s underdevelopment was presented as a direct consequence of 48 years of “fascist dictatorship,” as the former regime was responsible for the people’s cultural backwardness. With the first free elections for the Constituent Assembly symbolically scheduled for the April 25, 1975, RTP aimed to provide political and historical education to its audiences to prepare them to live in a democracy¹²⁰. António Borga considers that, without television, it would have been much harder to democratize the country and believes RTP fulfilled the requirements of public-service broadcasting¹²¹.

However, more than just mirroring the country’s reality during the revolutionary period and explaining the revolution to the people, the station also took part in the events, engaging with

¹¹⁴ Madalena Soares dos Reis, “A programação televisiva revolucionária”, 108.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹⁶ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 243.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹¹⁹ Madalena Soares dos Reis, “A programação televisiva revolucionária”, 107.

¹²⁰ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 242.

¹²¹ António Borga, interview.

the objectives of the Carnation Revolution¹²². According to Borga, by reporting what was going on in the country, RTP fueled the revolution¹²³. Baptista sustains that after April 1974, journalists obtained a totally new status, becoming political actors within the revolutionary process¹²⁴.

2.5. Party Disputes

Consequently, the RTP did not escape the intense political party disputes that marked the revolutionary period. Francisco Rui Cádima refers to “power struggles between the political parties for television control.”¹²⁵ One of the main objectives of the political parties and the Armed Forces was to control the media and direct the broadcast of information and programming¹²⁶, Cádima reported. This dominance assumed crucial importance since the path of the revolution and the regime’s nature to be implemented in Portugal were still unclear¹²⁷. After March 11, 1975¹²⁸, most of the written press was nationalized, and the political parties increased their influence and manipulation of the media. The disputes were mainly between the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)¹²⁹ and the far-left political organizations¹³⁰. According to Cádima, from the second to the fifth Provisory Governments – headed by Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves – the PCP and the far-left controlled the Portuguese media¹³¹.

The journalist José Carlos de Vasconcelos, subdirector of the Information Department from February to August 1975¹³², remembers that to be true:

¹²² Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 243.; Maria Inácia Rezola and Pedro Marques Gomes (eds.), *A revolução nos media*, 21.; John Ellis, “Television and History”, 279.

¹²³ António Borga, interview.

¹²⁴ Carla Baptista, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária”, 244.

¹²⁵ Francisco Rui Cádima, “Os media na revolução (1974-1976)”, 326.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 335; 345.

¹²⁷ Pedro Marques Gomes, “Os jornalistas na revolução portuguesa (1974-1975)”, 116.

¹²⁸ On March 11, 1975, the former President of the Republic General António de Spínola (who had renounced the charge on the September 28, 1974) intended a military coup, sustained by part of the Aviation and members of the military right-wing. However, the coup failed and would mark the start of the most tumultuous period of the revolution.

¹²⁹ The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) was founded in 1921 during the First Republic (1910-1926).

¹³⁰ Pedro Marques Gomes, “Os jornalistas na revolução portuguesa (1974-1975)”, 120.

¹³¹ Vasco Gonçalves was Prime Minister from July 1974 to August 1975.

¹³² “Internal Directive 55/75”; “Internal Directive 92/75”.

“[. . .] was very difficult, because it was a mix of free for all, constant political infighting between the Communist Party and the extreme left, with the Communists in control, and never knowing what would happen next.”¹³³

Despite the political disputes on the left side of the political spectrum, he also recalls that:

“The struggle was between the extreme left and the Communist Party. You had the ex-fascists and reactionaries that stayed on but kept their mouths shut. And there were others who kept using the same adjectives they used previously with the former regime.”¹³⁴

On June 11, 1975, the RTP Administration issued an internal directive condemning unidentified workers for placing their political positions above their professional responsibility toward the station:

“[. . .]

Even considering, amongst other causes, the natural deficiencies that resulted from an RTP structure that was not set up for the times we are living, facts that have repeated themselves with undesirable frequency clearly show, on the part of some workers, a less conscious sense of responsibility, the placing of party interests above the combination of efforts necessary for the execution of their job, and an unacceptable caste spirit [. . .].”¹³⁵

¹³³ José Carlos de Vasconcelos, interview.

¹³⁴ José Carlos de Vasconcelos, interview.

¹³⁵ “Internal Directive 65/75”.

3 Portugal and Mozambique from April 25, 1974 to June 1975

In the two previous chapters, we examined the context of production and reception of *Uma Lança em África* and then turned to the context of the RTP from the Carnation Revolution until the summer of 1975. But how was the country mirrored by television? In this section, while continuing to zoom out, we will address the political context in the metropole, starting from the origins of the military coup on April 25, 1975 to the summer of 1975. Since the focus of this study is the depictions of Mozambique's independence, the metropolitan context will be intertwined here with the Mozambican political context.

3.1. Background

3.1.1 *Estado Novo's Colonial Rhetoric and Policy*

The Portuguese colonial policy underwent changes throughout the *Estado Novo* regime¹³⁶. After a phase marked by the “imperial mystique”¹³⁷ (from 1930 to 1951), in line with the European paradigm prior to the Second World War, the regime sought to reform its legislation in the postwar period to maintain its colonies in a world that was beginning to witness the phenomenon of decolonization¹³⁸. In this sense, Lusotropicalism, a theory developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, was appropriated as an ideological legitimation and scientific justification of the

¹³⁶ Until the end of *Estado Novo* (1933-1974), Portugal held Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe, Angola, and Mozambique as the African part of its empire. In 1961, the country lost its Indian territories (Goa, Daman, Diu) to the Indian Union. Macao would remain under Portuguese sovereignty until 1999.

¹³⁷ This doctrine crystallized in the *Colonial Act* of 1930, a document that enshrined Portugal's vocation and historical right to colonization. Colonization should aim at civilizing the colonies. Empire was defined as “timeless” and inseparable from the Portuguese national identity. In line with the Social Darwinist theory, miscegenation was heavily condemned. For this subchapter, see Cláudia Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo: o Luso-tropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Lisbon: Afrontamento, 1999).

¹³⁸ In 1951, the *Colonial Act* was revoked and its content, reformulated, became part of the Portuguese Constitution. Portugal then began to configure itself as a “multicontinental nation, united and indivisible,” abolishing the designation of “Portuguese colonial empire” and replacing the term “colonies” with “overseas provinces,” similarly to what had happened in France. In this way, Portugal nominally denied having colonies, thus reserving itself from the interference of foreign powers in the administration of its colonies.

Portuguese colonial policy after 1951¹³⁹. However, proclaiming the Lusotropicalist doctrine was not enough; the legislation had to reflect it. In the 1960s, as a response to the advances of decolonization in the African continent and a way to appease the spirits in the colonies, the regime adopted a policy of colonial reformism¹⁴⁰.

The colonial policy of Marcelo Caetano's governments¹⁴¹ adopted an ideal of "progressive autonomy" reflected in the Constitutional Revision of 1971, which sought to adopt a middle way between granting autonomy to the provinces and an integrationist current¹⁴². Until 1974, however, Lusotropicalism served as a shield for the Portuguese state against the growing international criticism. The regime promoted an idea of a multicontinental, multiracial, and fraternal society.

3.1.2 The Beginning of the Armed Struggle

The armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism started in Angola in 1961 and extended to Guinea-Bissau in 1963. On June 25, 1964, FRELIMO launched guerrilla attacks against the Portuguese army in North Mozambique, opening the third and last battlefield against Portuguese sovereignty in Africa.

¹³⁹ In 1933, the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) published *Casa Grande & Senzala*. The work valued the contribution of the African and Indian elements to the making of Brazilian society, valuing the figure of the mulatto, seen as the future of the nation and the result of the Portuguese presence in the tropics. According to Freyre, the Portuguese colonizer would then have known how to adapt to the tropics and mix with the indigenous populations and the enslaved Africans, in a "peaceful" conquest, as opposed to that of the peoples of Northern Europe. Its special aptitude for adaptability came from the hybrid ethnic origin of people from Southern Europe, marked by the long Muslim and Jewish presence in Portuguese territory.

¹⁴⁰ The "Indigenous Status" was abolished in 1961, with the granting of citizenship to all inhabitants of the Portuguese colonies, without exception.

¹⁴¹ Marcelo Caetano was Prime Minister from Salazar's physical incapacitation, in 1968, to the Carnation Revolution, in 1974.

¹⁴² Angola and Mozambique were then elevated to the category of states with a specific political and administrative organization.

The movement was created in 1962 in Tanzania from a conjunction of different Mozambican nationalist movements settled outside Mozambique and under the Organization of African Unity (OAU). FRELIMO was presided by Eduardo Mondlane according to a classical national liberation strategy that included socialist tropes but refrained from adopting a complete Marxist program. Mondlane, who benefited from North American support, was assassinated in 1969. With the leadership of Samora Machel from 1970 onward, FRELIMO adopted a modernizing agenda characterized by nontribal, nonracial, noncolonialist, and noncapitalist traits. However, only in the 1977 Congress would the organization affirm itself as a Marxist-Leninist party¹⁴³.

By 1973, FRELIMO troops had liberated some Northern areas of Mozambique and extended the guerrilla toward the South. The *Estado Novo* propaganda portrayed them as a rag-tag of communists, criminals, and racists¹⁴⁴. In January 1974, 50,000 colonial troops (30,000 of African origin) were fighting against 10,000 FRELIMO guerrillas, supported by the USSR and China, while the war was unfolding in favor of the latter¹⁴⁵. At the time, Portugal was the fourth most militarized state in the world, and Mozambique counted a white European population of 180,000 people¹⁴⁶.

3.1.3 The Creation of the MFA and the Military Coup of April 25, 1974

The Armed Forces Movement (MFA), the clandestine movement set up by disgruntled mid-ranking Portuguese officers in 1973, was in disbelief that Portugal could win the wars against the liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique and acknowledged *Estado*

¹⁴³ Mallyn Newitt, “Os partidos nacionalistas africanos no tempo da revolução,” in *O Adeus ao Império: 40 Anos de Descolonização Portuguesa*, ed. by Fernando Rosas, Fernando Rosas, Mário Machaqueiro, and Pedro Aires de Oliveira (Lisbon: Nova Vega, 2017), 38-40.

