

Ambitions of Cinema: Revolution, Event, Screen

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Abstract

In this thesis, the theoretical implications of the African Revolution for the entanglements of postcolonial urban space are explored through examination of radical cinematic inventions. It tracks points where the cinema screen became a site of radical gathering and ambitions of cinema emerged that expressed a revolutionary desire. The thesis maps out a relational geography between different late liberation struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, a relational geography that is produced by cinema in the networks of connections lived out and constructed through radical drives. The exploration of aesthetics of liberation is the point of departure to investigate how screens, as urban surfaces of projection and reflection, appearance and masking, emerge from the world and have material and psychical effects in the world. In the entanglements of cinema with radical politics, the memory of Revolution, after the event, re-emerges in unexpected forms and figures, which prompt a re-thinking of the notion of the screen. In the urban spaces of Ouagadougou, Maputo, Lisbon, and other cities that have been sites where cinema was an agent in Revolution, the thesis investigates appearances of psychical and material screens that may be sites of intensity in the formation of subjectivity, or surfaces across which the past flickers, its dreams of the future and its disappointments folded into the present.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work.

Rosalind Gray
25 August 2006

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ACOBAC – Associação de Cooperativas e Organismos de Base da Actividade Cinematográfica (Portugal)
- APC – Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean
- APIE – Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado (Mozambique)
- CCAC – Comissão Consultiva para as Actividades Cinematográficas (Portugal)
- CDR – Comité de Defense de la Révolution (Burkina Faso)
- CDS – Centro Democrático Social (Portugal)
- CIDC – Interafrican Consortium for Cinematic Distribution
- CIPROFILMS – Interafrican Consortium for Film Production
- CMRPN – Comité Militaire pour le Redressement e le Progrès National (Burkina Faso)
- CNCA – Centre National du Cinéma Algérien (Algeria)
- CNR – Conseil National de la Révolution (Burkina Faso)
- CPC – Centro Português de Cinema (Portugal)
- CPLP – Comunidade dos País de Lingua Portuguesa
- CSP – Conseil du Salut du Peuple (Burkina Faso)
- CSV – Confédération Syndicale Voltaïque (Burkina Faso)
- EEC – European Economic Community
- FESPACO – Festival Pan-Africain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
- FEPACI – Fédération Pan-Africain de Cinéastes
- FIMATS – Force d'Intervention du Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Sécurité (Burkina Faso)
- FLN – Front National de Liberation (Algeria)
- FRELIMO – Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique)
- ICAIC – Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (Cuba)
- ICS – Instituto de Comunicação Social (Mozambique)
- IMF – International Monetary Fund
- INAFEC – Institute Africain de Education Cinématographique (Burkina Faso)
- INC – Instituto Nacional de Cinema (Guinea-Bissau)
- INC – Instituto Nacional de Cinema (Mozambique)
- IPC – Instituto Português de Cinema (Portugal)
- LIPAD – Ligue Patriotique pour le Développement (Burkina Faso)
- MFA – Movimento de Forças Armadas (Portugal)
- MNR – Mozambican National Resistance (Mozambique)
- MNR – Mouvement National pour le Renouveau (Burkina Faso)
- MPEA – Motion Picture Export Association of America (USA)
- MPLA – Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Angola)

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OAA – Office des Actualités Algériennes (Algeria)
OAU – Organisation of African Unity
OCAM – Common African and Malagasy Organisation
PAIGC – Partido Africano Para Independência de Guine e Cabo Verde (Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde)
PIDE/DGS – Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado/Direcção Geral de Segurança (Portugal)
PCD – Partido Comunista Portuguesa (Portugal)
PPD – Partido Popular Democrático (Portugal)
PREC – Processo Revolutionário em Curso (Portugal)
PS – Partido Socialista (Portugal)
RENAMO – Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambique)
RIA – Régiment Inter-Armes d'Appui (Burkina Faso)
SNPC – Sindicato Nacional dos Profissionais de Cinema (Portugal)
SONAVOCI, later SONACIB – Société Nationale Voltaïque de Cinema (Burkina Faso)
SPC – Sindicato dos Profissionais de Cinema (Portugal)
STPCT – Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Produção do Cinema e Televisão (Portugal)
TPA – Televisão Popular de Angola (Angola)
TPC – Tribunal Popular de conciliation (Burkina Faso)
TVE – Televisão Experimental (Mozambique)
TVM – Televisão de Moçambique (Mozambique)
ULC – Union des Luttes Communistes (Burkina Faso)
UNITA – União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (Angola)
ZACA – Zone administrative et commerciale (Burkina Faso)

'revolution moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform'

C.L.R. James

Introduction

The fascination that drove the research for this thesis revolved at the outset around a strong intuition that the notion of the screen might be expanded by exploring how it parlays relations in the immediate present to those histories that have formed and entangled postcolonial subjectivities in Africa and Europe. Any project that embarks on research into how cinema has functioned in revolutionary situations and how these have expressed new emergent subjectivities builds on the huge body of work that has analysed avant-garde and militant cinematic forms and theories. However, what is much less studied is how the cinema screen functions as a locus of ephemeral gathering in which desires circulate that cannot be so easily identified and defined by pre-existing categories. The revolutionary events of decolonisation were unique and unrepeatable moments that precipitated new film aesthetics and practices, often for people with no prior exposure to cinema. It became crucial that these experiences inform and underpin how the ambitions of cinema should be theorised and understood.

The ambitions of cinema referred to in the title of the thesis are manifested in a set of material artefacts and situated histories. The urban spaces of Ouagadougou, Maputo, Lisbon and other cities that have been sites where efforts to decolonise filmmaking focused on the key problems of production, distribution and the creation of new aesthetics of liberation, through which cinema could become an agent of Revolution. These diverse sites and events of radical innovation are the means through which the underlying conceptual question of the thesis is explored. Study of these events through analysis of cinema's revolutionary forms, modes of operation and institutions is an essential scholarly endeavour. However, this alone risks missing more immaterial dimensions of Revolution that continue into the present, coming into appearance through surfaces of the screen in Benjaminian 'flashes' of intensity. These bring a new texture to urban space through which the circulation and emergence of radical desires and revolutionary subjectivities can be mapped. By mediating such under-acknowledged zones of affect, the screen may be that which enables a return to moments of revolutionary beginning, of anticipation and hope more often thought of today in terms of the disappointments or failures that followed in their wake. This becomes a means to explore such manifestations of modernity theoretically, and also to recognise how they continue to reconfigure understandings of the contemporary postcolonial condition.

Conceptually this project has a number of influences that have so deeply seeped into my thinking that their presence is evident in the thesis not so much in the form of concrete referencing as in the overall intentions, dynamics and forms of its argument and exposition. I first engaged in depth with Frantz Fanon's insights into the individual and collective psychological dynamics of racism in the colonial situation, and into the transformative potential of revolutionary desire, as a Master's student at Goldsmiths College through the teaching of Françoise Vergès and the works of Isaac Julien. I experienced this intellectual re-

configuration as a call to attend to those moments of anxiety and disorientation in the hybrid space of postcolonial cultural difference, as well as to forgotten or overlooked instances of radical innovation.

As a PhD student at Goldsmiths in the Department of Visual Cultures, my research project has been profoundly enriched by the critical theory of Irit Rogoff, particularly the way in which she has brought the challenge of postcolonial theory to Eurocentric imperialist discourses into conjunction with spatial theory and cultural geography so as to map out emergent 'relational geographies' and, more recently, to develop an expanded notion of cultural participation. Her writing and teaching gave me an impetus to approach academic research as a rigorous process of creative striving towards a 'subject-in-formation', rather than merely extending pre-existing epistemologies of knowledge.¹ I hope that this begins to be realised in my own work with this thesis. Rob Stone and Kodwo Eshun each in different ways expanded my awareness of and curiosity about the sonic architectures of cinematic and urban space, while conversations with Mark Nash deepened and broadened my knowledge and appreciation not only of the many different archives of world cinema that are understudied, but also the ways in which they relate to the moving image in contemporary art.

The thesis follows in the wake of the huge body of work undertaken for two exhibitions curated by Okwui Enwezor that took place just prior to the beginning of my PhD research. *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994* went on display in 2001 at Museum Villa Stuck, Munich; House of World Cultures, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. While the exhibition brought together sources and materials that were highly pertinent to my research, it also made an epistemological break. In drawing out the interconnections between visual cultures from different places and times in Africa that are not conventionally associated with one another, it offered a re-mapping of the Continent, and indeed of global modernity, according to political aspirations for liberation and the aesthetic and theoretical innovations they produced.

Documenta11, which took place in 2001 and 2002 over a series of platforms in Vienna, New Delhi, St Lucia, Lagos and Kassel, was also hugely important conceptually and methodologically for the way in which its analysis of contemporary visual culture and its spectatorial regimes took place across disciplinary, geographical and cultural boundaries, identifying the postcolonial today as 'a world of proximities' and 'the site where experimental cultures emerge to articulate modalities that define the new meaning- and memory-making systems of late modernity.'² The book for Platform 4 of *Documenta11*, *Under Siege: Four African Cities*, includes in its collection of essays texts by a number of writers whose work has been particularly enabling for the thesis. Achille Mbembe and Filipe de Boeck's intellectual projects have been crucial to my understanding of the formation of subjectivity, and of how the trauma of colonialism and the promises of Independence are projected and refracted in urban space in the midst of frenetic re-invention.

¹ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*, 2000 (London and New York: Routledge), pp.1–13

² Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *Documenta11_Platform 5*, exh.cat. Kassel, 8 June–15 September 2002 (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Catz), p.44

AbdouMaliq Simone, who also contributed to that volume, has been another key influence, particularly for the way in which he tells stories of the 'more diffuse but no less concrete ways in which diverse urban actors are assembled and act', creating narratives out of 'a practice of being attuned to faint signals, flashes of important creativity in otherwise desperate manoeuvres, small eruptions in the social fabric that provide new texture, small but important platforms from which to access new views'.³ In so doing Simone uses conceptual notions to make sense of 'what otherwise appear simply as disparate and irrational dimensions of urban life'.⁴ More crucially as a model for the aspirations of this thesis, the account he gives of youths gathering in an abandoned cinema in Douala to invent the fantastical narratives of imaginary films demonstrates how his writing distils yearning.⁵

As the research developed and came to involve numerous research trips to France, Portugal, Burkina Faso and Mozambique, another motivation became a driving force: profound respect for the liberationist and revolutionary political aspirations of those militants, filmmakers and other participants with whom I came into contact during the research, either through their works or, wherever possible, through interviews, conversations and the generous access that was granted to personal and institutional archives. The stories of Revolution they shared with me became one of the defining motifs of the thesis, and my own personal fascination came in some small way to echo the subjective investments in the ideals of Revolution unveiled in the research. I benefited particularly from interaction with those, such as Diana Andringa, Licínio Azevedo, João Paulo Borges Coelho, José Luís Cabaço, Sol de Carvalho, Margaret Dickinson, Polly Gaster, Gabriel Mondlane, Oscar Monteiro, Pedro Pimenta, Jorge Rebelo, Camillo de Sousa and Sergio Tréfaut, whose insights extended far beyond the politics and aesthetics of their own personal experiences.

This thesis amasses and sifts through numerous artistic practices, events and histories of the conjunction of radical cinema and Revolution, and yet the notion of the screen continually takes such materials a little bit elsewhere, beyond that which can be pinned down by the empirical analysis of objects of study that have a pre-given coherence. Although much of the material of the thesis might initially appear marginal to European cinema, an expanded notion of the screen makes it possible to ask how they inform the kind of crisis in knowledge and in understandings of the self at the heart of Europe, as addressed recently in Michael Hanecke's *Caché* (*Hidden*, 2005). This film surely elucidates and is symptomatic of how the memory of decolonisation and Revolution are folded into the present in the most intimate spaces of individual and collective experience. Having not embarked on the research for this thesis with a pre-determined definition of 'the screen', I will defer further conceptual description here. Instead, glimpses of what 'the screen' might be are scattered through the chapters that follow in works that explore and embody the refraction of revolutionary subjectivities in material and psychical worlds, with the intention that their cumulative effect will enable a rigorous elaboration of the concept in the conclusion. The screen is raised, but for now left suspended...

³ Abdoul Maliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*, 2004 (Durham and London: Duke University Press), p.12

⁴ *Ibid*, p.13

⁵ AbdouMaliq Simone, 'The Visible and Invisible: Remaking African Cities', Okwui Enwezor *et al.*, *Under Siege Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinhasa, Lagos*, Documenta11_Platform4, 2002 (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz)p.40

Chapter 1

The African Revolution

Waiting alone in the Ebano office, I stand with my back to a bank of computer screens and monitors, and scan the filmmaking paraphernalia on the opposite wall. The Jornais do Povo that appeared during the revolution in Mozambique were made up of ephemeral clusters of news-sheets, songs, exhortations and pictures pinned and painted on the walls of the city. They changed with every rapid movement of the Revolution. But this surface, with images and texts pristine behind glass frames, reads more like a proscenium arch: a cartoon of Licínio Azevedo sitting in a tree with a video camera, a memento from the making of A Guerra de Agua; a snap-shot of Jean-Luc Godard in Maputo in 1978; a poster for Battleship Potemkin; awards from Cannes and Zanzibar; a black-and-white photograph... It shows a circle of young men, some with cameras, standing and kneeling for a group portrait. I recognize Licínio, Camillo de Sousa and Funcho among them. The caption, in type-writer print, reads: 'Angola (Cabana) – Setembro 1981'.

Then, all of a sudden, a scene of confusion descends as the crew arrives back from shooting on location. Licínio is fuming, and one of the actors, Manuel, stands by the door, his face raised as he sniffs and, with clenched fists, rubs his grubby round face that is stained with tears. Camillo starts telling me how Manuel got arrested yesterday for stealing a mobile phone and the police had to be paid off so that he could be there for the shoot today. 'There's a story you should write about!' The boy is nineteen, but at this moment looks about twelve – so different in demeanour from the ferocious character who turned up on set two days before, drunk at seven in the morning, not having slept, and picking fights with everyone who crossed his path. He gave a tremendous performance – freezing you with a look if he chose, slipping into the role of a gangster with a nonchalance that testified to a precarious life. Unlike most of the other actors, this is his second film. He had a walk-on part as a child soldier who shoots two freedom fighters in The Interpreter, a thriller set in some unnamed country that is an amalgam of all the social and political disappointments that define a place called 'Africa' in the Hollywood imaginaire. 'You see how our films are', Licínio said that day, with the glint of a fabulist preparing his pitch, 'so close to life, reality and fiction become indistinguishable. He killed someone, you know, and only escaped prison because he was a minor. If he lives to see the film released it will be a miracle!'

Amid the bustle I ask Camillo about the photograph. He tells me how he, Licínio and Funcho came to be in Angola. They went at the time of the South African invasion, spent several weeks in trenches under fire, and worked with the filmmakers in the photograph to make Cinco Tiros de Mauser. Camillo points them out one by one: 'That one, Carlos Henriques, he died. Funcho made Pamberé ne Zimbabwe with him – the first Southern African film made without foreign support. We wanted to show that it was the same fight we were involved with together against Apartheid. This is something important that you should know. Our struggle wasn't about nationalism. It may sound strange these days, but their struggle was our struggle too.'

I feel myself at that moment as a blank sheet, hollowed out by these lives flickering before me, past and present, retold so vividly. And the words 'you should write' 'you should know' remind me that this is what I am here to do – to come to some kind of knowledge, and to write, about screens and the tangled web of relationships, desires and imaginings that form and pass across them, and in which now, obliquely, I find myself caught...

August 2005, Maputo

What happened in that claustrophobic room? A situation in which a conjunction of people, stories, images and objects, coming together in an agitated moment, felt like some kind of demand. Fragments and memories of radical histories re-appear today, their aspirations and disappointments entwined with imaginaries that operate at local and global registers, in which ideas of what 'Africa' and 'Revolution' might be emerge and circulate. The anecdote conjures a snapshot in my own shifting relationship to the people, texts, materials and situations I encountered in the research. Aside from the injunctions 'to write' and 'to know', what suddenly became unnervingly apparent was a set of components that re-configure how to understand the world. They constitute a textile of connections lived, but also imagined and dreamed. A demand is heard, felt, inscribed, but what kind of response does it anticipate? What is it that is questioned and impelled?

Let me tell you stories of Revolution. Let me, in the telling, make them live again through a theoretical and historical examination of their cinematic inventions. Let telling stories of Revolution map out connections between people who, in the struggles of late decolonisation in Africa and Europe, operated in the name of desire for liberation, social justice and freedom, and, through filmmaking among other means, sought to act in fidelity to principles that those events set in motion. Phrases such as 'African Revolution', 'solidarity' and 'Socialist friendship' may indeed 'sound strange' when they re-appear in the present, seeming perhaps to be merely the anachronistic rallying cries of outmoded political alignments. The more familiar image of the African Revolution today is that characterized chiefly by disappointment and catastrophe following in its wake. It serves different, often dubious, roles as a screen that travels dominant audio-visual circuits, so that, in the words of Edouard Glissant, 'We see a lot of Africa on the television – AIDS, massacres, tribal wars, miseries... But in fact, we don't see Africa. It is invisible'.¹

Sydney Pollack's Hollywood thriller *The Interpreter* (2005) is such a screen, which operates with the sheen of slick construction. In a seamless amalgam of cultures, geographies and histories, 'Africa' is presented through an imaginary country that was the birthplace of a white female interpreter at the United Nations. Her past is intimately connected to that nation's liberation struggle and its postcolonial disillusion. A plethora of masks, instruments and other artefacts crammed into her apartment from the four corners of the Continent signify this imagined nation that is the interpreter's place of birth. So deeply is her subjectivity enmeshed in this history that her drive to interpret the speech of others and to facilitate the capacity to listen finds its inspiration in the words of the country's leader, who is to speak at the United Nations. His turn to tyranny has betrayed those principles that once guided the struggle. It is he, therefore, who is ultimately the source of her personal 'disappointment', but this sentiment is the precondition of a certain viewing position from which the West sees and is continually 'disappointed' with Africa. In the African background to the New York plot there is a political situation similar to Zimbabwe, in which massacres and assassinations carried out by child soldiers

¹ 'On voit beaucoup l'Afrique à la télévision – le sida, les massacres, les guerres tribales, les misères... Mais en fait, on ne voit pas l'Afrique. Elle est invisible.' Quoted in Filipe de Boeck and Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City*, 2004 (Ghent: Ludion), p.23

recall recent conflicts and atrocities in Liberia and Rwanda. The uniform of soldiers and government officials resembles that of the *Forças Populares* set up during the liberation struggle in Mozambique. These scenes were shot in the city centre of Maputo, in a bullring situated next to a shopping complex, skilfully re-worked so that, in the film, murders take place in the bush.

There is an imaginary in which the African Revolution figures through the circulation on global circuits of a film like *The Interpreter*, but it refers to an international movement of liberation spread through connections of political militancy and radical desire that, to the many who answered its call, appeared at the time to be contagious and unstoppable in its momentum. What is set out here is a conceptual cartography, reviving some forgotten connections, but also, in the chapters that follow, bringing together places and revolutionary events not usually associated through the Western epistemological grid that descends, tortuously, from the 1884–5 Congress of Berlin. Instead of following a logic that divides, for instance, *lusophone* from *francophone* territories, or overlooks the effects of the African wars of liberation on European events and subjectivities, it tracks points where the screen became a site of radical gathering and ambitions of cinema emerged that expressed a revolutionary desire. The thesis thus maps out a relational geography between different late liberation struggles of the 1970s and 1980s produced by cinema in the networks of connections lived out and constructed through radical drives.

The Revolutions whose stories thread through this text, in which people acted to liberate themselves from colonial fascist rule in Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, or from repressive neo-colonial regimes in Burkina Faso and elsewhere across the Continent, are manifestations of earlier events interconnected trans-nationally. Anti-colonial wars in *lusophone* African colonies eventually precipitated the Portuguese Revolution in 1974, thus liberating the Portuguese people from fascist dictatorship. The Revolutions of the 1970s and 1980s drew activists and filmmakers from around the world to document and participate in the moment, just as an earlier generation of French thinkers were radicalised by the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria.² Such instances re-configure how to understand the inter-dependencies of Africa and Europe and suggest that Lisbon and Paris should be considered postcolonial cities as well as the urban spaces of former colonies.

These Revolutions shared ambitions for cinema that recognised it as an agent of radical change, and understood the collective experience of the screen (its critical cultures, institutions, audiences, movie-theatres and aesthetics) as having a central role in the new cultures of revolutionary nationalism forged through the

² Irit Rogoff reads the exhibition *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994* as in part a demonstration of how a generation of French thinkers, politicised through their outrage at colonial war in Algeria, produced a new position from which to critique outside pre-established alignments to either the government or the Communist Party. See Irit Rogoff, 'Engendering Terror' and 'Hit and Run – Museums and Cultural Difference', in *Art Journal*, Winter 2002; Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994*, 2001 (exh.cat. Museum Villa Stuck, Munich; House of World Cultures, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

liberation struggle. The cities of Ouagadougou, Maputo, Luanda, Bissau, Lisbon and Paris have been sites from which various experiments with screens have been carried out as part of ambitious revolutionary politics that recognised and sought to address the central issue of developing local production and dissemination, and creating critical film cultures. They are postcolonial cities where screens (of the cinema, television and/or video) became operational at times of revolutionary change, and where there were ambitions for cinema as part of wide-reaching social transformations.

Why, then, insist on ambitions *of* cinema? The notion of an ambition *of* rather than *for* internalises the conceptual shift from the illustrative to the constitutive. It suggests that cinema has properties specific to its medium that express a revolutionary drive. Since the earliest Soviet filmmaking, radical experimental cinema not so much illustrated Revolution as embodied it. Gilles Deleuze argues that:

Because the cinematographic image itself “makes” movement... it converts into potential what was only possibility... Heidegger said: “Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking.” It is this capacity, this power, and not the simple logical possibility, that cinema claims to give us in communicating the shock. It is as if cinema were telling us: with me... you can’t escape the shock which arouses the thinker in you. A subjective and collective automaton for an automatic movement: the art of the masses.³

Revolutionary cinema sought to germinate that which it performed. Not only do films such as Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Victorio de Sica’s *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and Sarah Maldoror’s *Sambiganza* (1972) appear on the cinema screen and circulate through almost every revolutionary situation in Africa and Europe in the 1970s, but their radical avant-garde forms and motifs take on different significations and effects. Thus Glauber Rocha, who first participated in the Brazilian Cinema Novo movement and made the anti-colonial film *Der Leone Have Sept Cabeças* (1970) in Angola before contributing to radical filmmaking collectives during the Portuguese Revolution, not only makes reference in his films to a pre-existing revolutionary cinematic inter-text but creatively transforms it into new allegories of class struggle.⁴ Similarly, the rapid inter-cuts and spiralling camerawork of filmmakers such as Djibril Diop Mambety or Med Hondo resonate, whether intentionally or not, with the cinematic inventiveness of Dziga Vertov to elucidate the contradictions of the late twentieth-century postcolonial condition.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, 1989 (London: Althone Press), pp.156–157

⁴ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam point out that in Rocha’s *Terra em Transe* (*Land in Anguish*, 1967) ‘One moment evokes the famous sequence from *Battleship Potemkin* where the goateed Doctor Smirnov, responding to the sailor’s complaints about the food, uses his lorgnette to examine maggot-covered meat, then pronounces it “perfectly healthy and ready to be eaten”. Rocha has his Senator, who has just lavished Panglossian praise on El Dorado’s perfect society, use his glasses in identical fashion to examine the corpse of a murdered representative of the people. The analogy is clear: in both cases the corrupt representatives of established power look at but refuse to see the most glaring evidence of social ills.’ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentricism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, 1994 (London and New York: Routledge), p.274

Many of the aesthetics of liberation considered here may thus be understood as part of a sporadic sequence or *long durée* of radical drives that take on new forms. This makes the inter-textual relations hard to recognise, but they still make up an allusive counter-cartography of modernity. The exploration here of new aesthetics of liberation built on actual experiences of change, conflict and struggle is the point of departure to investigate how screens, as surfaces of projection and reflection, appearance and masking, emerge from the world and have material and psychical effects in the world. There are the absolutely specific ambitions for cinema's role in revolutionary processes of decolonisation put forward in manifestoes, institutional statutes and theoretical treatises, and there are ways in which cinema may be understood as expressing and precipitating Revolution in certain films and filmmakers' movements. To speak of *ambitions of cinema* is thus to recognise this double register, but also to insist that the cinematic is revolutionary not as a representation or echo of a set of social realities and their contradictions. While individual films may do this, cinema is ambitious *in itself* as an agent of Revolution.