¹⁴⁴ Amélia Neves de Souto, “Moçambique, descolonização e transição para a independência: herança e memória,” in *O Adeus ao Império*, 145; Benedito Machava, “Galo amanheceu em Lourenço Marques: o 7 de Setembro e o verso da descolonização de Moçambique,” in *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 10.

¹⁴⁵ Norrie MacQueen, “O balanço militar em 1974 nos três teatros de operações,” in *O Adeus ao Império*, 51-53.

¹⁴⁶ Bruno Cardoso Reis, “Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975),” in *O Adeus ao Império*, 81.

Novo's lack of political legitimacy¹⁴⁷. Therefore, the movement considered a regime change the only solution to the Portuguese colonial problem¹⁴⁸. After a failed military coup in March 1974, the MFA could finally overthrow Caetano's dictatorial regime on April 25, 1974.

3.2. The Revolutionary Period

In the days following the military coup, the state apparatus of the dictatorship was dismantled amid significant social turmoil¹⁴⁹. The Junta of National Salvation assumed power to implement the MFA program on April 26. From May 1974 to July 1976, Portugal would be ruled by six Provisional Governments composed of elements from different political parties and two military presidents of the Republic. Nonetheless, the MFA would still interfere with the governments and the State Council¹⁵⁰.

As stated in the second chapter, the most turbulent phase of the revolution (PREC) began on March 11, 1975 and ended on November 25. This period was marked by intense political and social conflicts and the fastest and most in-depth changes within Portuguese society¹⁵¹. The Socialist Party (PS) won the election for the Constituent Assembly of April 1975, followed by the Social-Democrat Party (PPD-PSD) and the Communist Party (PCP). As a result, two opposing groups emerged: a moderate faction composed of PS, PPD-PSD, and moderate military, sustained by the urban middle classes and the rural populations of the North of the country; a revolutionary faction including PCP, MDP-CDE, and radical military, supported by the rural workers of the

¹⁴⁷ MFA was created in June 1973 uniting middle-ranking commissioned officers against the law that allowed the entry of noncommissioned officers from the universities into the ranks of the Army. However, from a corporative movement, the MFA became politicized and started to include high military ranks who had doubts about the course of the war. For the origins and key role of the MFA throughout the Carnation Revolution, see Douglas Porch, *The Portuguese Armed Forces and the Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

¹⁴⁸ Bruno Cardoso Reis, "Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975)," in *O Adeus ao Império*, 84.

¹⁴⁹ Fernando Tavares Pimenta, *Portugal e o século XX – Estado-Império e Descolonização (1890-1975)* (Oporto: Afrontamento, 2010), 137.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 150-151. There were land occupations, nationalizations, demonstrations, and strikes. PREC was simultaneously marked by the emergence of new far-left political parties and the creation of clandestine extreme right-wing organizations, many of them paramilitary.

South and the factory workers of Lisbon's periphery¹⁵². In the "Hot Summer" of 1975, the country was on the brink of a civil war between PS and PCP, and some PCP headquarters and other left-wing parties were destroyed in the North¹⁵³. However, in November, the moderate bloc would prevail, assuming political and military power¹⁵⁴.

3.3. Decolonization

The fact that the independence of the Portuguese colonies occurred during a revolutionary period is often remarked on as one of the peculiarities of Portuguese decolonization compared to other former European colonial empires¹⁵⁵. The historian Fernando Tavares Pimenta identifies a political interdependence between PREC and the end of the Portuguese empire in Africa¹⁵⁶. The metropolitan context also helps to explain why Portuguese decolonization had a more openly ideological character than the French, Belgium, and British ones¹⁵⁷. The other uniqueness of Portuguese decolonization is its temporal gap compared to decolonization in different contexts, with Portugal being the last European colonial empire¹⁵⁸. The collapse of the Portuguese empire is thus at the intersection of European decolonization and the Cold War¹⁵⁹.

Finally, the fast pace is also a characteristic of the Portuguese decolonization process. On September 10, 1974, Portugal recognized the independence of Guinea-Bissau, unilaterally declared by PAIGC in 1973. On June 24, 1975, Mozambique became independent, followed by Cape Verde on July 5, and São Tomé e Príncipe on July 12. On November 11, Angola became independent.

¹⁵² Ibid., 151.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 152.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 155.

¹⁵⁵ Pedro Aires Oliveira, "As condições sociais e políticas da descolonização," In *Retornar. Traços de memória do fim do império*, ed. by Elsa Peralta, 45-62 (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2017), 57.

¹⁵⁶ Fernando Tavares Pimenta, *Portugal e o século XX*, 131.

¹⁵⁷ Bruno Cardoso Reis, "Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975)," in *O Adeus ao Império*, 100.

¹⁵⁸ Pedro Aires Oliveira, "Decolonization in Portuguese Africa," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, 2017. For more information in English, see Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa. Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (London: Longman, 1997).

¹⁵⁹ Pedro Aires Oliveira, "A descolonização: contornos e dinâmicas internacionais," In *Descolonização IV. A solução*, ed. by P. Cardoso Almeida, 44-73 (Vila do Conde: Verso da História, 2015), 44.

On November 28, FRETILIN unilaterally declared the independence of East Timor. Still, the political transition there would be violently interrupted by Indonesia's invasion at the beginning of December that year¹⁶⁰.

3.3.1. The MFA and General Spínola: Different Decolonization Strategies

With the dictatorship overthrown, the question became how and at which pace to solve the colonial problem. Two conflicting strategies proposed by the MFA and General Spínola, the President of the Republic, differed on the calendar, in the method of negotiation, and with the final objectives¹⁶¹.

The MFA recognized the right to self-determination and a fast power transfer to the liberation movements. According to a logic of revolutionary legitimacy, the MFA defended that the different liberation movements should be deemed the sole legitimate representatives of each African people since they had been the ones to undertake the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism. This argument implied the exclusion from the negotiations of the local political movements and organizations that had not participated in the armed struggle.

Conversely, General Spínola favored a slow decolonization process, in which the liberation movements could only participate if they renounced arms, and also included the other nationalist movements not involved in the armed struggle. General Spínola was in disbelief that Portugal would be viable without its colonies and, for this reason, aimed at a federation that also could include Brazil¹⁶². His domestic critics and the African liberation movements denounced this formula as a façade for neocolonial domination.

¹⁶⁰ For a chronology, see: RTP, "Descolonização Portuguesa: os 500 Dias do Fim do Império," RTP, <https://media.rtp.pt/descolonizacaoportuguesa/introducao/descolonizacao-portuguesa/>.

¹⁶¹ Bruno Cardoso Reis, "Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975)," in *O Adeus ao Império*, 95.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 96-97.

With the promulgation of the Decolonization Law on July 27, 1974¹⁶³, the MFA's strategy became the official decolonization policy of the Portuguese state¹⁶⁴. Since the liberation movements agreed to negotiate a cease-fire only if they were recognized as the sole legitimate representatives of the peoples of their countries, the MFA argued that dealing with the movements would be the sole solution to stop the war¹⁶⁵. Furthermore, this strategy was attuned to the international norms on self-determination of the time proclaimed by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The resolutions declared that transferring power should be done exclusively between the former colonial states and the liberation movements that had taken part in the armed struggle against colonialism¹⁶⁶. The fact that the MFA followed these norms assured international support for the Portuguese decolonization and, most importantly, for the new regime in Portugal¹⁶⁷.

3.3.2. Political Parties on Decolonization

According to the historian Bruno Cardoso Reis, no organized political movements openly and totally opposed decolonization after the revolution since none wanted to risk being perceived as being in favor of the war¹⁶⁸. Rather than avoiding decolonization, the priority was to minimize its impacts¹⁶⁹. Despite their ideological differences¹⁷⁰, the political parties that integrated the provisional governments, which pressed ahead with decolonization (PS, PCP, and PPD-PSD), did not significantly differ in the MFA's decolonization policy¹⁷⁰. On the contrary, the strategy favored

¹⁶³ The Decolonization Law was promulgated by General Spínola under the pressure of the radical sectors of the MFA. According to the law, Portugal's overseas territories would no longer be constitutionally part of the Portuguese territory. See Fernando Tavares Pimenta, *Portugal e o século XX*, 140.

¹⁶⁴ Bruno Cardoso Reis, "Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975)," in *O Adeus ao Império*, 78.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁶⁶ Michel Cahen, "Luta de emancipação anti-colonial ou movimento de libertação nacional? Processo histórico e discurso ideológico – o caso das colónias portuguesas e de Moçambique, em particular," in *Africana Studia* VIII (2006): 48.

¹⁶⁷ Bruno Cardoso Reis, "Visões das forças políticas portuguesas sobre o fim do império, dois planos em confronto e uma política exemplar de descolonização (1974-1975)," in *O Adeus ao Império*, 79; 99.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

by the MFA was preferred to that of Spínola by most of the 48 existing political parties in the summer of 1974.¹⁷¹

The “exemplary” character of Portuguese decolonization (to quote the MFA’s self-congratulatory formula) would be challenged in the summer of 1975 by the arrival of heavy contingents of the population from the “colonies-becoming-countries,”¹⁷² as the “returnees” were the most visible symbol of a physically and psychologically distant empire¹⁷³.

3.3.3. Mozambique

The negotiations between Portugal and FRELIMO began in June 1974 in Zambia, but an agreement between both parts was signed on September 7 in Lusaka. According to the decolonization policy, as defined by the MFA, all the Mozambican political parties and movements that had not engaged in the armed struggle and were against the transfer of power to FRELIMO were excluded from the negotiations and illegalized¹⁷⁴. Although the agreement was celebrated by the African majority and the liberal faction of the European community in Mozambique, the conservative settlers of European origin saw it as a betrayal by the Portuguese government¹⁷⁵.

On the same day the Lusaka Agreement was signed, the previously illegalized political forces colligated under the Movimento Moçambique Livre (“Free Mozambique Movement”) endured a rebellion in Lourenço Marques¹⁷⁶. The airport and the local broadcast Mozambique Radio Club studios were occupied by the enraged conservative settlers who also perpetrated acts of violence and death in the African suburbs of the capital for four days. The African populations

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 94.

¹⁷² Formulation used by David Cannadine, “Introduction: Independence Day Ceremonials in Historical Perspective,” in *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 97 no. 398 (2008): 658.

¹⁷³ Mário Artur Machaqueiro, “Memórias em conflito ou o mal-estar da descolonização,” in *O Adeus ao Império*, 228.