Let telling stories of Revolution, then, be the means to explore how the aspirations and dynamics of revolutions have been embodied by cinema. In the entanglements of cinema with radical politics, the memory of Revolution, after the event, re-emerges in unexpected forms and figures, which prompt a re-thinking of the notion of the screen. The screen is an ambiguous and unstable term, far less mapped out in its theoretical genealogy than Revolution or Event because its manifestations are so multifarious and ranging, involving the concrete, the psychical and the metaphorical. There are the notions of the screen implied by film theory, philosophy and psychoanalysis, where it figures as a mechanism to explain perceptual and psychical processes. But in the production of space there are psychical and material screens, that may draw a crowd, be sites of intensity in the formation of subjectivity, or surfaces across which the past flickers, its dreams of the future and its disappointments folded into the present.³

³ The thesis seeks to analyse the production of urban screens and surfaces at certain sites, drawing on key theorisations that move beyond the notion of 'the city' as some kind of container for social and political interaction, in which modes of civic behaviour are enacted in public life. Instead, urban space is understood as working through a conjunction of psychical, visceral and material forces, simultaneously imagined, represented and lived. As such, it engages with the traditions and writings of Henri Lefebvre, Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt, also with theorisations by Frantz Fanon and others of colonial and post-colonial urban space, and with what Achille Mbembe calls the 'city unconscious'. These trouble the ways in which the city has been understood as paradigm site of democracy and reason in Western thought, associated with capitalist rationalization of relations of production and social spheres. They variously emphasize how the transformative is often located outside the places constructed for the purposes of overtly political activity, in minute gestures of bodies and the psychical, in the intimate and the domestic, in *suburbios*, *bairros*, marketplaces, nightspots, cinema clubs, or in the formation of new political constituencies from outside the city. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1991 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell); Achille Mbembe, 'The Aesthetics of Superfluidity', in *Public Culture*, 16 (3), pp.373–405

What is the importance to the telling of stories of Revolution in the present? What is it to tell of events, solidarities and expectations that at a certain point made a leap into 'the open air of history'?⁶ Perhaps it is the very way in which they 'sound strange these days' that makes the demand – the unexpected flash of 'a moment of danger' that appears as a memory that may be appropriated.⁷ In her theoretical investigation of Revolutions that preceded those of decolonisation, Hannah Arendt says that: 'It is a strange and sad story that remains to be told and remembered'.⁸ The story she tells is not one of irresistible progress 'on whose thread the historian might string the history of the nineteenth century in Europe', but of the emergence at certain moments and places of the possibility of a new beginning, not born of some inevitable historical force or 'Will' but through 'specific deeds and events'. Revolutionaries are 'agents in a process which spells the definite end of an old order and brings about the birth of a new world'. Revolution initiates a radical change so as to build new social realities that will endure beyond the violence of revolt:

...only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government to bring about the formation of a new body politic, where liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom can we speak of revolution... The revolutionary spirit of the last centuries ... is the eagerness to liberate and to build a new house where freedom can dwell.⁹

Telling a story of an event enables that which is singular to it to be recognised retrospectively and endowed with a significance that endures in the frailty of human affairs.¹⁰ As opposed to authority or violence, the potentialities of power to construct a space of freedom arise when people act together.¹¹ In Arendt's ideal of regulated, consensual government, the chance of the power created through participation lasting lies not only in the recognition of the event as that which opens up a new beginning, but in the maintenance of its 'spirit'. This 'spirit of Revolution' is kept alive through the making and keeping of promises concretised in legal systems and

⁶ Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', in Michael W. Jennings *et al* (eds), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 4 1938–1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott *et al*, 2003 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), p.395

⁷ *Ibid*, p.391

⁸ Arendt grounds her argument in a reading of the events and institutions of the French, American and Russian Revolutions. Her conceptual manoeuvres and insights along the way are more pertinent here than the conclusions she reaches, namely that the space of freedom is best preserved by maintaining the 'happiness' of political participation as the reserve of a self-elected elite. She sees the failures of the French and Russian Revolutions lying with the Jacobin and Bolshevik parties assuming the vanguard of the radical social transformation, quickly repressing the genuinely innovative revolutionary councils or *soviets* that sprang up in the Event of the Revolution itself. The terrors that followed destroyed the potential that lay in these new spaces of political participation and freedom to form the basis of the foundation of institutions that would maintain the 'spirit of revolution'. By contrast, Arendt argues, the Constitution worked out by the Founding Fathers of the United States created a political system in which power was harnessed through a system of 'checks and balances', the failure of the American Revolution being the lack of 'remembering' and theoretical analysis of the new freedoms this system was set up to preserve. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 1990 (London: Penguin), p.256

⁹ *Ibid*, p.42 and p.35

¹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), pp.188–192

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.199–200

institutions that endure.¹² Badiou, whose conception of the political is grounded in a more radical conception of antagonistic different, principled thought and action, theorises the Event as that which unexpectedly intervenes in a given situation and opens up new possibilities for the future.¹³ People become 'Subjects' through a process of what Badiou calls 'fidelity to an Event'. This commitment is to the production of a new truth in that it involves making a wager upon 'the generic potency of a transformation of a domain of knowledge.'¹⁴ Amílcar Cabral notes that the globalisation of capitalist imperialism 'gave new worlds to the world' and 'gave a more profound knowledge of humanity as a totality in movement, with a unity in the diverse complexity of the characteristics of its development.'¹⁵ The liberation struggle creates a different kind of knowledge, however. It is 'a reponse to the accumulation of information and ethnographic knowledges' that group people according to supposedly timeless categories of race, caste, ethnicity, and which become the target of attention for those who study societies called 'primitive' or 'in development'.¹⁶ Instead, 'The struggle brings about the need to understand the characteristics of societies in radical change and struggle.'¹⁷ It makes a demand for new kinds of knowledge, and the Event produces new concepts through which to understand the world.

For Arendt, the failure of post-revolutionary thought was that it did not 'remember the revolutionary spirit and ... understand it conceptually', as though those founders of the new body politic 'had simply forgotten what actually they cherished above everything else, the potentialities of action and the proud privilege of being beginners of something altogether new.'¹⁸ Yet in the present conjuncture is it not only those who participated in Revolutions who may seek to 'forget' the desires that impelled them. There are forces at work that obscure the radical interventions into the world of the late African Revolutions, or, as in the case of *The Interpreter*, fuse complex divergent phenomena and situations into an unfathomable amalgam of disasters signified as 'Africa'. Achille Mbembe suggests that the contemporary moment of globalization might be compared to what in philosophy has been called 'the gigantic', in that it both eliminates 'great distances and the representation – producible at any time' of 'daily life in unfamiliar and distant worlds'.¹⁹ It is that through which the 'quantitative became an essential quality', a phrase that might also describe how, in the temporal span of the Revolutions of decolonisation begun in the 1960s to the waning of State socialism in the late 1980s, global networks increasingly became harnessed to and forged by trans-national forces of capitalist neo-liberalism, so accelerating

¹² 'The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises.' *Ibid*, p.237

¹³ Badiou characterises the differences between his notion of the political and that of Arendt's in conversation with Peter Hallward. Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, 2001 (London: Verso), p.115–116

¹⁴ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 2005 (London: Continuum), p.43

¹⁵ 'The Role of Culture in the Struggle for Independence', in Amílcar Cabral, *A Arma da Teoria: Unidade e Luta* 1, 1976 (PAIG and SARL), p.235

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.235–236

¹⁸ Arendt here discusses the relative sterility of the American Revolution for political thinking in comparison with the French Revolution. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, *op.cit.*, p.232

¹⁹ The notion of 'the gigantic' to which Mbembe refers is Heidegger's. Achille Mbembe, 'At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa', trans. Steven Rendall, *Public Culture* 12(1), p.259

its domination of audio-visual registers.²⁰ To extrapolate, a process is presently at work through which global imperialism colonises how we see and understand the world through the proliferation and circulation of certain kinds of sound and image.²¹

In Braudel's conception, on which Mbembe draws, there is a plurality of temporalities, 'world time', an experience of time that takes in the 'gigantic' dimensions of the world, being that which has come to govern 'certain spaces and certain realities', while others remain alien to it.²² Mbembe points out that it is no longer clear that there remain zones on which world history has no repercussions, imaginaries that circulate globally feeding into the overlapping singular and collective subjectivities that make multiple temporalities possible and meaningful. There is thus a specific importance to telling stories of the 'African Revolution' today, related to how it appears in the world. The Continent of Africa has figured in Eurocentric imaginaries as 'the heart of darkness' – that marginalized place 'on the edge of the world' and outside history. But the metaphor informs liberationist discourse too, where one of the characteristics of colonialist violence is to consign the colonised to obscurity.²³ The understanding that there is a time 'of the world' informs the writings of revolutionary thinkers who have struggled most against the pernicious and enduring separation of the world and its peoples into centre and periphery. Colonialism was that which prevented the colonised from determining their own destinies and hampered them materially, psychologically and physically in the nurturing their own specific modes of creating, acting and being together. In the ambitions harboured within revolutionary movements themselves, often caught within a teleological conception of temporality, Revolution was to be the means through which Africa would re-enter the 'stage of the world' and contribute to the universal from diverse positions, both temporal and located.²⁴ Africa becomes the place from which to understand the world, and a place from which to speak.

To remember the Event of Revolution, to share and re-tell its myriad of deeds and articulations in films, texts and debate, becomes a means to conceptualise it theoretically. Doing so opens the opportunity to recognise

²⁰ The stories to be told here are of later struggles and radical change at historical moments when internal constraints and the effects of neo-colonialism were already evident in many countries, and socialist Revolution came to be seen by many as an essential part of achieving independence. These different conflicts and militant stances also played out as part of wider shifts from Cold War polarities to the emergence of a new kind of globalized neo-colonialism implemented by transnational forces such as the IMF and the World Bank, through structural adjustment and other fiscal and cultural policies as well as military force.

²¹ This is not a linear progression, neither is it inevitably reactionary in all its manifestations. Take, for instance, the example of CNN, whose massive global influence and rapid growth in the 1990s has since abated as other news agencies have come into the frame, and as independent progressive news platforms multiply on the Internet.

²² *Op.cit.*, p.260

²³ Frantz Fanon thus begins his conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth* with the exhortation, 'We must shake off the heavy darkness in which we were plunged.' Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2001 (London: Penguin), p.251

²⁴ If the universal is that which can apply to all humans as thinking beings, the germination of a universal truth is temporal and located. Badiou says: 'all truth is first presented in the form of the absolutely singular – as can be seen in scientific invention, artistic creation, political innovation or the encounter that comprises love.' Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 2005 (London: Continuum), p.40

what it was that a particular revolutionary event brought into the world that was new, to let it live again in the understanding of the possibilities lived out at that moment, as well as subsequent disappointments or failures to live up to its principles.²⁵ Perhaps to keep the 'spirit of revolution' alive means a repetition, which may be unconscious, that mutates and finds new forms for changed circumstances.²⁶ To circulate around an event involves movements between temporalities that are disjunctive and overlapping, tracking back from the present through the remains of the past to find those instances when there was a jump-cut to an image of the future. Re-visiting those rare revolutionary moments of promise in which dreams and aspirations are realised within the individual and the collective – times when expectations for the future are raised – is a mode of re-appropriating the past in the present, and of understanding the here and now in its strangeness and complexity.