¹⁷⁴ According to Benedito Machava, more than 20 parties and movements were excluded from the negotiations. See Benedito Machava, “Galo amanheceu em Lourenço Marques”, 53-54.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 53-54.

¹⁷⁶ John A. Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 164.

reacted to the attacks, leading to hundreds of deaths¹⁷⁷. However, the Portuguese Armed Forces, still in the territory, managed to contain the insurrection¹⁷⁸. Meanwhile, a massive exodus of the white population from Mozambique toward Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa was taking place¹⁷⁹.

The Lusaka Agreement defined the constitution of a Transitional Government that would oversee the country's preparation for its complete independence. The government would be composed of nine ministers – six from Mozambique and three from Portugal – and Joaquim Chissano as Prime Minister¹⁸⁰. In addition, according to the agreement, a High Commissioner would be appointed by Portugal to represent Portuguese sovereignty and command to both the Portuguese Armed Forces and FRELIMO troops. Lastly, the agreement symbolically scheduled the transfer of power for June 25, 1975, the thirteenth anniversary of the foundation of FRELIMO¹⁸¹. However, the Lusaka Agreement did not define the political system to be implemented in Mozambique after its independence (single-party or multiparty), nor did it safeguard the interests of the white minority¹⁸².

During the Transitional Period, FRELIMO launched “cleaning operations” in the cities against its dissidents and the so-called “antisocials” (prostitutes, thieves, unemployed people, etc.), who were sent to reeducation camps. FRELIMO considered the cities suspiciously, viewing them as centers of vice incompatible with revolution¹⁸³.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Samora Machel, the president of FRELIMO, remained outside Mozambique during the Transitional Period. One month before the independence, Machel returned to Mozambique to start a journey from the North to the South of the country. According to Darch and Hedges, the real objectives for the journey remain disputed, and it is unclear why

¹⁷⁷ Benedito Machava, “Galo amanheceu em Lourenço Marques,” 54.

¹⁷⁸ Fernando Tavares Pimenta, *Portugal e o século XX*, 141.

¹⁷⁹ António Costa Pinto, *O Fim do Império Português. A Cena Internacional, a Guerra Colonial e a Descolonização, 1961-1975* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001), 75.

¹⁸⁰ Fernando Tavares Pimenta, *Portugal e o século XX*, 141.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁸³ Amélia Neves de Souto, “Moçambique, descolonização e transição para a independência: herança e memória,” 152.

Machel returned to Mozambique shortly before the independence date¹⁸⁴. Yet, the authors believe the journey was a way to exalt the personality of the future president of Mozambique and to legitimate the future provincial governors, all members of FRELIMO¹⁸⁵. The journey also played an essential role in circumscribing the idea of national unity, showing that all regions visited by Machel were part of the same country and all populations part of the same people¹⁸⁶. Thus, the power of FRELIMO was no longer restricted to the “liberated zones”; the totality of the territory, from Rovuma to Maputo, became a “liberated zone.”¹⁸⁷ Finally, the authors consider the performative aspect, such as the political rallies or Machel’s arrival in different cities by airplane or helicopter, to be the most crucial journey element¹⁸⁸.

On the night of June 24, 1975, FRELIMO assumed the power of the new nation in what the historian David Cannadine called a “freedom at midnight ceremonial”¹⁸⁹ before the presence of foreign delegations. Despite the absence of an electoral act, FRELIMO enjoyed internal and international legitimacy when it assumed power. With independence, the country became a People’s Republic, a presidential regime with FRELIMO as its single party, and the president of FRELIMO as the president of the Republic¹⁹⁰. In the medium term, the Mozambican independence would influence the fate of the two surviving white supremacist regimes in Africa: Rhodesia, which gave way to Zimbabwe in 1980; and South Africa, whose embroilment in several regional conflicts contributed to the slow erosion of apartheid’s standing¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁴ Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Inscrevendo a nação?” 396.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 405.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 428-429.

¹⁸⁹ David Cannadine, “Introduction: Independence Day Ceremonials in Historical Perspective,” 54.

¹⁹⁰ Amélia Neves de Souto, “Moçambique, descolonização e transição para a independência: herança e memória,” 151.

¹⁹¹ Pedro Aires Oliveira, “A descolonização: contornos e dinâmicas internacionais,” 20.

3.3.4. Decolonization on RTP: Broadcast and Editorial Choices

RTP programming followed the decolonization process from the summer of 1974, starting with the negotiations between Portugal and PAIGC and closing at the end of 1975 with the conflict in East Timor¹⁹². The coverage included interviews and reports incorporated in the NewsHour and documentaries and special reports broadcast separately. Most of the coverage, however, is composed of NewsHour extracts, for which the News Line Ups are crucial since they provide the text read by the news presenter framing and introducing the report to be shown. Without these complementary sources, most of what was aired lacked context.

Although, at the time, the country was going through a turbulent period and while many events were being reported, decolonization was never relegated to the background, observes António Borga¹⁹³. According to the journalist, the presence of foreign correspondents in Portugal during 1974 and 1975 was partly due to the ongoing decolonization process since it implied far-reaching consequences for the world economy and international politics. Borga adds that more than decolonization itself, from the summer of 1975 onward, RTP's main focus was on the effects of decolonization, such as the arrival of the “returnees”¹⁹⁴.

In the first chapter, both Cesário Borga and Joaquim Letria said they were not pressured by the RTP about what to cover or not regarding the Mozambican independence. Nevertheless, José Carlos de Vasconcelos recognizes that “there was a strong tendency to support and protect”¹⁹⁵ the various independences. Simultaneously, António Borga acknowledges that RTP “was attuned

¹⁹² From my research [last consulted on 06.08.2022], I could find publicly available in the RTP Online Archives 72 audiovisual sources directly related to the Portuguese decolonization and produced in the period between 1974 and 1975. As said in the Introduction, it is highly probable that this number is inferior to the total number of productions RTP devoted to decolonization in the period. Also, as said, this number may increase since new materials are updated permanently on the website.

¹⁹³ António Borga, interview.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ José Carlos de Vasconcelos, interview.

with the orientation of the MFA and the Provisory Governments after September 28,”¹⁹⁶ adding that:

“There has never been another directive than helping and covering the decolonization process. As the public broadcaster, [RTP] followed what at the time was the policy of the Portuguese state, of the MFA, and of the political forces that supported the MFA. [. . .] At the time, what was on the agenda was decolonization and democratization, which were fundamental to a development strategy.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ António Borga, interview.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

4 Viewing *Uma Lança em África*

Uma Lança em África, filmed in black and white, is composed of two parts: the first segment runs for 38 minutes; the second for 37 minutes. When aired, the two parts were separated by six minutes of advertisements for cars, water, Knorr Broth, dishwashing liquid, plastics, football bets, *etc.*¹⁹⁸.

A nearly two-minute presentation written and read by António Borga, the news presenter in the studio, introduced the special report to the audience.



Figure 1: António Borga presenting *Uma Lança em África* to the RTP audience. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

Besides mentioning that it included the “first interview given by Samora Machel to a Portuguese journalist,” Borga explained its title:

“Because Mozambique is a spear in Africa, a spear for Portugal, which peacefully and in an exemplary way could put an end to secular colonization in a spirit of total solidarity and fraternity with the Mozambican people and FRELIMO, its

¹⁹⁸ “Program Schedule”, 06.25, 1975.

revolutionary vanguard. A spear in Africa, from an open and progressive spirit, towards true socialism. A spear in Africa in the contribution to the construction of a new society free of hate and all sorts of racial discrimination. A spear in Africa by the construction of a new Portuguese-speaking homeland.”¹⁹⁹

In Portuguese, “meter uma lança em África” is an idiomatic expression that means overcoming great difficulty and achieving a much-valued result. That was found here with the independence of Mozambique, settled in a friendly manner with the former colonial power after ten years of war. However, the emphasis laid by the anchor in Portugal is evident. This country is given the agency to end colonization. The process of the Mozambican independence is described positively through the adjective “exemplary,” which was first used by the MFA itself, as we have seen. Also, Portugal is presented as having contributed to a new Mozambican society, which added to the list of independent Portuguese-speaking countries. Finally, the anchor identifies a convergence among the new regime in Portugal, FRELIMO, and the Mozambican people, and Mozambique expected to follow the path of genuine socialism after independence.

With the hindsight offered by 47 years, Borga recognizes:

“It’s a bit of that utopian tone, but whatever. That was like that. It shows that the orientation was support for decolonization and support for independence. In the case of Mozambique, this was peaceful.”²⁰⁰

4.1. *Uma Lança em África*: Formal Aspects

From the approximate 75 minutes of the television report, interviews fill approximately 62 minutes. The most extended interview is with Joaquim Chissano in the first part of the report, which lasts about 30 minutes. In the second part, Letria conducts an approximately 20-minute interview with Vítor Crespo and a roughly 12-minute interview with Samora Machel. The remaining 13 minutes include images of Mozambican cities, villages, and scrubland with pictures

¹⁹⁹ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [00:55 – 02:30].

²⁰⁰ António Borga, interview.

of Machel and Chissano in the context of the former's "Triumphal Journey," from Rovuma to Maputo.

Voice-over is entirely absent from *Uma Lança em África*. The only apparent interventions of Letria are the interviews in which he directly leads the conversation. For the remainder of the report, there is no explanation or contextualization of the images apart from occasional subtitles. These provide concise information on the date, location, nature of the events, and the name and political office of the interviewees. However, they do not seem enough to make the television report intelligible even to the audience of the time since they provide scarce background on the situation in Mozambique after April 1974. This fact can make us think about whether the RTP audience was familiar with or, on the contrary, ignored the metropolitan and Mozambican political context to achieve to interpret what the report showed. Still, we simply cannot isolate *Uma Lança em África* from the RTP programming, the written press, and the radio broadcast of the time.