The elements this text weaves through – films, conversations, individual and collective memories, documents, agendas and manifestos, theoretical works, urban spaces, newspaper articles, and so on – suggest how the events it tells of came about through the participation and sometimes conflicting forces of a multitude of different people and agencies. Through this ongoing poly-vocal and inter-textual articulation, Revolution exists and circulates after the event in audio-visual texts, as memories and traces, these surfacing as different kinds of facts in the world.²⁷ Theory, as well as history, is a set of facts that have effects. Those theoretical bodies of work most crucial to this thesis, the texts of Amílcar Cabral and the films of Flora Gomes for instance, germinated in the specific situations and experiences of which they speak, while drawing too on the solidarities and currents of political thought born in the shared purposes of the Tricontinental.²⁸ Gomes' films embody aspirations, concepts and a collective memory created in the liberated zones during the struggle; at the same time they reflect on the legacy of Cabral and the ambiguities and awkwardness of his figure in post-colonial

²⁵ 'What saves the act of beginning from its own arbitrariness is that it carries its own principle within itself, or to be more precise, that beginning and principle ... are not only related to each other, but are coeval. The absolute form which the beginning is to derive its own validity and which must save it, as it were, from its inherent arbitrariness, is the principle which, together with it, makes its appearance in the world.... As such, the principle inspires the deeds that are to follow and remains apparent as long as the action lasts.' Arendt, *op.cit.*, p.212–213

²⁶ Arendt comments that there has been 'the regular emergence, during the course of revolution, of a new form of government that resembled in an amazing fashion Jefferson's ward system and seemed to repeat, under no matter what circumstances, the revolutionary societies and municipal councils which had spread all over France after 1789. ... What struck [Marx and Lenin] was not only the fact that they themselves were entirely unprepared for these events, but also that they knew they were confronted with a repetition unaccounted for by any conscious imitation or even mere remembrance of the past.' *Ibid*, p.256

²⁷ On the recognition of polyphony as a mode of textual production, and the challenge it makes to authorities that claim to 'represent', see James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, 1986 (University of California Press: Berkeley); Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *The Rustle of Language*, 1986 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell)

²⁸ Internationalist political identifications across the three continents of Latin America, Africa and Asia were declared at the first conference of the Organisation of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America at Havana in 1966. This was the first global alliance of the peoples of these geographic and cultural zones against Imperialism. The Tricontinental signifies an activist politics committed to social justice and transformation, which derives its strength from 'the networks of configurations and common political identities, broaching epistemological, social and institutional boundaries, that are thus established and drawn together.' Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, 2001 (Oxford: Blackwell), p.58

Guinea-Bissau.²⁹ The ongoing fecundity of the Event depends on further (re-)constructions of Revolution.³⁰ To demonstrate this importance, at the present conjuncture, is to begin a process of mapping out the intertextuality of a long sequence of drives within modernity for radical social, aesthetic and political transformation.

The notion of the screen as a kind of textile surface, a network of connections in which certain figures, dreams or hopes come into appearance and moments from the past are folded into the present, has implications for the way in which the surfaces of the city may be read.³¹ In modernist conceptions, the city is articulated by its cinematic representations, the dislocated rhythm of urban life embodied in the rapid jerks of the moving image. But the material and theory of this thesis suggest other ways in which the cinematic is lodged within the very ways in which the postcolonial city appears and is experienced as a visceral text. The thesis explores this in ways that reflect the different methodological approaches of the research, which involved extended repeated trips to Maputo, Ouagadougou, Lisbon and Paris. It seeks conceptual ways of understanding how screens function in urban space, working out from the specific and the located to recognise previously unseen and unexpected emergences (of new aesthetics, political ideas, networks of subjectivity, forms of participation and collectivity), and track their dynamics as they circulate more widely and morph in different forms for new revolutionary situations. For instance, Fanon and Cabral both challenge the Soviet Marxist tradition that understands the urban proletariat as the centre from which political radicalism springs, and follow on from Mao in locating the potential for revolutionary action in the colonies with rural peasant populations. Cabral recognised the revolutionary possibility of connections being forged between young people from a new urban class that he calls the 'petty bourgeoisie' and the village communities with whom they still had links – a radically different site for the emergence of the new.³² The thesis analyses appearances of different kinds of surface that may be understood as 'screens', which may operate at varying intersecting levels of individual and collective experience. If the material and the psychical are understood as folded into each other, such 'screens' may have unexpected forms and effects, bringing some things into appearance, while perhaps at the same time functioning as 'screen memories', psychically produced surfaces that cover over an earlier more traumatic or significant event.³³

²⁹ Cabral was assassinated in a plot orchestrated by Portuguese agents in 1973, a year before PLAGC unilaterally declared Guinea-Bissau an independent sovereign nation. All Gomes' films address the legacy of Cabral (see Chapter 2). In *N'ha Fala*, for instance, no-one in Bissau can agree on where a bust of the revolutionary should be placed, and it is passed from hand to hand as an unwanted burden.

³⁰ Hannah Arendt points about the sterility of the American Revolution for political thought in comparison with the French, despite its importance in providing historical proof that Revolution need not lead to terror. Hannah Arendt, *op.cit.*

³¹ The etymological connections of the word 'textile' are significant, linking to 'text', 'textuality', 'tissue' and 'texture'. See Ros Gray, 'Chinese Whispers: Variations on Textile', in *Textile: Journal of Cloth and Culture*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 2002, pp.158–173

³² Cabral theorised that the petty bourgeoisie in Guinea-Bissau would have to commit 'class suicide' in order to fulfil its potential as a revolutionary force that would have a reciprocal relationship with the peasant population, learning from their cultural richness but also showing them how their lives would be improved by the eradication of colonialism. Amílcar Cabral, 'The Weapon of Theory', *op.cit.*, pp.212–213

³³ Sigmund Freud, 'On Childhood Memories and Screen Memories', in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. Anthea Bell, 2002 (London: Penguin), pp.45–52

There is a need to attend to the singular configurations that certain postcolonial sites constitute at a given moment and the specific histories of their formation. While drawing on theory, this involves resisting inappropriate importation of existent theoretical models. The concern of the thesis with late Independence struggles and Revolution in former Portuguese African colonies means that, for example, in the urban formation of Maputo the Manichean divisions that Fanon described as characteristic of the colonial city were maintained and reproduced until far more recently.³⁴ The material fabric and symbols of these cities were then subjected to radical overhaul and destruction at the moment of Independence, dramatic demographic changes, the transformation of ways of life, and ruination of infrastructures with subsequent conflicts and lack of resources. Yet elements of colonial structures remain in varying states of transformation as decaying fragments of disjunctive urban conglomerations. Ouagadougou (see Chapter 4) differs from the other case studies in that Thomas Sankara's Revolution was initiated not through a mass uprising or prolonged guerrilla warfare but by a military coup against a conservative postcolonial regime, which only afterwards sought to harness popular support to enact radical social transformation. In Ouagadougou the monuments, edifices and signs of the 1983 Revolution, erected as part of an ambitious programme of modernisation and re-distribution of wealth, are still highly visible in the urban fabric, still far from being erased by the commercial expansion of the present.

At the level of the urban surface, the residues of moments of Independence and Revolution continue to mark traces even in the context of violent erasure, ruination and transformation. Working out from specific sites and case studies, the thesis draws out connections between macro- and microscopic events and forces that co-join in the production and transformation of urban space and effect how change in peoples' lives is experienced and spatialised psychically and materially. At stake is thus a notion of how subjectivity relates to the screen, which takes as a point of departure the understanding that individual and collective desires and imaginaries form reciprocally through a series of dynamic movements. Given that part of the theoretical endeavour is to understand the different modes of being and acting together that certain singular events of cinema and Revolution have made possible, the screen may be thought of as a surface across which course 'vectors of subjectivication', in which different imaginaries, drives and desires pulse simultaneously, becoming significant in specific subjects and situations, though perhaps often in contradiction with each other.³⁵

With the late struggles for Independence and the preceding radical geopolitical re-configurations of the Tricontinental, a cultural politics emerged in which cinema was a key means by which Africa and its Revolutions would appear in the world and effect change. The Festival Pan-Africain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou (FESPACO) was set up by a group of *cinephiles* and filmmakers in 1969 and quickly became a crossroads for liberationist filmmakers. Meanwhile the closely linked Federation Pan-Africain de Cineastes (FEPACI), which was established in the same year in Algiers, began lobbying governments to nationalise cinema industries and promote African filmmaking. Filmmaking was recognised as a revolutionary 'weapon' in the liberation struggles of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. After Independence, the governments of

³⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2001 (London: Penguin)

³⁵ Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, 2000 (London: Althone Press), p.36

these countries nationalised cinemas and set up filmmaking institutes along the lines of those already functioning in Cuba and Algeria. Thomas Sankara's Revolution of 1983 in Burkina Faso gave renewed impetus to FEPACI and FESPACO with increased political and financial backing and a drive to develop the Burkinabè film industry. Sankara's government, the Conseil National de la Révolution (CNR), recognised this international event and movement as complimentary to its revolutionary nationalism, cinema becoming a means to develop and decolonise the country beyond the parameters that the World Bank was then attempting to enforce.

The experiences and a set of cultural politics that emerged in the events of these Revolutions ground this thesis. Concepts of what liberation meant, ranging from those developed by Amílcar Cabral to those of Thomas Sankara, whom Cabral influenced, emphasize the transformation and liberation of individual consciousness through identification with revolutionary nationalism rather than traditional African cultures and power structures. In this respect they chime with Fanon's earlier seminal texts of decolonisation written in the context of the Algerian liberation war, such as *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Toward the African Revolution*.³⁶ In Fanon's vision of African Revolution:

The liberation of the individual does not follow national liberation. An authentic national liberation exists only to the precise degree to which the individual has irreversibly begun his own liberation. It is not possible to take one's distance with respect to colonialism without at the same time taking it with respect to the idea that the colonised holds of himself through the filter of colonialist culture.³⁷

Through his participation in the armed struggle to liberate Algeria, Fanon came to see African unity as a concrete and immediate military objective.³⁸ Traversing Africa south of the Sahara on diplomatic and reconnaissance missions, he came to perceive Algeria as the 'vanguard' of an African Revolution that would spread to the countries of the South, so that the Independence of each would mean a genuine opportunity of self-determination for all African peoples. But at the same time, Fanon's writings on the 'Pitfalls of National Consciousness' warn of the dangers of neo-colonialism: national consciousness risked being imprisoned in a 'sterile formalism' played out by a bourgeois elite, the palace of post-colonial government, far from being a house for freedom to dwell, becoming a 'brightly lit, empty shell' deserted by 'the nation'.³⁹ The Revolutions that began in the late 1960s and culminated in the 1970s and early 1980s were pitted against the spectres of

³⁶ Patrick Chabal points out this connection between Cabral and Fanon. See Patrick Chabal, *Amilcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War*, 2003, (London: C. Hurst).

³⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution*, 1970 (Harmondsworth: Pelican), p.114

³⁸ See 'Towards the African Revolution', an account of Fanon's diplomatic mission to represent the FLN in Accra, Ghana in 1960. It preceded reconnaissance into the possibilities of running guns across the Sahara through Mali and setting up a base there for arms supplies; in this journey he began to trace out the potential for a network of bases for militants traversing the desert. *Ibid*, pp.187–200

³⁹ Fanon conceives 'the nation' as an ever-mutating entity made up of the totality of action and consciousness 'the people' participating in the process of decolonisation: 'The living expression of the nation is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women.' Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *op.cit.*, p.165

neo-colonialism and underdevelopment, conditions of dependency into which, as was by then all too apparent, States could become prey after Independence. They shared with Fanon the conviction that colonialism and neo-colonialism denied African people not only the material necessities for development but also the capacity to think, act and organise autonomously and with dignity. While each of these colonial wars differed substantially, they also shared the experience of challenging entrenched and repressive regimes, where violence was the only remaining course of action to bring colonialism to an end.⁴⁰

The Algerian liberation struggle, which Fanon saw as the 'vanguard' of the African Revolution in the 1950s and 1960s, was a vital point of reference to the revolutions that followed, and for the ambitions of cinema to be a revolutionary agent and expression of radical desire. Unlike its other colonies in Africa, most of which gained Independence in 1960, France was determined to keep hold of Algeria at all costs and large numbers of French settlers formed a crucial part of the colonial apparatus. As with the later liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, in Algeria armed struggle was recognised as the only way in which independence from colonial rule would be achieved. Film was seen as a crucial part of the liberation struggle, and the production unit Group Farid was set up in 1957, led by the French FLN activist René Vautier, who also ran an FLN film-making school.⁴¹ Various filmmaking organisations were set up by the FLN following Independence in 1962. Feature films were made by the Centre National du Cinéma Algérien (CNCA), the newsreel company the Office des Actualités Algériennes (OAA) and the Algerian television organisation RTA. In 1967 a new State company, the ONCIC, was created that would hold the monopoly on film production until 1984, through which all filmmakers became State employees.⁴² The war of liberation remained the dominant theme from the 1960s, with the agrarian revolution of 1970s becoming another collective focus for Algerian cinema the following decade.⁴³ Algeria became a model for revolutionary nationalist cinema production and Algiers was a key site of gathering and solidarity for filmmakers as well as many exiled political activists.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ To give just one example of these differences, the PAIGC, fighting a guerrilla war in a country barely populated with Portuguese outside a few coastal cities, always distinguished between the Portuguese people and the Portuguese colonial apparatus, while the FLN, fighting a system of exploitation that worked through French settlement as well as military, legal and other institutional means, insisted it could make no such distinction in Algeria, each settler on Algerian soil being an instrument of the colonial apparatus. In an article for *El Moudjahid* in December 1957 Fanon wrote: 'Every Frenchman in Algeria is at the present time an enemy soldier.' Frantz Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution*, p.91

⁴¹ Four of the students died in combat. See Roy Armes, *Postcolonial Images: Studies in North African Film*, 2005 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press)

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ Only with the emergence of a new generation of filmmakers such as Merzak Allouache and Assia Djebar in the late 1970s did Algerian cinema begin to move away from 'earnest tales' of revolutionary struggle and to address post-revolutionary subjects. *Ibid*

⁴⁴ FRELIMO militants (including Camillo de Sousa and Oscar Monteiro), Black panthers and radicals from across West Africa funded by Gaddafi were among those who found sanctuary or passed through the training camps that Algeria hosted during the 1960s and 1970s. In *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, Elaine Brown, who at one point was appointed acting leader of the Black Panthers by Huey Newton, describes the terrifying journey she made with Eldridge Cleaver to China and then to Algeria, during which he repeatedly threatened to kill her. In Algiers, she stayed at the 'embassy' of the Black Panther International Section where Cleaver was based, in a building that previously had been the residence of the North Vietnamese ambassador,

The 1973 Third World Film-Makers Meeting held in Algiers was a crucial moment in the crystallisation of ambitions to decolonise cinema and to define a liberationist aesthetic. Taking as its starting point the situation of expanding global capitalism and the resulting uneven power relations of colonialism and neo-colonialism, the Meeting defined the role of cinema in the non-aligned Third World as being to reflect the 'objective conditions' of 'struggling peoples' and to 'accomplish... active solidarity' between filmmakers and governments.⁴⁵ It posited nationalisation as being 'in the interests of the masses of people' because it was thought that such a system, implemented across the Continent, would have the power to 'eliminate once and for all' the structures and market forces that allowed foreign monopolies to continue to impose films 'upon us either directly or indirectly and which generate reactionary culture.'⁴⁶ The Meeting drew pivotal figures such as Med Hondo, Ousmane Sembene, Flora Gomes, the British Simon Hartog (who later helped set up the INC in Mozambique), and the Cuban documentary-maker Santiago Alvarez, whose paths are among those that map out the global networks of filmmaking that emanated from the late African revolutions.

The contribution of the Algerian Revolution to political, cultural and aesthetic thought, and to these ambitions of cinema to embody Revolution, both precede and are part of the story of the examples the thesis studies. Fanon's notion of national culture and his understanding of the collective psychological dynamics of revolutionary desire are an apposite point of departure, particularly with regard to the many ways in which aspects of his thought were taken up by filmmakers during the 1960s and 1970 to theorise their own militant filmmaking practices. His writing on the shift in Algerian attitudes towards the radio during the liberation struggle describes how new revolutionary desires and subjectivities are formed in collective interaction with this piece of technology through the creation of a perceptual screen. The perceptual screen allows certain figures to come into appearance, produced by the radical desires of the listeners as a means of participation with an emergent national culture of liberation. The radical potential of the radio lies not, significantly, in its instructional clarity but in its capacity to gather a crowd and precipitate animated conversations about events that for the majority could only be experienced vicariously. In this process listeners become participants – the agents of radical change come into relief and become aware of themselves as a collective body defined by the struggle. The event of the screen, therefore, radicalises personal trajectories, which come to have a metonymic relationship to grand ideas of Revolution.

In 'The Voice of Algeria', Fanon argues that the radio came 'to be of capital importance in consolidating and unifying the people' around the 'voice of the combatants'.⁴⁷ This took place despite Algerians initially having rejected this technology because the official Radio-Alger was 'essentially the instrument of colonial society and

and which he secured with help from North Korea. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, 1994 (New York: Anchor Books), pp.232–234

⁴⁵ 'Resolutions of the Third World Filmmakers Meeting in Algiers, 1973', reprinted in Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, 1982 (Michigan: Ann Arbor), pp.103–106

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ Frantz Fanon, 'The Voice of Algeria' in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier, 1965 (London: Penguin), pp.68–69

its values'.⁴⁸ Fanon claims that 'no explicit, organised and motivated resistance was to be observed, but rather a dull absence of interest in that piece of French presence', which constituted a refusal to 'participate' in the colonialist 'world of signs'. This attitude to the radio transformed in 1956, when the Voice of Free Algeria was first broadcast to transmit news from the combatants. The radio lost its identity as 'enemy object' and in 'less than twenty days the entire stock of radios was bought up': Algerian society was 'tun[ing] itself in on the new signalling systems brought into being by the Revolution.'⁴⁹ The French authorities responded by banning the sale of radios to Algerians, confiscating them in house-to-house searches, and systematically jamming the frequencies, forcing the broadcasters to adopt tactics of rapidly switching frequencies through more than one station, sometimes within a single broadcast.⁵⁰ The Voice of Free Algeria thus became a 'choppy, broken' voice. Yet in this absence of a clear message, 'the people' came to participate in the struggle by constructing their own 'acted truth':

Under these conditions, claiming to have heard the Voice of Algeria was, in a certain sense, distorting the truth, but it was above all the occasion to proclaim one's clandestine participation in the essence of the Revolution. It meant making a deliberate choice ... between the enemy's congenital lie and the people's own lie, which suddenly acquired a dimension of truth ... Every Algerian, for his part, broadcast and transmitted the new language. The nature of this voice recalled in more than one way that of the Revolution: present 'in the air' in isolated pieces, but not objectively.⁵¹

Through this uneven surface of sound, full of gaps and white noise, a presence was felt that 'gave to the combat its greatest reality'. The 'phantom-like and quickly inaudible character' of this voice in no way, Fanon argues, diminished its 'felt reality and its power'.⁵² Instead it would seem that a figure of the *mujabadeen* emerges in the ontological becoming of the listener, who comes into a new form of existence with the voice by desiring it to exist, transforming perception and in the process transforming his or her own subjectivity. This happens 'magically', in a situation in which 'a pattern of listening habits' had to be 'virtually invented'. Paradoxically, a new sovereignty centring on an idea of nationhood is thus formed and felt in the very condition of human plurality it works to deny, through the invention of a new 'truth' constructed collectively. Figures and their meanings are produced at this threshold of significance in the interplay between singularities at a moment of sovereign emergence before these meanings ossify into totalitarianism. The 'psychological potentialities' of the

⁴⁸ 'The Paris music, extracts from the metropolitan press, the French government crisis, constitute a coherent background from which colonial society draws its density and its justification.' *Ibid.*, pp.53–55

⁴⁹ It also involved radical changes in attitudes towards language, as the use of Arab, Kabyle and French organized 'fragments and splinters' from various sources according to 'a national and Algerian political idea' that transformed French from being the language of colonialism to what Fanon calls 'the expression of a non-racial conception.' *Ibid.*, p.56 and p.68

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.69

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp.69–70

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.78

screen might then be made manifest in its 'incantation', a voice that lures and induces a perceptual disturbance that makes it possible to see the world differently.⁵³

Although Fanon did not live to see Algerian independence, the events of the Revolution are re-told in Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), which gives audio-visual forms to many of his theorisations of the struggle. The film focuses on the military operation to suppress FLN activity in Algiers in the 1950s, and opens with the camera tracking between the rooftops of the *medina* and the French city, visualising Fanon's analysis of the colonial city divided between a 'well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly... full of good things' and the zone where the 'natives' live, 'a place of ill-fame, peopled by men of evil repute'.⁵⁴ The scenes that follow depict the brutal imposition of colonial rule from the perspective of the colonised, inviting spectatorial complicity when the camera watches with the other Algerian prisoners one of their comrades being taken to be executed. At the centre of the film a riveting sequence that recalls Fanon's essay on the veil.⁵⁵ It follows Algerian women as they disguise themselves in Western garb to smuggle explosives through the city checkpoints, where the sexist racist comments of the French soldiers manning the barricade are overheard from the aural perspective of the female bombers. Pontecorvo worked in collaboration with the Algerian State, and with the participation of many non-professional actors, individuals each painstakingly selected to populate the streets of Algiers.⁵⁶ The final scenes, which follow on as an appendage to the main events dramatised in the film, show the spontaneous uprising of the Algerian people some years later, which was pivotal in shifting public opinion in France towards French withdrawal from the territory. The camera tracks across the city streets as Algerians of the *medinas* stream into the broad boulevards of the central French *quartiers* of the city. It is a moment that resonates strongly with Fanon's description of revolutionary emergence, when he describes how:

The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native in the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters.⁵⁷

In the film, the screen turns completely white, then amid the smoke and dust emerge first the sound of women crying out, then individual faces and bodies stamping, shouting and dancing (Plate 1). The figure of a new people comes into appearance.

⁵³ Roger Callois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia', trans John Shepley, in *October*, pp.27–28

⁵⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *op.cit.*, p.30

⁵⁵ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, *op.cit.*

⁵⁶ *The Battle of Algiers* was made as a co-production by Algeria's only private production company Casbah Films, which functioned between 1965 and 1967. Casbah Films was co-founded by the FLN activist Yacef Saadi, and Pontecorvo's film draws on his story.