Since June 24, 1975²⁰¹, the RTP NewsHour provided significant focus on the Mozambican independence, emphasizing the role of the MFA and FRELIMO and providing a description of the new political system to be implemented in the country. Moreover, the 37-minute documentary made by the cinema cooperative Cinequanon²⁰², which RTP aired immediately before *Uma Lança em África*, highly contrasts with Letria's report, starting from the fact it uses voice-over. The narrator gives meaning to the images and generates irony since what he says sharply differs from what is shown in some situations. Although the focus of this program is the Mozambican culture, it follows a chronologic narrative, beginning with the Portuguese conquest to the different phases of the independence process (as the Lusaka Agreement), which are briefly explained alongside images the RTP previously aired. There is an evident concern in denouncing Portuguese colonialism by showing its most nefarious consequences – slavery and colonial wars. While sequences of the Portuguese troops destroying Mozambican villages are conveyed, the narrator acknowledges the

²⁰¹ "News Line Up", 06.24.1975; 06.25.1975; 06.26.1975.

²⁰² *Programa sobre Moçambique*.

former regime hid those images. Thus, the documentary seems to respond to a pedagogical intention of unveiling to the audience things it ignored due to the political nature of *Estado Novo*, but also providing it with an openly ideological reading of events.

For these reasons, *Uma Lança em África* does not appear to share this pedagogical concern. Also, as a piece of journalism, it looks more interested in the subject's topicality than in retelling the past. As in a fly-on-the-wall documentary style, the camera seems not to be more than a witness, not interfering with the situations it captures²⁰³. This feature could make the audience forget that the images it watches are as mediated as others. However, the montage is crucial for challenging this impression.

The fast-paced cutting of some scenes contrasts with the length of the interview sequences, which are only interrupted by fast assemblages of shots, more or less illustrative of what the interviewees say. Also, at the beginning of the first part, a freeze-frame shot shows Machel exiting the plane while the subtitle “Samora Machel: Pres. of FRELIMO” is displayed.



Figure 2: Samora Machel exiting the plane from Zambia in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

²⁰³ Cf. “The power of film is that it gives the viewer a sense of witnessing events. This is also the danger of the medium [...] because this sense of witnessing is an illusory one. The director shapes the experience while remaining invisible.” In Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 159.

This strategy could have been used to introduce Machel to the Portuguese audience and highlight the symbolism of his arrival in Mozambique. However, the same freeze-frame shot appears again in the first part of the report during one of Machel's speeches. Furthermore, in the second part, a freeze-frame shot of Machel's face is shown twice during his interview with Letria.



Figure 3: Samora Machel among FRELIMO troops. *Uma Lança em África*. Parts I and II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

The same shot appeared six times in the report's opening, but it was impossible to recognize Machel due to the fast-paced cuts. For this reason, I argue that the freeze-frame shots of Machel serve as a *leitmotif* that confers centrality to his figure within the report, parallel with his centrality for the Mozambican liberation.

Apart from the interviews and some sequences of political rallies, the sound is non-diegetic or asynchronous. FRELIMO songs in Portuguese are frequently juxtaposed with images of places or political events. In some scenes, such as the one in which Machel inspects FRELIMO troops,

the sound used does not correspond to the exact situation shown but was probably recorded in a similar moment within the “Triumphal Journey.”²⁰⁴

While these aspects we have seen make the montage quite noticeable instead of seamless, they also show a sense of authorship by adopting an experimental approach inspired by cinematic language. *Uma Lança em África* follows a circular narrative structure. The report starts and ends with aerial shots of the scrubland accompanied by FRELIMO songs. Although the journalist does not appear there, it is as if it were Letria himself arriving in and leaving Mozambique.



Figure 4: Opening shot: aerial view from Mozambique. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 5: Closing shot: aerial view from Mozambique. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

²⁰⁴ Cf. “In the case of film, the problem of detecting interpolations is a particularly acute one, given the practice of montage and the relative ease with which images of different places or events can be introduced into the sequence.” In Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 156.

After the establishing shots, the report's first subtitle is displayed with references to location and time: "Mueda – May 1975".



Figure 6: Marcelino dos Santos exiting the plane in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

Then we see “Marcelino dos Santos – Vice-pres. of FRELIMO” exiting the plane and being welcomed by FRELIMO troops and population. A few seconds later, Samora Machel is introduced as “Samora Machel: pres. of Frelimo,” who exits a plane identified as belonging to the “Mozambican Liberation Forces.” As we have already seen, this moment marks the beginning of the “Triumphal Journey” Machel took from the North to the South of the country on May 24, 1975. However, this detail is omitted from the report. Therefore, we can infer the journalist assumed a “level of common knowledge of the present in its audiences”²⁰⁵ or that he considered it would not add much to the report to mention. However, for Letria and his crew, and then through them to the Portuguese viewers, witnessed a moment that would become part of FRELIMO’s mythology.

²⁰⁵ John Ellis, “Television and History,” 282.

Also, the fact that Machel's "Triumphal Journey" started in Mueda, in the Northern province of Cabo Delgado, has a symbology that is not referred to by the journalist. On June 16, 1960, the *macondes*²⁰⁶ outside Mozambique, in Tanganyika – currently Tanzania – went back to Mueda to claim the return to their lands. Although they were not asking for Mozambique's independence, some were killed by the Portuguese authorities at a mass demonstration. FRELIMO took advantage of the massacre, depicting it as the starting point of Mozambique's nationalist awakening²⁰⁷ and establishing a teleological theory between such an event and the armed struggle for independence that began in 1964²⁰⁸, a view now disputed by several scholars²⁰⁹.

After the arrival of Dos Santos and Machel in Mueda, the special report shows Machel giving a speech on a podium beside Dos Santos.



Figure 7 : Samora Machel speaks at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

²⁰⁶ Although this ethnic group from the border between Mozambique and Tanzania only represented 2.5 percent of the Mozambican indigenous population, its contribution was crucial to the liberation struggle, with most of the "liberated zones" being inhabited by this group. See Michel Cahen, "Luta de emancipação anti-colonial ou movimento de libertação nacional?", 39-67.

²⁰⁷ Michel Cahen, "Luta de emancipação anti-colonial ou movimento de libertação nacional?", 64.

²⁰⁸ Miguel Cardina and Bruno Senas Martins, eds., *As voltas do passado. A Guerra Colonial e as Lutas de Libertação* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2018), 40-47.

²⁰⁹ Michel Cahen, "Luta de emancipação anti-colonial ou movimento de libertação nacional?", 63.

This speech was the first of the 30 discourses he delivered within the “Triumphal Journey.”²¹⁰ According to Darch and Hedges, Machel speaks Portuguese, reflecting FRELIMO’s language policy. In fact, the Front had appropriated the colonizer’s language to forge national unity in a multilingual society such as Mozambique²¹¹. This also can be seen as a subversive act, the colonized using the colonizer’s language to defeat the colonizer²¹². However, Darch and Hedges refer that Machel also adapted his language to listeners, using the Mozambican variety of Portuguese²¹³. What Machel says in this speech is paradigmatic of the other discourses shown in the report and also of the interview he gives to Letria:

“Our struggle is a struggle which is part of the world’s struggles. It is a struggle that is part of the oppressed peoples. Our struggle has always been fair, and that is why it triumphed. The oppression was not only against the Mozambican people but also against the Portuguese people. This is why the triumph of the struggle of the Mozambican people is also a triumph, a victory, for the Portuguese people. [. . .] The end of the war, the end of oppression in Mozambique, also has unblocked Portugal. Today Portugal has a new face, a new identity, which is well-represented all over the world. Thus, our struggle was never against the Portuguese people: the Portuguese people have always been the Mozambican people’s natural allies. [. . .] Comrade Prime Minister had warm words for all our friends here, who came from Zambia, from Tanzania, and journalists who came from different countries, from the socialist countries in particular, including journalists from Portugal.”²¹⁴

Machel starts by framing the struggle of FRELIMO within a larger global context, with Mozambicans being on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors. Yet, he stresses the idea that the Portuguese people were also oppressed due to the autocratic nature of the *Estado Novo* regime, establishing a parallel between their oppression and the one endured by the Mozambican people. Instead of enemies, both peoples were “natural allies,” and the Portuguese people could not be given the responsibility of colonialism and the war. The agency is placed on the Mozambican side by implicitly saying that the struggle in Mozambique contributed to Caetano’s overthrow.

²¹⁰ Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Political rhetoric in the transition to Mozambican independence,” *Kronos* 39, no.1 (2013): 55.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 51.

²¹³ Ibid., 55.

²¹⁴ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [07:16 – 9:52].

Moreover, Machel pays compliments to the new Portuguese authorities and includes Portugal among the group of socialist countries whose journalists were in Mozambique to follow the “Triumphal Journey.” This inclusion of Portugal among the socialist countries shows that Machel welcomed the ascendancy of the Communist Party and the “Third-Worldist” far-left within the Portuguese revolution, the high point of which would be the appointment of the fifth Provisional Government in early August 1975. Finally, the possessive “our” usage is noteworthy since it can ambiguously refer to all Mozambicans or exclusively to the armed struggle participants. Thus, listeners are invited, or forced, to become implicit supporters of FRELIMO through this intentional strategy²¹⁵.

²¹⁵ Collin Darch and David Hedges, “Political rhetoric in the transition to Mozambican independence,” 61.

As in the other scenes of FRELIMO rallies shown in *Uma Lança em África*, the montage follows a shot-reverse-shot pattern.



Figure 8: Shot of Samora Machel speaking at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 9: Reverse shot of the audience at the political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 10: Shot of Samora Machel speaking at a political rally in Mueda. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

From shots of Machel speaking, the report cuts to close-up shots of the audience, mainly of women, which I consider evoke the tradition of ethnographic films like those by Jean Rouch²¹⁶.



Figure 11: Samora Machel's audience at a political rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 12: Mother attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 13: Old woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 14: Young woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

²¹⁶ Cf. *Les Maîtres Fous* (1954); *Moi, un noir* (1959).



Figure 15: Girl attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 16: Young woman attending Samora Machel's rally. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

However, the listeners' face shots do not seem to have been filmed during that specific rally. Although montage can make this possible, we must ask whether the audiences of Machel's speeches were really following their content.

4.2. Uma Lança em África: Interviews

The three interviews Letria did for the report differ regarding their setting and the style of the interviewees. In formal terms, since there was only one camera, the interviewer and the interviewee were sitting side-by-side during all the conversations. Thus, a wide shot of both is shown when Letria asks the questions, followed by a zoom-in on the interviewee's face while he answers the journalist.

The first and most extensive interview is with Joaquim Chissano in what seems to be a governmental building.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [09:52 – 40:18].



Figure 17: Joaquim Chissano at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>



Figure 18: Letria interviewing Joaquim Chissano. *Uma Lança em África*. Part I, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

At the time, Chissano was 35 years old and the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government. In 1960, he came to the metropole to study medicine but abandoned the country for political reasons, becoming part of FRELIMO in 1963²¹⁸. Chissano would be appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs after the Mozambican independence. He wears a short-sleeve shirt and rarely looks directly at the camera, appearing shy and talking at a slow pace in a monotone voice.

²¹⁸ Joaquim Chissano, *Vidas, lugares e tempos* (Alfragide: Texto, 2011), 327.

Vítor Crespo contrasts with Chissano's attitude since he shows confidence and looks at the journalist amicably²¹⁹.



Figure 19: Vítor Crespo at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>



Figure 20: Letria interviewing Vítor Crespo. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

As for Chissano, the interview takes place in what seems to be the Governor's Palace, and the interviewee dresses formally, wearing a suit and tie. Admiral Vítor Crespo, 43 years old at the time, was appointed by President Spínola as the High Commissioner of the Transitional Government. He was to represent Portuguese sovereignty in the run-up to the Independence Day and command a joint force of Portuguese and FRELIMO troops²²⁰. He was one of the prominent leaders of the Navy within the MFA and directly participated in the April 1974 military coup operations. Crespo was considered essential to the then Foreign Minister Ernesto Melo Antunes, chief strategist of the MFA and the most salient figure of its “moderate” wing²²¹.

²¹⁹ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [02:45 – 22:26].

²²⁰ Vítor Crespo's Testimony at the Witness Seminar *A descolonização portuguesa*, Arquivo de História Social, ICS-UL, 08.20.1996,79. http://www.ahsocial.ics.ulisboa.pt/atom/uploads/r/null/d/9/3/d936b42deed18c2ad8d5338cd8da7b8846beb445b1397b2bec78d5896ce2bc4a/guine_1996_08_27.pdf

²²¹ Ernesto Melo Antunes served as Minister of the Foreign Affairs between March and July 1975 (4th Provisional Government) and between September 1975 and July 1976 (6th Provisional Government).

Finally, the interview with Samora Machel takes place on the scrubland, with both the journalist and the interviewee sitting around a bamboo table surrounded by FRELIMO troops²²².



Figure 21: Samora Machel at the beginning of the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>



Figure 22: Letria interviewing Samora Machel. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

²²² *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [24:45 – 36:51].

Machel dresses in FRELIMO's military uniform and adopts a confident style, gesturing and pointing his finger at the camera in what could be seen as a theatrical attitude²²³.



Figure 24: Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África. Part II*, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>



Figure 23: Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África. Part II*, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>



Figure 25: Samora Machel gesturing during the interview with Letria. *Uma Lança em África. Part II*, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

²²³ Collin Darch and David Hedges, "Political rhetoric in the transition to Mozambican independence," 64.

Moreover, he touches the journalist, who calls him “Comrade President,” and seems to control the progress of the interview by suddenly standing up as a way to say that the conversation has come to an end.



Figure 27: Samora Machel touching Letria’s shoulder and standing to mark the end of the interview. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>



Figure 26: Samora Machel touching Letria’s shoulder to signal the close of the interview. *Uma Lança em África*. Part II, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

At the time, the 41-year-old Machel was generally perceived as the undisputed leader of FRELIMO and a successful guerrilla leader about to transition to the statesman role.

Working for the Portuguese national television, Letria asks his three interviewees questions of interest for the Portuguese audience. Those were related to the positions the incoming FRELIMO government was likely to adopt, the future relations of Mozambique with Portugal, and the situation of Portuguese nationals in Mozambique. Also, more than once, Letria poses the same question to the different interviewees in what looks to be a way to compare the official perception of the Mozambican side to that of the Portuguese side regarding specific issues.

4.2.1. Overview of the Transitional Period

After a brief introduction of Chissano and Crespo to the viewers, Letria begins by asking these top figures of the Transitional Government to evaluate the Transitional Period and point out its main difficulties. When questioning Crespo, the journalist uses the adjective “exemplary” to define the Transitional Period, thus subscribing to the image the MFA had created and spread on Portuguese decolonization:

CHISSANO: “The Transitional Period was tough, but it was possible to face the existing problems thanks to the conditions created by FRELIMO during the years of struggle and the work done by the Portuguese authorities during the Transitional Period. A period of adaptation was necessary for both parts. However, it was necessary to work carefully because a considerable amount of the personnel who were at the services – and still are – were personnel who brought past habits that were incompatible with our revolutionary process. It was necessary to act carefully, be tolerant when needed, and act a little harshly when necessary. To do that, the mutual understanding between the representatives of the Portuguese government and us, representatives of FRELIMO, was needed.

LETRIA: And did that understanding exist?

CHISSANO: The understanding existed. I must say it evolved from simple understanding to deeper and deeper understanding. [. . .]

In the beginning, there was a great emotion on the part of the population, some with too much optimism and some with too much pessimism, which caused clashes. Thus, there were times when a small wrong step was very prejudicial. That is what we have seen on the 21st of October. First, we saw it on the 7th of September, which was not a small wrong step, but a big wrong step. But it is small since that sensation was provoked only by a tiny group of Portuguese troops. Although it was serious, tolerance and facing the situation in cold blood were necessary since the populations had to understand that everything being created could not be created at one time and the colonial mentalities. There were strong colonial mentalities at every level, and we knew we could not liquidate them all at once.”²²⁴

CRESPO: “[. . .] As you know, immediately after the Lusaka Agreement, there was a process of social turmoil here in the Lourenço Marques area, motivated by a lack of preparation, a misunderstanding from a great number of people regarding the grandiosity and fairness of the political process accorded in Lusaka. Of course, after that, a reaction always attentive to those problems took

²²⁴ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [09:52– 18:08].

advantage of them, provoking a process of anarchy and disorder to take power before the constitution of the new expected authority . . .

LETRIA: So, here in Lourenço Marques . . . Was it not at the national level?

CRESPO: Yes . . . In Lourenço Marques, there was the most significant turmoil. But this phenomenon had consequences all over the country, mainly in the urban areas. In Beira, as in Tete, and even in Porto Amélia, processes like the one in Lourenço Marques occurred, even with a more reduced action. After that, you know that it was necessary to overcome the initial difficulties, make the Portuguese Armed Forces aware of that [. . .] I want to say that I find of extreme importance the understanding that existed between the two sides about the necessity of FRELIMO to extend its political organization to the nonmembership bases. They naturally joined, but without the frame of a political structure. The party was able to create it little by little, as it was able to clarify the bases, which are all Mozambican population, about the correctness of its ideological line, and from the actuation on the practical level of the administration, realism, and pragmatism of its action.”²²⁵

Both Chissano and Crespo recognize the Transitional Period as a challenging time but simultaneously acknowledge the mutual understanding between Portuguese and Mozambican authorities. Also, when discussing the difficulties, both refer to the incidents of September 7, 1974, nevertheless in different ways. On the one hand, Chissano seems to diminish the importance of the events by accepting them as the result of long-lasting colonial mentalities and attributing its responsibility to a small group within the Portuguese Armed Forces. Alternatively, Crespo believes the rebellion resulted from a short-sighted “reactionism” against the decolonization process in Mozambique, which he condemns. However, unlike Chissano, Crespo does not downplay the importance of the uprising. Instead, he admits that it was not circumscribed to the capital city but had repercussions throughout the country. Finally, Crespo praises FRELIMO for its actions regarding the Mozambican population and shows to be ideologically attuned with the Front.

²²⁵ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [02:45 – 07:01].

4.2.2. Independent Mozambique toward the Portuguese who left the Country

Letria then asks both interviewees about the position of future independent Mozambican authorities regarding the Portuguese who considered returning to Mozambique, without using the terms “returnee” or “refugee.” According to the journalist, those Portuguese had left Mozambique for Portugal because they feared the decolonization process but could not establish themselves due to the adverse economic situation. However, their fears, Letria believes, are no longer valid since “the practice and the recent history, but the history, have already demonstrated to be wrong” that the decolonization process would be turbulent:

CHISSANO: “I believe that if we had ways to detect who is returning because they found unfavorable conditions in Portugal, they would be the last to be accepted in Mozambique. But those who come ready to work in Mozambique are a different case and would be welcomed. Moreover, we will need here different kinds of technicians. Those technicians who will work here should not come to do us a favor or because the situation is difficult in Portugal. [. . .] But unfortunately, it will not always be possible to determine who will come willingly and who will come just to solve a temporary situation that worries them. [. . .]”²²⁶

CRESPO: “Well, I would like to say that, from the Mozambican side, which is the most important now, as from the Portuguese side, everything has been done so that the political process of transition and the independence process would go smoothly. I think that to Portugal, what matters is to hand over power to whom can hold it with political stability and give the new country a way of social progress. I believe that, here in Mozambique, all the conditions for a smooth process are established without great turmoil that can affect the political process itself. And I believe the orientation of the future country will be a progressist orientation. [. . .]”²²⁷

On the one side, Chissano seems to condemn those who left Mozambique “hastily,” escaping from the responsibility of helping the country’s development during the Transitional Period. He also adds that the fact they were Portuguese or had already lived in Mozambique would not guarantee their acceptance in the country after independence. According to him, those who left Mozambique would be treated as any other foreign citizen seeking a technical job. On the other

²²⁶ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [30:24 – 33:11].

²²⁷ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [08:19 – 09:57].

side, Crespo does not directly respond to the question since, as the representative of Portugal, it was not his role to interfere in Mozambican domestic policy. He only reaffirms the concern expressed in the MFA's decolonization policy of handing over the power to movements that could secure political stability and social progress in the new-independent countries and considers FRELIMO to fulfill these conditions. It seems to be implicit in his reply that, these two conditions respected, the Portuguese nationals would not have much to worry about regarding their situation in Mozambique.

4.2.3. Independent Mozambique's Future

Later, Letria asks Chissano about the future of independent Mozambique:

“Well, I believe the future will be what the Mozambican people decided it to be. In the first years, there will certainly be great difficulties. [. . .] These will be years of sowing. They will be very difficult, I believe. But I also believe that difficulties will not be noticed by many. There is a strong cohesion, from Rovuma to Maputo, as you said, of the masses, in the determination to build the country. [. . .] Of course, there might also be attempts of external interferences, but we are already prepared to face them. [. . .] There will be a series of maneuvers because our country is a country which interests many people, many countries, for its geographical location, natural resources . . . We have no doubt. We will build the new society we want to build.”²²⁸

According to him, Mozambique would live a difficult moment after independence, motivated either by internal factors or external pressure (and here, Chissano anticipates the Civil War that opposed FRELIMO to RENAMO, supported by Rhodesia and South Africa, between 1976 and 1992). However, he also acknowledges a strong sense of national unity, which would prepare the country for those threats.