⁵⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.31

Fanon's impact on the conceptualisation of radical filmmaking across the Tricontinental is most incisive in theorisations of the event of the screen as a site of gathering and transformation of individual and collective consciousness. He is cited in Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's text 'Toward a Third Cinema', which is one of the key theorisations of cinema as a weapon of Revolution that emerged out of the experiences and practices of militant filmmakers in the late 1960s.⁵⁸ Solanas and Getino draw on their experience of making and projecting *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968). This open-ended documentary exposes the many forms of neo-colonialism effecting Argentina and explores the opposition struggle to dictatorship with interviews, archive footage and testimonials inter-cut with explosive inter-titles that organise the visual material into a series of arguments and provocations to the audience to engage and debate. *The Hour of the Furnaces* was filmed clandestinely with political militants and shown in a climate of repression in which simply being present at the projection risked arrest. Re-appropriating tropes from the cinematic and artistic avant-garde (from Vertov, Eisenstein, Andy Warhol, Dada) and evoking the rhetoric of Che Guevara, Fanon and other icons of the Tricontinental, the film married 'political and artistic vanguards engaged in a common task which is enriching to both.'⁵⁹ However, Solanas and Getino also suggest that the film is 'important only as a detonator or pretext', which makes 'with each showing, as in a revolutionary incursion, a liberated space, a decolonised territory' around the screen.⁶⁰ Their experience with *The Hour of the Furnaces* led them to discover 'a new facet of cinema':

...every comrade who attended such showings did so with full awareness that he was infringing the System's laws and exposing his personal security to eventual repression. This person was no longer a spectator; on the contrary, from the moment he decided to attend the showing... he became an actor, a more important protagonist than those who appeared in the films... *The spectator made way for the actor, who sought himself in others.*⁶¹

Such a Third Cinema, which they speculate might become a '*Guerilla Films International*', would be constituted out of such 'film acts', each different and specific in effect to the given situation.⁶² Cinema is an agent of Revolution, but one that is most effective when it 'took on the task of subordinating its own form, structure, language, and propositions to that act and to those actors — to put it another way, *if it sought its own liberation in*

⁵⁸ As Rachel Gabara explains, the radical genealogy that runs from Italian Neo-realism, through the engaged cinema of South America to the African films of liberation and decolonisation is grounded in a concern to use realism to engage with and tell stories of the struggles of everyday people, often drawing on the intense performances of non-professional actors. Other South American protagonists who have theorised their own revolutionary cinema practice include Glauber Rocha, the Chilean Jorge Sanjines, and Cuban Julio Garcia Espinosa. Teshome Gabriel introduced the notion of Third Cinema into Anglophone discussions in 1982 with his book *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, which offered a different set of theoretical criteria from predominant European models grounded in psychoanalysis, arguing for the analysis and categorisation of films according to their capacity for radical political intervention. Rachel Gabara, 'A Poetics of Refusals: Neorealism from Italy to Africa', 2003 (unpublished paper); Teshome Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, 1982 (Michigan: Ann Arbor)

⁵⁹ Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, 'Toward a Third Cinema', in *Cinéaste*, volume IV, no.3, Winter 1970/71

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.9

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² *Ibid*

*the subordination and insertion in the others, the principal protagonists of life.*⁶³ Gathering people around the screen, the projection 'can be turned into a kind of political event, which, according to Fanon, could be "a liturgical act, a privileged occasion for human beings to hear and be heard."⁶⁴ Solanas and Getino advocate a cinema that, in an act of simultaneous destruction and construction, operates through each participating individual, opening up the possibility of radical collective transformation. It is 'a cinema fit for a new kind of human being, for what each one of us has the possibility of becoming.'⁶⁵

Med Hondo haunts this thesis as a figure of politically engaged filmmaking directed towards the objective of African liberation, and his work over four decades demonstrates ongoing 'fidelity' to the event of decolonisation. He is a highly vocal and yet elusive and intriguing figure, who was exiled from Mauritania following his political involvement in the actions of Paris 1968. As a self-taught filmmaker based in Paris, Hondo has managed on the whole to avoid funding sources such as the French Co-operation that most *francophone* African filmmakers turn to in order to get their films made, instead becoming a key player in the networks of engaged filmmaking across Africa. He was a founding member of FEPACI, participated in the Third World Film-maker's Meeting at Algiers in 1973, and made a number of visits to Mozambique during the revolutionary period, completing one of his films using the equipment at the INC.⁶⁶ *Les Bicots-Negres vos voisins* (1974) was shown in Maputo, as was *Polisario: un peuple en armes* (1976), a film made in the refugee camps and liberated zones of the Sahara about the independence struggle of the people of the Western Sahara led by the Frente Polisario against the Moroccan regime.⁶⁷ His films all contribute to the politics of decolonisation, but in an extraordinary variety of modes. These range from the rapid montage of *Soleil Ó* (1969), to *Sarrounia* (1986), a historically precise dramatisation of an African queen's armed resistance to French colonial invasion during the nineteenth-century, to *Lumière Noire* (1994), which appropriates the detective thriller genre to protest the plight of immigrant populations in France and suggest the shady geopolitical networks of multinational corporations, State police and secret services through which global capitalism repeatedly suppresses liberationist struggle. Hondo cites as influences the political cinema of South America and Cuba, including Solanas and Getino's *Hour of the Furnaces* and Rocha's *Black God, White Devil* (1964), but emphasizes that they were important:

...not only for their cinematic technique, in the strict sense, but because of what I'm tempted to call a foundational act of cinema: the eruption of the masses onto the screen, who appropriate speech to denounce lies and hypocrisy, to reveal contradictions of society and explore new paths.⁶⁸

It is in this way that

⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.10

⁶⁶ Interview with Camillo de Sousa, Maputo, 8 July 2005. See Appendix

⁶⁷ See Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Republica Popular de Moçambique, *Ciclo de Cinema Africano*, 1977 (Maputo: INC), pp.21–22

⁶⁸ Ibrahima Signaté, *Med Hondo: Cineaste Rebelle*, 1994 (Paris: Presence Africaine), p.25

Cinema was a way of asserting Africa's presence in the world. The written works of some great African figures such as Amílcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, Sheik Anta Diop were for me a powerful stimulant... it was necessary, through the image, to pursue the fight that they had engaged on the ground of ideas and politics.⁶⁹

Soleil Ó demonstrates one of the ways in which this ambition to affirm a revolutionary African politics through cinema has been manifested, with a dynamic in which the film's protagonist, a young African immigrant to Paris, becomes a figure of a collective consciousness and resistance that has appeared repeatedly across space and time. The title is derived from the words of a song sung by African slaves forced from their homes and shipped to the West Indies, an expression of protest passed through the generations of their descendants. Hondo has described *Soleil Ó* as a 'pamphlet', and while it functions as an avant-garde tract on the racism and estrangement experienced by black communities in France, its temporal and geographic span ranges the entire colonial and neo-colonial experience of imperialist oppression in all its forms.⁷⁰

The film begins with a puppet African ruler being installed by foreign military intervention, only to be deposed shortly afterwards. Thereafter the film threads together episodes in a black man's struggle to survive in Paris. Though he is educated and qualified as an accountant, he is continually identified only by his colour and is humiliated as he searches for housing and employment, eventually being forced to take on a menial job as a road-sweeper. He interacts with a series of social figures in Brechtian sequences, including a white French sociologist, who lectures patronisingly on the condition of black people, a white French businessman, with whom he debates capitalism, as well as other black immigrants, some of whom offer solidarity, while others shun him. These vignettes are inter-cut with symbolic images (often inverted, as in the Christian cross that becomes a sword with which some Africans kill themselves as a European officer looks on) and these combine to produce a damning indictment of postcolonial social conflict and contradiction, shot in a strongly anti-realist style with rapid camera movements reminiscent of Dziga Vertov.⁷¹ A poster for the film (Plate 2) shows a sea of faces – a montage of a single image of a black man shouting out in protest that is multiplied into an infinite mass of people – while the caption reads: 'We are the millions. They killed Lumumba, Guevara, Ben Barka, Malcolm X, Cabral. They can't kill us all.' The film ends with the protagonist running into the bush, falling onto the roots of a tree, and in his delirium images of these figures of revolutionary heroism swirl and overlay one another to the sound of machine-gun fire. In this explosive collision of sound and image the screen presents a fusing of personal revolt and resistance with a trans-temporal liberationist subjectivity.

There are ambitions of cinema to embody and hasten Revolution, but there is also the question of how the stories of Revolution re-appear and are re-told – a series of effects in the world that multiply and take off in

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ Hondo's description is quoted in Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *Black African Cinema*, 1994 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press), p.80

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.81

unexpected directions. Although colonial and postcolonial Africa and Europe are intimately linked by centuries of violent and exploitative relations, there exist progressive trans-national connections between experimental filmmakers, radical political organisations and revolutionary events. Screens inscribe, embody and sometimes precipitate such points of crisis and new commonalities, but these moments also circulate through other spaces and times, parlaying relations to histories, often forgotten, damaged or destroyed. In an expanded notion of the screen, screens function as surfaces that make certain things, memories, relations and movements visible, some partially seen, and others, perhaps, invisible. At the moment of crisis, what comes into appearance on the screen is a new figure – that of a people bringing about a Revolution.