²²⁸ *Uma Lança em África*. Part I [35:47 – 40:19].

4.2.4. The Future Relations between Independent Mozambique and Portugal

Letria asks Crespo and Machel about the future of the relations between independent Mozambique and Portugal. According to Crespo, during the Transitional Period:

“[. . .] more than to separate Portugal from Mozambique, we were concerned about uniting, but now in a decent way [. . .] We have separated the wrong links, but without cutting the links. On the contrary, we created as deep or even deeper links than the ones that existed before, but now wanted by both parts.”²²⁹

Thus, Crespo hoped that:

“[. . .] the relationship between Portugal and Mozambique will be of a preferential kind, very deep, within the respect and total independence of the two states. After the fine-tuned process and the coexistence of relationships, I believe those relations will result in even deeper relationships at the political level, with eventual agreements to be established between the two countries. But, as I told you, I hope these will be the result of reality and not done *a priori* as an object of stimulation of that reality.”²³⁰

When asked by Letria if the relationship between the two states should follow, or already followed, a “Third-Worldist line,” Crespo added:

“I believe so. Historically, Portugal is a country that belongs to the Third World. It belongs in the sense that its *raison d'être* is its link with the Third World. Portugal is not exactly a country with all the characteristics of the Third World since there is some development in Portugal. But the characteristic of our people is all in the direction of openness to the Third World. On the other hand, I think that the Portuguese development can only be achieved without great alignment with the hegemonic blocs. For that, we naturally must be totally open to the Third World, without excluding the traditional relations of Portugal and the new relations recently established on a solid basis.”²³¹

²²⁹ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [13:51 – 17:15].

²³⁰ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [20:17 – 21:39].

²³¹ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [17:18 – 18:57].

Machel's answer to the same question does not seem to be very far from the line formulated by Crespo:

“[. . .] We have had relations from the beginning with the Portuguese people. But those relations were blocked by colonialism. Therefore, our people did not have direct contact with the Portuguese people. And we want the relations of friendship, of cooperation within the political, cultural, social domains to be established at the people's level, not at the level of individuals, not only at the level of governments. So, we say: we want to establish a new type of relations with Portugal. Exemplary relations for the world.”²³²

Both Crespo and Machel agree that the demise of colonialism would not bring the relations between Portugal and Mozambique to an end. If the former refers to “deeper links” between the two countries, the latter hopes those new relations will set an example for the rapport that Mozambique aimed to establish with other countries.

For Crespo, the *raison d'être* of Portugal and its future viability rested only in its link to the “Third World,” to which the Portuguese people were intrinsically open, instead of aligning with one of the hegemonic blocs of the Cold War. This thought evokes *Estado Novo's* notion of “imperial vocation,” by which Portugal's historical path was inseparable from its colonizing role. However, it is as if the “Third World” concept had replaced the “empire” advocated by the dictatorship. If we consider this, Crespo's thought also evokes Lusotropicalism, for it implies that the receptiveness to the “Third World” was an intrinsic “characteristic” of the Portuguese people²³³. *Estado Novo* had already replaced its concept of empire based on military defense and administration with a cultural concept of the empire grounded on Gilberto Freyre's Lusotropicalist ideas. According to the historian Rui Ramos, this new conception of empire allowed for continuity even after a political separation of the territories and was thus adaptable to the relationship between Portugal and its former colonies beyond 1974-1975²³⁴.

²³² *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [25:34 – 27:49].

²³³ Cf. “The singular predisposition of the Portuguese to the hybrid and slave colonization of the tropics is largely explained by their ethnic, or rather cultural, past as an undefined people between Europe and Africa.” In Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande & Senzala*, (Recife: Global Editora, 2003), 66

²³⁴ *Ibid.* 476.

The Third-Worldist approach sustained by Crespo was shared by the influential Melo Antunes, who had also been involved in the negotiations for Mozambican independence in Lusaka²³⁵. While responsible for the Foreign Ministry, Antunes was trying to reconceptualize Portugal's postcolonial position in the world and was a firm believer in strengthening ties with Third World countries and forging a "special relationship" with the newly independent, Portuguese-speaking African nations. However, the victory of the Socialist Party (PS) in the first free parliamentary elections in 1976 brought a turn in Portuguese foreign policy toward Europe²³⁶. Nevertheless, the country was still perceived as having a unique link with Africa, and its privileged relationship with the Third World was seen as what made Portugal attractive to Europe. Thus, the fact that Portugal could reposition itself as a "bridge" between Europe and the Third World allowed Portuguese post-authoritarian elites to show that the loss of empire did not symbolize Portugal's loss of international status²³⁷.

The new type of relations between Portugal and Mozambique mentioned by Crespo was tuned with the speech the Portuguese Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves would make on June 25, 1975, at the official commemorative dinner of the Mozambican independence in Lourenço Marques (Maputo):

"You should not take us wrong. You should not consider us fools because we feel a deep pride and a deep impression that we are creating relations of a new kind between the colonizing peoples and the colonized peoples. Since the 25th of April, we have always maintained that neocolonialism must be banished from all the territories on earth."²³⁸

As in other speeches, Gonçalves argued that the new relations between Portugal and its former colonies, although deep, could never be of a neocolonial type. That was because Portugal

²³⁵ Pedro Aires Oliveira and Bruno Cardoso Reis, "The Power and Myths in Portugal's Search for a Post-Imperial Role," *International History Review* 40, no. 3 (2018): 642-643.

²³⁶ *Ibid.* 644.

²³⁷ *Ibid.* 663.

²³⁸ Parts of this Vasco Gonçalves' speech were quoted in the first edition of RTP NewsHour on June 26, 1975. See "News Line Up", 06.26.1975.

was a “poor country” (*siz*) in Europe that Europe’s rich nations had informally colonized and thus had never been a genuinely colonial power²³⁹. Echoing the idea of an absence of racial prejudice from the Portuguese formulated by Gilberto Freyre²⁴⁰, although without directly referring to him, Gonçalves continued:

“[. . .] we are not racist. We are anti-racist. Racism is an alibi. It is a mask of something else much deeper: the class struggle, which is the exploitation of man by man.”²⁴¹

In his answer to Letria, Machel refers that the confusion between Portuguese colonialism and the Portuguese people had to be eliminated, exempting the Portuguese people from the responsibility of colonialism, as he did in his speech, which was mentioned earlier. But, according to him, colonialism also was responsible for creating a separation between the Portuguese and the Mozambican peoples. Thus, Mozambique wished for a new relationship of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to be maintained at the people’s level and serve as a world model.

The first edition of the RTP NewsHour on June 25, 1975 opened with a piece of news recognizing Machel’s stance that colonialism should not be confused with people:

“Since midnight today, the 25th of June 1975, Mozambique is an Independent State.

Inseparable dates: the 25th of April 1974 and the 25th of June 1975. Why are they inseparable?

On the one hand, because the struggle of the Mozambican people, led by FRELIMO, never confused the Portuguese people with the colonialism of some Portuguese; on the other hand, because the ‘dawn of the captains’ also brought with it the freedom of the Portuguese people, breaking away from fascism and internal colonialism.”²⁴²

²³⁹ Rui Ramos, “O Império que Nunca Existiu”, 458.

²⁴⁰ “The lack of people, which afflicted them [the Portuguese] more than any other colonizer, forcing them to undergo immediate miscegenation – against which they had no racial scruples, only religious prejudices – was an advantage to the Portuguese in their work of conquest and colonization of the tropics.” In Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande & Senzala*, 74-75.

²⁴¹ “News Line Up”, 06.26.1975.

²⁴² “News Line Up”, 06.25.1975.

Therefore, RTP mirrored a widespread belief from the revolution that drew a parallel between the African liberation movements and the MFA, the latter being given the agency of overthrowing fascism and liberating the Portuguese people from the colonialism of the elites. It was as if “the Armed Forces Movement is [were] the liberation movement of the Portuguese People, and FRELIMO movement is [were] the liberation movement of the Mozambican People.”²⁴³ So liberated, both brotherly peoples could “finally” relate at the same level. Like Machel in his answer, the news presenter continued by invoking the past. According to a teleological perspective, the Carnation Revolution and the independence of Mozambique were thus inserted into the broader course of history. Also, both countries were seen as following the same “revolutionary” and “progressive” path:

“From the time of the Caravels, that rounded the Cape of Good Hope, to the time when Samora Moisés Machel takes office as President of the People’s Republic of Mozambique, a period of 500 years elapses in which, finally, two peoples, brothers and long known, meet, side by side, in freedom: the Mozambican and the Portuguese.

Fraternally, we salute the People’s Republic of Mozambique. With it, we stand for the future.

The world cannot ignore, forget that fact, because both Portuguese and Mozambicans are walking the natural path of history, in a sure step and, as revolutionary, progressive.”²⁴⁴

As formulated by Crespo and Machel, the persistence of postcolonial links between Portugal and Mozambique helps explain the idea defended by some authors that Portugal did not experience an “imperial mourning.”²⁴⁵ According to this idea, Portugal moved from an imperial to a European dimension without coming to terms with its imperial past, which nevertheless was a crucial part of Portuguese state identity, at least since the Early Modern period. However, contrary

²⁴³ Excerpt from a foreign piece of news in English on the independence of Mozambique quoted by the Mozambican daily newspaper *Notícias*. See “Today’s Main News,” *Notícias*, 06.25.1975, 5.

²⁴⁴ “News Line Up”, 06.25.1975.

²⁴⁵ This expression was firstly used by the Portuguese thinker Eduardo Lourenço in his *Labirinto da Saudade* (1979).

to what could be expected, the rupture with the imperial past did not plunge Portugal into an identity crisis²⁴⁶. According to Ramos, two main reasons explain why Portuguese elites were already “mentally detached” from the idea of empire at the time of decolonization. The first is a counter-image of the Portuguese empire in contemporary Portuguese culture since the 1960s, particularly among oppositionist circles. Instead of an agent, Portugal was also perceived as a victim of its overseas expansion²⁴⁷. The second, and already mentioned, is that *Estado Novo* replaced the old concept of an empire with a new culturalist conception of an empire rooted in cooperation and cultural communion, which the revolution appropriated in 1974-1975²⁴⁸.

In their turn, the historians Pedro Aires Oliveira and Bruno Cardoso Reis sustain it was possible for “Portugal to move away so rapidly from identifying itself as a great country overseas”²⁴⁹ since the colonial myth was transformed into a postcolonial myth. This idea had already been explored by the Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço, who affirmed that the myth of exemplary colonization was replaced by exemplary decolonization put forward by the MFA²⁵⁰, but which the authors believe not to have survived in the Portuguese mainstream public memory²⁵¹. After Oliveira and Reis, the idea that the former Portuguese colonies would be willing to pursue a “Portuguese-friendly foreign policy” is the most powerful cultural myth of decolonization and surfaces in some of the interviews in *A Uma Lança em África*²⁵².

²⁴⁶ Rui Ramos, “O Império que Nunca Existiu”, 445.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 458-459.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 476.

²⁴⁹ Pedro Aires Oliveira and Bruno Cardoso Reis, “The Power and Myths in Portugal’s Search for a Post-Imperial Role,” 633.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 660.

²⁵¹ Ibid. 641.

²⁵² Ibid. 664.

4.2.5. The Future Relations between Mozambique and its Neighboring Countries

Letria asks Machel about the relations between independent Mozambique and its neighboring countries, mainly *apartheid* South Africa:

LETRIA: “Recently, in Nachingwea, President Samora Machel said that the face of Southern Africa would soon change.

MACHEL: It is already, it is already changing. There are new types of relations, including with South Africa.

LETRIA: What will happen to such a powerful and unfriendly neighbor as South Africa?

MACHEL: Which neighbor, which? It is not powerful . . . South Africa will change its politics. South Africa does not need war. South Africa will change the system. Rhodesia, we do not need to talk about it. I do not need to talk about it.

LETRIA: Does it speak for itself?

MACHEL: It is an immediate case, I am convinced. The type of relations, the face of Southern Africa, has already changed. War is not necessary. And Mozambique will be the model for that. Men from all races and colors: it is possible to live together. Only that. Only that work. It is already possible for South Africa; don't you think so? Living together, talking together, working together. It changes the relations and is already combat. Weapons are not needed. Political work. And our country, we believe so, will be a model for that. Don't you think so?²⁵³

Machel seems to anticipate the end of the two surviving white supremacist bastions in Africa. As a harmonious multiracial society, independent Mozambique would serve as a model for ethnic relations to be established in South Africa. At this point of the conversation, Letria realized the historical importance of the interview with Machel:

“I completely believed that it was a historical moment with the Machel interview and South Africa. When he says that to me, I say, “This guy is telling me extraordinary things that will last.”²⁵⁴

²⁵³ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [32:49 – 34:19].

²⁵⁴ Joaquim Letria, interview by Catarina Letria, 09.13.2021.

4.2.6. Samora Machel speaks to Portugal

Letria ends the interview with Machel by asking him to say some words to the Portuguese people. That was the first interview the president of FRELIMO gave to a Portuguese journalist; thus, it was implicit that its target was the Portuguese audience. However, this is also the first time Machel is asked to speak directly to the former colonizer in the report. As a guerrilla fighter, leader of FRELIMO, and future president of the Mozambican Republic, Machel felt he was in the position to advise the Portuguese on their revolutionary path, something unimaginable 14 months before. Then, standing up, looking straight into the camera in a provocative theatrical performance, he says:

MACHEL: “What will I say to the Portuguese people? It has not determined its line yet. We don’t know in which direction the Portuguese people are going. And I don’t know if they have the power. I would say to the Portuguese people to liberate themselves. To support the righteous line, which I believe will be established in Portugal, but a line deeply oriented towards improving the conditions of the Portuguese people. Before all, to improve the living conditions of the Portuguese people, which had been oppressed for more than 40 years. No development was allowed in Portugal. And we think that with the change, the world’s change – the winds are blowing hard, and you are there, even if Spain is still fascist. We are sure it will change: the people will take power there. And I would say to the petty intellectuals of Portugal to go to practice, leave the speeches aside, go to practice.

LETRIA: And the cafés, as you said a moment ago?

MACHEL: Exactly. Don’t often go to cafés and ‘ice creams’ [*sic*]. Work with the people, bring conscience to the Portuguese people, and enlighten the Portuguese people, which is not free. That is it. Enlighten the Portuguese people. But for that, conscient boards with a national conscience are needed. That Portugal is backward and that the war brought greater backwardness for Portugal, the Portuguese people. And make it possible for the Portuguese people to get a job. Improve the living conditions of the Portuguese people. At least to have hospitals, clothes, a place to sleep, food. The Portuguese people need that. These are immediate things. After those, the rest.”²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ *Uma Lança em África*. Part II [34:30 – 36:47].

Some ideas are worth pointing out here. The first is that to Machel and, by extension, to the new Mozambican regime, the path of the Portuguese revolutionary period was unclear, as it was not evident if the Portuguese people were given the power. Therefore, the people should follow the “righteous line,” something FRELIMO took upon itself regarding the Mozambican people.

Second, there seems to be an implicit comparison between the political situation in the former metropole and the political line FRELIMO established for the almost independent People’s Republic of Mozambique. This also can be perceived as a provocative foray into Portuguese politics since, in June 1975, the disputes between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party had almost peaked.

Third, Machel also addresses the Portuguese intellectual elites by provocatively referring they were detached from the concrete side of politics, i.e., the real needs of the masses. According to him, intellectuals should empathize with the Portuguese people, who had yet to achieve their true liberation. In the order of things, development should be the first step to pull Portugal out from its backwardness. Machel attributes the cause of lack of progress to the oppression of the *Estado Novo* regime, a situation made worse by the waging of the colonial wars. Therefore, the basic welfare of the Portuguese population was yet to be achieved. Finally, and as he did for the case of South Africa and Rhodesia, Machel seems to anticipate the fall of the dictatorial regime in Francoist Spain.

Conclusion

Uma Lança em África was part of RTP's comprehensive television programming devoted to the Portuguese decolonization process in 1974 and 1975. It also was included in the context of broader programming specifically dedicated to the independence of Mozambique. The special report was produced and aired during the most turbulent phase of the Portuguese revolutionary period when political parties disputed the control of the country's only television station, at the time under a military administration. Decolonization, nevertheless, was not publicly and totally opposed by any organized political movement in Portugal. As the public broadcaster, RTP followed a positive approach regarding the independence of the former Portuguese African colonies, attuned to the decolonization policy defined by the MFA. Thus, the station mirrored the general tendency to support decolonization and openly condemn colonialism as conveyed in the television and cinema productions in the first years following the Carnation Revolution.

However, the different programs broadcast in June 1975 marking the independence of Mozambique show differences regarding formal aspects and how they addressed the independence. *Uma Lança em África* witnesses and follows part of the "Triumphal Journey" undertaken by the leader of FRELIMO all the way from the North to the South of Mozambique between May and June 1975, which became part of the liberation movement's mythology. Yet, this is not explained to audiences, as the special report does not share the same pedagogical concerns as the documentary produced by Cinequanon, the cinema cooperative, which aired on the same day.

As a journalistic piece, *Uma Lança em África* analyzes the past but mainly looks at the present and the future. From the three interviews it included with prominent figures of Mozambican decolonization, it seems that the change of political regime in Portugal exempted the country from the responsibility of colonialism and the colonial wars. Joaquim Chissano and Samora Machel, on the Mozambican side, and Vítor Crespo, on the Portuguese side, share the same desire and a common model for the "postcolonial survival of a 'special relationship' between the ex-metropole

and the ex-colony.”²⁵⁶ By speaking of a new type of relations between Portugal and Mozambique, freed of colonialism and the threat of neocolonialism, the interviews reflect on the reframing of Portuguese identity as also expressed by Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves in his speeches quoted in the NewsHour and written press of the time.

The fact that the interviewees share common views on specific issues does not mean the special report presents a univocal perspective on the Mozambican independence. That univocal perspective is instead called into question since *Uma Lança em África* contains three interviews, which are put into dialogue through montage. Thus, the special report’s name itself (an idiomatic expression that means “overcome great difficulty and achieve a victory”) and the introduction made by the anchor contrast with Machel’s interview on the point they give Portugal the agency to end colonization. The latter, however, emphasizes the role of FRELIMO in the struggle for independence. On the contrary, Cinequanon’s documentary shows a much less plural interpretation of the Mozambican past and independence, for it resorts to the strategy of using a narrator who exercises the power of the word.

Uma Lança em África reflects the general tendency of RTP programming of that time. Moreover, it was one among many ways the end of the empire was mediated for domestic audiences. Some authors defend that Portuguese elites were mentally detached from the idea of an empire since the 1960s, and that this prevented the country from plunging into an identity crisis brought about by decolonization²⁵⁷. They do not reflect, however, on how other segments of the Portuguese population received the end of the empire. Television, as an agent in the public sphere, may have contributed to build a more transversal and generalized perception of the loss of the empire, thus allowing for the construction of a shared collective memory and the development of national consciousness²⁵⁸.

²⁵⁶ Berny Sèbe and Matthew G. Stanard (eds.). *Decolonising Europe?*, 3.

²⁵⁷ Rui Ramos, “O Império que Nunca Existiu”, 458-459.

²⁵⁸ Cardão, Marcos, “A grande aventura”, 21.

This thesis is a brief and limited investigation since it only focuses on the programming RTP devoted to Mozambican independence in June 1975. Further and exhaustive analysis of the programs and NewsHour extracts that reflected on the independence process in Mozambique from 1974 until its independence would have to be done to provide a diachronic perspective on how the public station mediated the Mozambican case. Finally, the same logic must be applied to the other Portuguese colonies to reveal a larger picture of how RTP mediated the collapse of the Portuguese empire.