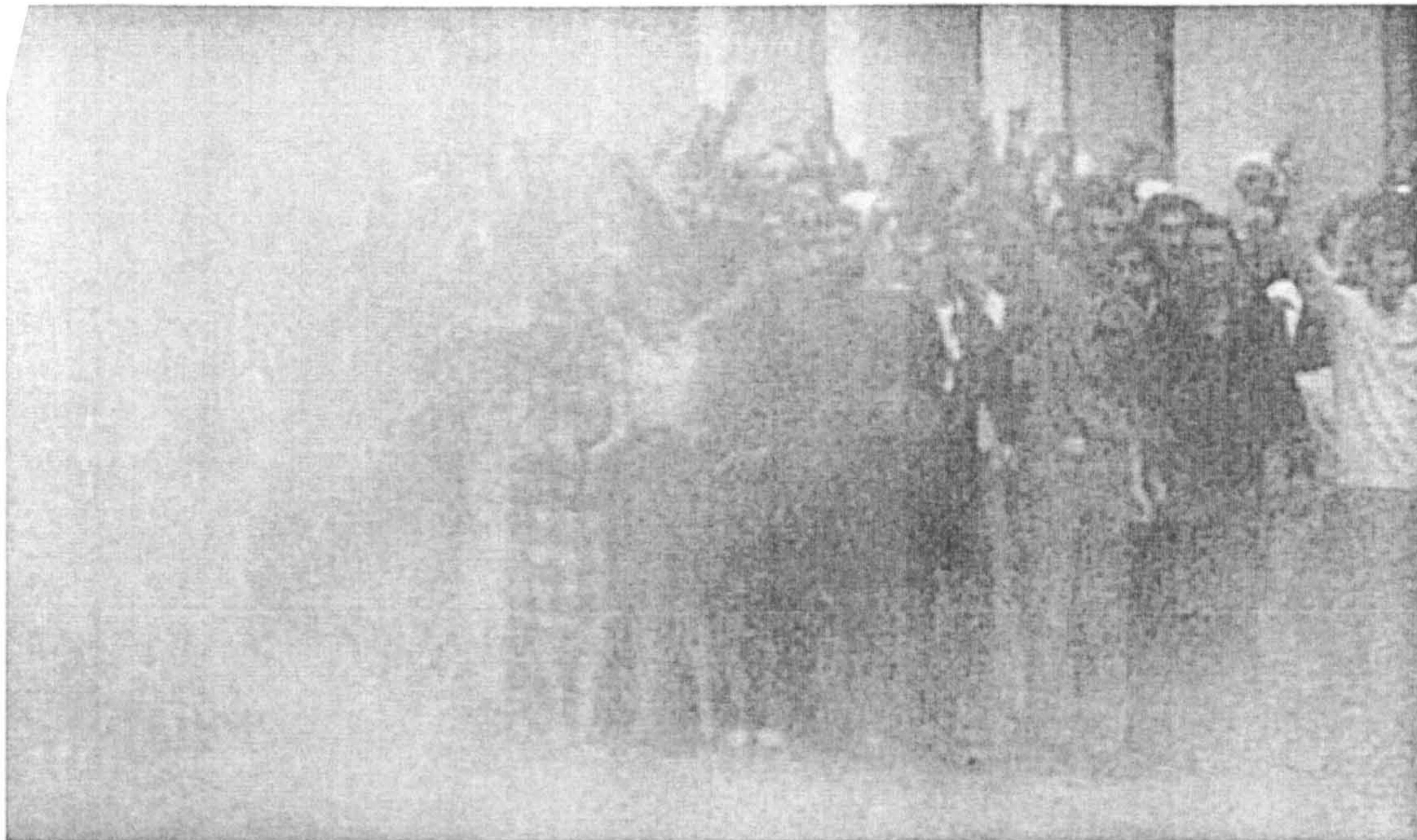


Plate 1
The Battle of Algiers, 1966

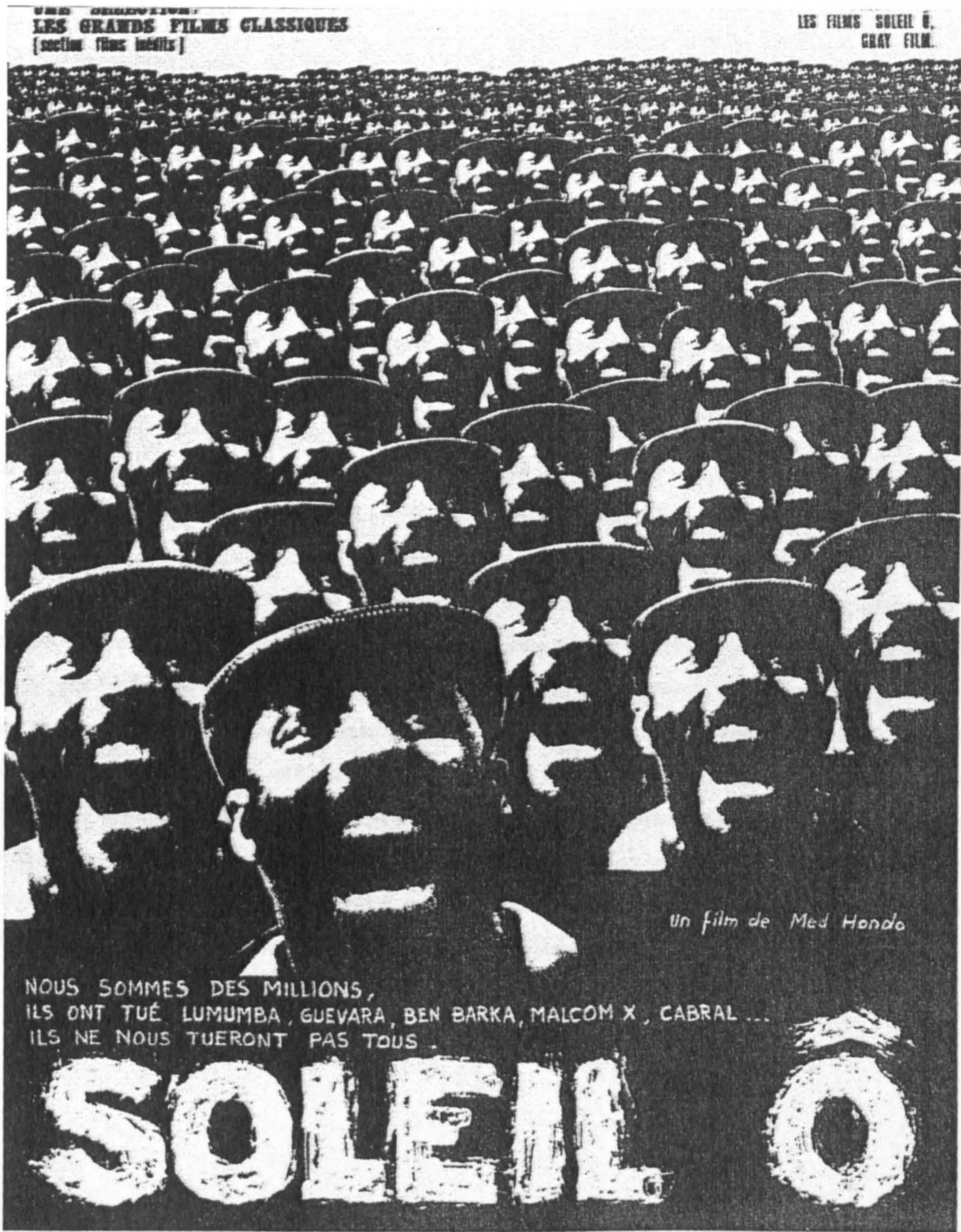


Plate 2
Poster for Med Hondo's *Soleil Ô*, 1969

Chapter 2

Acts of Culture, Networks of Liberation

We must tell this story again. In the beginning there was a rhythm, but the rhythm was clandestine.' The first images are sepia photographs of Luanda, the stiff edifices, white-washed buildings and prim squares of a colonial outpost that fed 'the ferocious capitalist city'. But these give way: 'There is a people, and the people have a rhythm'. And the rhythm of N'gola Ritmos ripples across a screen of surfaces – wood planks, tin roofs and corrugated iron arranged into the shacks and winding paths of the musseque. Here mestiços, blacks and impoverished whites live. A Creole people forming as the musseques multiplied on every side. In the film Ritmos do N'gola Ritmos, the words of José Luandino Vieira mingle with the images of Antonio Olé to tell the story of N'gola Ritmos, a band of musicians who sang old songs again, weaving a tissue of connections between their daily struggles and the stories passed down in song by Africans shipped from Angola to Brazil. It could pass as a folkloric lullaby that the Portuguese thought they knew, of fishing boats, sunsets and bougainvilleas, but what it whispered was an underground network. And with each song, an act of resistance - leaflets distributed at concerts, secret conversations with Amílcar Cabral, and when Cuban revolutionaries first came to meet the MPLA, N'gola Ritmos played to masquerade the meeting as a party. PIDE picked them out one by one, imprisoned, exiled, sent to Tarrafal on Cape Verde, where they shared cells with Cabral's comrades from Guinea-Bissau. But others came and sang the songs, making a filigree of rhythms and whispers, like 'a spider's web woven over the colonists' heads'. 'And in the silence of their music, studiously, patiently, another rhythm is born', the rhythm of revolt. Before the revolution, before cinema, there was a screen.

If some radical filmmakers of the late 1960s understood the screen as a 'detonator', an explosive device that sets off a revolutionary event of political awakening and collective transformation, the work of António Ole posits the screen differently. In *O Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos* (1978) it becomes a clandestine network of stories and songs that whisper the beginnings of Revolution. A sonic surface of lyrical description, testimony and song intersects with the visual rhythms of the *musseque*, speaking of the Creole culture of *Angolanidade* through which nationalist sentiments were first expressed in poetry and song. In the context of political repression, many of the pre-revolutionary clusters of resistance to fascist colonial rule were cultural gatherings, in the film clubs and artistic movements in Portugal, Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde. In the Casa dos Estudantes do Imperio in Lisbon a radicalised elite of assimilated African students came into contact with each other, with workers and sailors, and with the currents of Marxism, *Négritude* and Pan-Africanism that circulated in secret.¹

This network of resistance that arose across different locations in the Portuguese Empire during the 1940s and 1950s became a series of nationalist movements: that of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde islands, the Partido Africano Para Independência de Guine e Cabo Verde (PAIGC); that of Angola, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA); and that of Mozambique, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). Each of these struggles sought, in theory and often in practice, to ground its operations and concepts in local knowledge rather than impose foreign models, but they were also forged trans-nationally and in solidarity with others fighting imperialism. Filmmaking became operational in the armed struggle, feeding the importance that would be accrued to cinema in the revolutionary nation-building projects after Independence. The notion of the screen thus works at different registers – that of the metaphorical and that of the material, of physical and psychical screens that exist in various forms.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger comments that 'Nothing, in retrospect, appears more harmless than the beginning of a revolution.'² Speaking of the nineteenth-century precursors to the Russian revolutionaries of October 1917, he describes, not a 'single red thread', but a tangle of groups, the earliest of which engaged 'the battlefield of theory' through radical ideas that were themselves quickly criminalised.³ Later activists were forced underground, radicalised by the Tsarist authority that repressed them and turning from pamphlets to the bomb to work through political assassination. Among the assimilated elite of *lusophone* Africa, for whom poetry was the means to 're-discovered Africa', a notion of liberation as an 'act of culture' emerged.⁴ The initial manifestation of the concept was in the artistic expression of African cultures

¹ In the Portuguese empire, African populations were divided between the vast majority of 'indigenas' and tiny educated elites of 'assimilados' who were in theory granted the same rights as Portuguese citizens, though in reality discrimination was widespread. Social and professional development depended on one becoming 'assimilated', which involved the rejection of indigenous ways of life, attaining fluency in Portuguese, financial independence, and other criteria that were impossible for the vast majority. In line with official rhetoric that Portugal was conducting a 'civilising mission', assimilated students were groomed to think of themselves as 'Portuguese' and to become the regime's future functionaries in the colonies. Cape Verdeans were the only population in Portugal's empire that automatically benefited from the status of being 'non-indigenous', and they held many of the responsibilities of managing and administering the colonies on the Continent, heightening animosity felt by those from mainland Guinea-Bissau.

² Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Dreamers of the Absolute (Part I)', in *Raids and Reconstructions: Essays on Politics, Crime and Culture*, 1976 (London: Pluto Press), p.141

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Amílcar Cabral, *A Arma da Teoria: Unidade e Luta 1*, 1976 (PAIG and SARL), p.225

and historical realities, a shared experience that the system of assimilation sought to wipe out, which was explored alongside political organisation. However, under the brutal and recalcitrant regime of Salazar, mass participation in armed struggle came to be understood as the only way to achieve Independence. With the emergence of neo-colonialism in other African States, national liberation was also seen as requiring a Revolution if it were to be truly independent.⁵ The struggle was theorised as the means of unifying a 'people' not around a static notion of ethnicity but around desire for radical social change, and cinema came to be imagined as a means of projecting and realising this dream. A set of ambitions for cinema thus emerged through the armed struggles in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique that chimed with the radical commitments and liberationist aesthetics of filmmaking across the African Continent and in other countries then defining themselves as part of a non-aligned 'Third World'.⁶

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the emergence of these ambitions of cinema through the armed struggles that, by 1975, had brought Independence to the countries of *lusophone* Africa, and had in turn precipitated a Revolution in Portugal. While *O Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos* (Plates 3 and 4) was made in the context of the revolutionary Angolan State's project to decolonise film production, there is a notion of the screen it articulates that precedes cinema. The interplay between textures of music and urban surface suggest the screen may be understood as a sonic and visual textile woven out of multiple temporalities. Sound has a *textile*, porous surface, whose significance is formed through the desire of the listener.⁷ But in this film it is posited as a surface made up of multiple temporalities – cadences that move between 'the rhythm of days and nights, of weeks and years, of minutes and centuries'. As in the songs N'gola Ritmos sang, the singing of which became a mode of political engagement alongside other activities, this screen tells stories of the resistance to colonialist oppression manifested in music.

Yet there is another temporal register of the repression of the film itself that feeds the demand to tell these stories again. *O Ritmo* was a production of Angola's Televisão Popular de Angola (TPA), made at a time when television was backed by the State to drive through the harnessing of the cinema screen to a radical political agenda.⁸ With the *Angolanidade* writers José Luandino Vieira and Rui Duarte de Carvalho among its directors, TPA recruited staff to train as documentary filmmakers. In the words of Rui Duarte, film was to 'speak of resistance, record the reconstruction and depict militancy'.⁹ Alongside more conventional '*cinema directo*', the mode adopted by filmmaking teams who traversed the country to document and mobilise the Revolution, another kind of documentary film emerged. Exemplified by Rui Duarte's *Geração 50* (1975) and *O Deserto e os Mucubais* (1980?), and by António Ole's *No Caminho das Estrelas* (1980) and *O Ritmo do N'gola*

⁵ Amílcar Cabral, *op.cit.*, p.208 and p.211

⁶ The term 'Third World' was first used at the 1955 Bandung Conference, where delegates declared a politics of solidarity and non-alignment, asserted the rights of nations to self-determination and rejected all forms of imperialism, whether from the USA and its NATO allies, or from the Eastern Bloc.

⁷ In 'Le Grain de la voix', Roland Barthes describes the sound of a song as having a surface that 'papers over' the body of the singer ('*comme si une même peau tapissait la chair intérieure de l'exécutant et la musique qu'il chant*'). To focus on the 'grain' of the voice rather than coded gestures is to seek out nuances of 'significance' in the rapport between listener and singer. Roland Barthes, 'Le Grain de la voix', *L'ovie et obtus: Essais Critiques III*, 1982 (Paris: Édition du Seuil), pp.238–244. See also the discussion of Fanon's essay on the radio in the Algerian Revolution in Chapter 1.

⁸ Angola was the only Portuguese colony sufficiently developed and with the resources to invest in a television infra-structure immediately after Independence.