Bibliography

- Baptista, Carla, “A invenção da televisão revolucionária: a RTP durante o PREC (1974-1975).” In *Revista Media & Jornalismo* 19, no. 35 (2019): 237-247.
- Bourdon, Jérôme, “Detextualizing: How to write a history of audiences.” In *European Journal of Communication* 30, no 1 (2015): 7-21.
- Brundson, Charlotte, “Television Criticism and the Transformation of the Archive.” In *Television & New Media* 10, no.1 (2009): 28-30.
- Burke, Peter. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images As Historical Evidence*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Cádima, Francisco Rui. “Os media na revolução (1974-1976).” In *O país em revolução*, organized by J.M. Brandão de Brito, 321-358. Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2001.
- Cahen, Michel. “Luta de emancipação anti-colonial ou movimento de libertação nacional? Processo histórico e discurso ideológico – o caso das colónias portuguesas e de Moçambique, em particular.” In *Africana Studia* VIII (2006): 39-67.
- Cannadine, David, “Introduction: Independence Day Ceremonials in Historical Perspective.” In *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 97 no. 398 (2008): 649-665.
- Cardão, Marcos, “A grande aventura. Televisão, nacionalismo e as comemorações dos Descobrimentos portugueses.” In *Práticas da História* no. 8 (2019): 17-47.
- Cardina, Miguel, and Bruno Senas Martins, eds., *As voltas do passado. A Guerra Colonial e as Lutas de Libertação*. Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2018.
- Castelo, Cláudia. *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo: o Luso-tropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa (1933-1961)*. Lisbon: Afrontamento, 1999.

Chissano, Joaquim. *Vidas, lugares e tempos*. Alfragide: Texto, 2011.

Corner, John, “Finding data, reading patterns, telling stories: issues in the historiography of television.” In *Media, Culture & Society* 25 (2003): 273-280.

Darch, Collin, and David Hedges. “‘Inscrevendo a nação?’ A Viagem Triunfal no fim do período de transição em Moçambique, maio a junho de 1975.” In *Lutas pela memória em África*, edited by Livio Sansone and Cláudio Alves Furtado, 395-436. Salvador: EDUFBA, 2019.

Darch, Collin, and David Hedges. “Political rhetoric in the transition to Mozambican independence: Samora Machel in Beira.” In *Kronos* 39, no.1 (2013): 32-65.

Dava, Fernando (ed.). *Samora Moisés Machel – História de uma vida dedicada ao povo moçambicano*. Maputo: ARPAC – Instituto de Investigação Sócio-Cultural, 2014.

Ellis, John. “Television and History.” In *History Workshop Journal* 56, no 1 (2003): 278-285.

Freyre, Gilberto. *Casa Grande & Senzala*. 1933. Reprint, Recife: Global Editora, 2003.

Gomes, Pedro Marques, “Os jornalistas na revolução portuguesa (1974-1975).” In *Revista brasileira de história da mídia* 17, no. 2 (2018): 115-134.

Gomes, Pedro Marques. *A Imprensa na Revolução. Os Novos Jornais e as Lutas políticas de 1975*. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 2021.

Kapuscinski, Ryszard. *Os Cínicos Não Servem para Este Ofício. Conversas sobre bom jornalismo*. Lisbon: Relógio d’Água, 2008.

Luís, Rita, “O império colonial português e a televisão.” In *Cultura popular e império. As lutas pela conquista do consumo cultural em Portugal e nas suas colónias*, edited by Nuno Domingos, 241-279. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2021

Machava, Benedito, “Galo amanheceu em Lourenço Marques: o 7 de Setembro e o verso da descolonização de Moçambique.” In *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 106 (2015): 53-84.

Marcum, John A. *Conceiving Mozambique*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Maurício, Carlos, “Um longo degelo: a guerra colonial e a descolonização nos ecrãs portugueses (1974-1994)”. In *Ler História* 65 (2013). https://journals.openedition.org/lerhistoria/512_159-177 (accessed June 3, 2022).

Mihelj, Sabina, “Doing audience history: Questions, sources, methods.” In *European Journal of Communication* 30, no 1 (2015): 3-6.

Mustata, Dana, “«The Revolution Has Been Televised...». Television as Historical Agent in the Romanian Revolution”. In *Journal of Modern European History* 10, no. 1 (2012): 76-97.

Oliveira, Pedro Aires, “Decolonization in Portuguese Africa.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, 2017.

<https://research.unl.pt/ws/portalfiles/portal/3628524/PedroAiresOliveiraDecolonizationPortugueseAfrica.pdf> (accessed June 28, 2022).

Oliveira, Pedro Aires. “A descolonização: contornos e dinâmicas internacionais.” In *Descolonização IV. A solução*, edited by P. Cardoso Almeida, 44-73. Vila do Conde: Verso da História, 2015.

Oliveira, Pedro Aires, and Bruno Cardoso Reis, “The Power and Myths in Portugal’s Search for a Post-Imperial Role.” In *International History Review* 40, no. 3 (2018): 631-653.

Oliveira, Pedro Aires. “As condições sociais e políticas da descolonização.” In *Retornar. Traços de memória do fim do império*, edited by Elsa Peralta, 45-62. Lisbon: Edições 70, 2017.

Pimenta, Fernando Tavares. *Portugal e o século XX – Estado-Império e Descolonização (1890-1975)*. Oporto: Afrontamento, 2010.

Pinto, António Costa. *O Fim do Império Português. A Cena Internacional, a Guerra Colonial e a Descolonização, 1961-1975*. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001.

Pinto, João Ricardo da Silva. “Onde, Como, Quanto, Quando’ – a produção musical nos primórdios da Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (1956-1964).” PhD Dissertation, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2018.

Quando a Tropa Mandou na RTP. Directed by Jacinto Godinho. Lisboa: RTP, 2017.

Ramos, Rui. “O Império que Nunca Existiu’: a Cultura da Descolonização em Portugal, c. 1960-1980.” In *Revista de História das Ideias* 28 (2007), 429-478.

Reis, Madalena Soares dos. “A programação televisiva revolucionária – RTP 1974-1975.” Master’s Dissertation, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2008.

Rezola, Maria Inácia, and Pedro Marques Gomes (eds.). *A revolução nos media*. Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2014.

Ribeiro, Nelson, “Colonisation Through Broadcasting: Rádio Clube de Moçambique and the Promotion of Portuguese Colonial Policy, 1932-1964.” In *Media and the Portuguese Empire*, edited by José Luís Garcia et al, 179-194. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Ribeiro, Rita and Joaquim Costa, “East Timor and Portugal: The Ending of Empire in the Media.” In *Media and the Portuguese Empire*, edited by José Luís Garcia et al, 327-344. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Rosa, Dora Santos. *Joaquim Letria sem papas na língua*. Lisbon: Âncora, 2014.

Rosas, Fernando, Mário Machaqueiro, and Pedro Aires de Oliveira (eds.). *O Adeus ao Império: 40 Anos de Descolonização Portuguesa*. Lisbon: Nova Vega, 2017.

RTP, “Descolonização Portuguesa: os 500 Dias do Fim do Império,” RTP, <https://media.rtp.pt/descolonzacaoportuguesa/introducao/descolonzacao-portuguesa/>.

Sèbe, Berny and Matthew G. Stanard (eds.). *Decolonising Europe? Popular Responses to the End of Empire*. London and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Teves, Vasco Hogan. “RTP: 50 anos de História.” RTP. 2017, <https://www.museu.rtp.pt/livro/50Anos/Livro/DecadaDe70/25DeAbrilDe1974-UmaEmissaoParaAHistoria/default.htm>

Woods, Philip, “Business as Usual? British Newsreel Coverage of Indian Independence and Partition, 1947-1948.” In *Media and the British Empire*, edited by Chandrika Kaul, 145-159. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Sources

Audiovisual Sources from the RTP Online Archives

“Uma lança em África: Parte I.” *RTP*, 41:10. 06.25.1975.

<https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-i-parte/>

“Uma lança em África: Parte II.” *RTP*, 37:50. 06.25.1975.

<https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mocambique-uma-lanca-em-africa-ii-parte/>

“Programa sobre Moçambique”. *RTP*, 37:41. 06.25.1975.

<https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/independencia-de-mocambique/>

Interviews

António Borga, interview by Catarina Letria, 03.14.2022.

Cesário Borga, interview by Catarina Letria, 01.19.2022.

Joaquim Letria, interview by Catarina Letria, 09.13.2021.

Joaquim Letria, interview by Catarina Letria, 09.14.2021.

José Carlos de Vasconcelos, interview by Catarina Letria, 01.14.2022.

Published Sources

Printed Media

Diário de Lisboa, 06.24.1975

Diário de Notícias, 06.25.1975.

Diário Popular, 06.26.1975.

Expresso, 06.28.1975.

Flama, 06.27.1975.

Gente, 06.17.1975.

Movimento, Boletim Informativo das Forças Armadas, 06.17.1975.

Notícias, 06.25.1975.

O Jornal, 05.16.1975.

O Jornal, 05.23.1975.

O Jornal, 05.30.1975.

O Jornal, 06.27.1975.

Telesemana, 06.20.1975.

Oral History Transcripts

Vítor Crespo's Testimony at the Witness Seminar *A descolonização portuguesa*, Arquivo de História Social, ICS-UL, 08.20.1996, 79.

http://www.ahsocial.ics.ulisboa.pt/atom/uploads/r/null/d/9/3/d936b42deed18c2ad8d5338cd8da7b8846beb445b1397b2bec78d5896ce2bc4a/guine_1996_08_27.pdf

Unpublished Sources from the RTP Audiovisual Archives

“Internal Directives” (“Ordens de Serviço”)

“Internal Directive 28/74”.

“Internal Directive 41/74”.

“Internal Directive 52/74”.

“Internal Directive 59/74”.

“Internal Directive 64/74”.

“Internal Directive 19/75”.

“Internal Directive 46/75”.

“Internal Directive 55/75”.

“Internal Directive 65/75”.

“Internal Directive 79/75”.

“Internal Directive 86/75”.

“Internal Directive 92/75”.

News Line Ups” (“Alinhamentos do Telejornal”)

“News Line Up”, 06.24.1975.

“News Line Up”, 06.25.1975.

“News Line Up”, 06.25.1975.

“Program Schedules” (“Alinhamentos de Emissão”)

“Program Schedule”, 06.08.1975.

“Program Schedule”, 06.24.1975.

“Program Schedule”, 06.25.1975.

“Program Schedule”, 06.25.1975.

“Yearbooks” (“Anuários”)

“Yearbook”, 1975.