⁹ José de Matos-Cruz and José Mena Abrantes, *Cinema em Angola*, 2000 (Luanda: Caxinde), p.28

Ritmos, it is marked by a concern for finding a visual language to complement oral and musical expression that was specific to Angola.¹⁰

However, the postcolonial political situation in Angola was fraught with factional violence, through which Cold War alignments were played out on African territory. Jonas Savimbi's União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) forces, backed by the CIA and the South African army, sought to overthrow the MPLA. Elements within the MPLA also turned against each other, leading to large numbers of people facing the firing squad in 1978.¹¹ When the film was completed that same year it was immediately banned. Although the founder of *N'gola Ritmos*, Liceu Vieira Dias, was a figurehead of Angolan nationalism, he had supported the '*Revolta Activa*', the faction of the MPLA that was defeated in the internal strife. According to Ole:

[T]hey wanted me to erase him from the picture – like Trotsky. I was very clear: 'if you want to cut the film into little pieces, go ahead, but remove my name from it and it becomes your film.' They didn't. They realised that was exactly what the PIDE used to do, and ultimately didn't do anything.¹²

Agostinho Neto recognised the importance of the film, but he was assassinated shortly afterwards, and with him 'the film died', remaining prohibited for eleven years.¹³ The brutal conflict that engulfed Angola over the ensuing years meant that by 1988 all the hopes that Independence would enable autonomous politically engaged Angolan film production collapsed, shattering the dream of revolutionary cinema.¹⁴

Contained within this story of a film is a tragic narrative of what became of the African Revolution, and the aspirations for cinema it harboured. Angola, a mineral-rich territory that had been the jewel in the crown of the Portuguese empire, was where the Cold War was most viciously and directly played out in Africa in the war of destabilization in the 1980s. Film production had collapsed by 1988 because of the civil war, and only resumed tentatively in 2000.¹⁵ Appearing again in the present the film flashes up like 'a

¹⁰ *Geração 50* (1975) is about the nationalist poetry of Agostinho Neto, António Jacinto and Viriato da Cruz; *O Deserto e os Mucubais* (1980?) is an image-poem about the Mucubais people; *No Caminho das Estrelas* (1980) is a homage to Agostinho Neto. See José de Matos-Cruz and José Mena Abrantes, *op.cit.*, p.22

¹¹ Jonas Savimbi's UNITA party became the main opposition to the MPLA, taking support away from the Frente Nacional Para a Libertação de Angola (FNLA), which the US and other Western powers initially financed but which, unlike the MPLA, never really engaged militarily against the Portuguese. Savimbi's declared political alignments changed from Maoist to anti-Communist, depending on which source of foreign support he was hoping to gain. China, the USA and South Africa all gave him backing at different times in the conflict. See Patrick Chabal *et al*, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, 2002 (London: Hurst), pp.6–7 and 101–102. Ole recalls that 'In Luanda, we felt like we were in a sandwich: the FNLA troops were to the North, a group of mercenaries was advancing towards Luanda, and the South Africans and UNITA troops were coming up from the south. The two fronts were being held by the MPLA troops and the Cubans, with us in the middle.' António Ole, *Marcas de um Percurso (1970/2004)*, 2004 (exh. cat: Culturgest, Lisbon), p.20

¹² *Ibid*, p.21

¹³ *Ibid*, p.22

¹⁴ José de Matos-Cruz and José Mena Abrantes, *op.cit.*, p.54

¹⁵ Civil war broke out in Angola on 12 November 1992, when Sambivi lost the general elections to the MPLA. UNITA no longer had the support of South Africa, but was able to acquire large quantities of arms from the Ukraine, where Soviet weapons had been stock-piled during the Cold War.

moment of danger', the risk being that such narratives of disillusionment with radical idealism may form a screen that consigns the innovative and unexpected ideas of the African Revolution produced to being understood merely as failed experiments. Of all the founding members of the *lusophone* African liberation movements, Amílcar Cabral, leader of PLAGC, most clearly articulated the need to break through the 'crisis of knowledge in the African Revolution since 1960'.¹⁶ Cabral conceived the African Revolution as building national cultures and politics of liberation from the grassroots *but also and at the same time* developing this into a nuanced theory of the human capacity for radical change and collective action.¹⁷ This would be the contribution of his struggle not only to the liberation of the people of Guinea-Bissau, nor only of Africa, but to the knowledge and freedom of the World. Although the Revolution led by PAIGC ended only a few years after Independence, something of its 'spirit' informs the films of Flora Gomes, whose works investigate Cabral's legacy in Guinea-Bissau. To understand the ambitions of cinema to embody and express Revolution in the singularity of each of its manifestations, we need to go back to the beginning and tell certain stories again.

The Portuguese State kept the world ignorant about the underdevelopment of its colonies, and did its best to ensure that both settler and indigenous populations remained in the dark about the 'winds of change' that swept across the African Continent in the early 1960s, when most former British and French colonies became Independent.¹⁸ Although historically Portuguese colonialism had at times embraced a certain pluralism and lacked the military might to bring inland territories under direct colonial control, European powers at the Congress of Berlin in 1884–5 made Portugal's consolidation of its power in Africa the condition for retaining an empire, though this was not fully accomplished until 1933. Any remaining residues of tolerance disappeared when a fascist military coup imposed Salazar as president of Portugal in 1926. This authoritarian, repressive regime defined itself through a nationalist ideology based on the myth of a glorious military past of maritime discovery. The colonies were thus ideologically as well as economically vital to the fascist regime.

The Colonial Act incorporated into the constitution in 1933 institutionalised the racist ideology used to justify Portugal's exploitation of its colonies.¹⁹ At this time the fascist State also embraced the notion of *Lusotropicalism*, which held that the Portuguese race had a 'colonising genius' for bringing 'civilisation' and the Catholic faith to indigenous populations because the Portuguese had a facility for adapting European culture to the tropics. The historical fact of *metissage* was used to argue that the Portuguese had developed a kind of colonialism that was not racist. Gilberto Freyre, who invented the notion of *Lusotropicalism*, based his argument on his experience of the Cape Verde islands.²⁰ Unlike the other African colonies, the Cape Verde archipelago was uninhabited before the Portuguese began using it as a trading post in the trafficking

¹⁶ Amílcar Cabral, *op.cit.*, p.191

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.235

¹⁸ In the *Estado Novo*, all radio broadcasts, print journalism and cinema was tightly censored; importation of film, literature and commodities deemed to be subversive were forbidden. Political parties were banned, and freedom of association and gathering denied. The 'indigenous' populations in the colonies were cut off from anything other than rudimentary education, which was run by the Church.

¹⁹ The Act proclaimed that colonisation was the 'expansion of our race' and that the 'historic role' of the Portuguese nation was to put under its authority and to colonise the 'overseas provinces', so as to 'civilise the indigenous populations'. Decree no. 18,570, 8 July 1930

²⁰ Gilberto Freyre, *O Mundo que o Português criou*, 1940

of slaves to Brazil, and a Creole population grew there who developed their own unique culture.²¹ Although Portuguese settlers did mix more with Black African populations than other Europeans, this was in fact far less widespread outside urban centres and on the African mainland territories than suggested by the myth, which glossed over the centuries of violence and exploitation through which cultural *metisage* took place.²²

Salazar's government responded to United Nations pressure for decolonisation by changing the Portuguese constitution in 1951 so as to re-define its colonies as '*provincias ultramarinas*' (overseas provinces). According to David Basildon, 99.5 per cent of Guinean Africans were 'free labourers', working as virtual slaves, as did many under the name of 'contract workers' in Angola or *serviçais* in Mozambique.²³ Tens of thousands of families were forced to grow cash crops, which cut into domestic food supply and worsened the poverty and malnutrition of peasants communities. The myth of Portugal's 'civilising mission' in Africa was perpetuated through a cloud of misinformation and lack of statistics. This was in part a result of the underdevelopment, but the difficulty in obtaining accurate information was also a convenient barricade to anyone seeking to make a true assessment of the colonial situation.²⁴ A '*wall of silence*' was built around the peoples of *lusophone* Africa, through which Portuguese fascism perpetuated an illusion of benign colonial rule.²⁵

By the 1940s, however, a new generation of African students were making their way to Lisbon. This included many future leaders of the liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Among them were: Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, Mário Pinto de Andrade (one of the founders of the MPLA, and Minister of Culture in Guinea-Bissau), Marcelino dos Santos (first deputy President of Mozambique) and Oscar Monteiro (later a FRELIMO government minister). Despite the conditions of repression and censorship, in Lisbon they were able to tap into the currents of Marxism, *Négritude* and Pan-Africanism that circulated clandestinely. For Cabral and others who gathered at the Casa dos Estudantes do Imperio, poetry and art became the means to 're-discover Africa', a move that was a critical stage of

²¹ Rather than this being an example of the successful implantation of Portuguese culture and values so as to assimilate colonial subjects, as the ideology of *lusotropicalism* would have it, studies of Cape Verdian literature have shown how new cultural modes resulted from the appropriation of the Portuguese language to give expression to local and African forms. See David Brookshaw, 'Cape Verde', in Patrick Chabal (ed.), *The Postcolonial Literature of Lusophone Africa*, 1996 (London: Hurst), p.179–234

²² It was only after the Salazar regime was forced by international pressure to modify its propaganda that it adopted Freyre's thesis, a move that did not fundamentally involve a change to its ideology of racial hierarchy. Yves Léonard, 'Salazarisme et lusotropicalisme, histoire d'une appropriation', in *Lusotopie*, 1997, pp.221–226

²³ Basil Davidson, *The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution*, 1969 (Harmondsworth: Penguin) p.25

²⁴ Eduardo de Sousa Ferreira, *O Fim de uma Era: O Colonialismo Português em África*, 1974 (Lisbon: Sá da Costa)

²⁵ Amílcar Cabral's foreword to Basil Davidson's study of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau begins: 'Perhaps it is too soon to write the history of the liberation of the Portuguese colonies. But those who will one day write it will have to recall a fact of characteristic influence on the development of these struggles, whether in their internal dynamic or in their relation with the outside world: the *wall of silence* built around our peoples by Portuguese colonialism. And this at a time when the continental "wind of change" had begun to announce its message of the African awakening and the return of Africans to history.' Basil Davidson, *op.cit.*, p.9

radicalisation for young Africans shorn from their roots through the process of assimilation.²⁶ For the intellectual elite, re-connecting with African cultures constituted an act of resistance alongside other underground political activities.

In 1948 the journal *Mensagem* was established, which over the following years published poems and articles by Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, Agostinho Neto and Mário Pinto de Andrade.²⁷ *Mensagem* affirmed a shared history and body of cultural experience, drawing on the literary movements that had sprung up across *lusophone* Africa. Among an educated class of bureaucrats and clerks on Cape Verde, for instance, new literary forms emerged from the 1930s that began to articulate a distinctive Creole voice. A tradition of oral literature that told of drought, storms, poverty and forced migration fed into the poetry that for the first time spoke of the conditions of hardship on Cape Verde and became a means to articulate dissent.²⁸ Similarly, radical Angolan writers experimented with form to capture the *Angolanidade* of the Portuguese spoken in the *musseques*, where a Creole population that for centuries had run the trade routes to the interior and dominated Luanda's public life found itself ostracized by a new generation of settlers coming from Portugal.²⁹ And in Mozambique too, where Portuguese settlement was only a recent phenomenon outside the coastal trading posts, artists and the 'poets of resistance' began to address the brutality of forced labour and the injustices of colonialism.³⁰

The screen functioned as a site of radical gathering even in conditions of fascist repression that prohibited the distribution of any overtly nationalist or anti-fascist material. Film clubs run by progressive and committed individuals, many sympathetic to the Partido Comunista Portuguesa (PCP), sprang up in Portugal, Angola and Mozambique from the late 1950s.³¹ Those established in the colonies by whites and *assimilados* were predominantly concerned with Western *auteur* films, which at the time were the only ones that could pass the censor.³² Membership of the ciné clubs in Mozambique was thus almost exclusively white, with most members having links to the colonial regime or to university circles.³³ Despite emerging from within colonial society and reflecting the divisions of that system, the film clubs were important sites of radical experimentation. They formed a space that nurtured amateur filmmaking, and in some instances these films contained overt anti-colonial messages.³⁴ The film clubs also nurtured an informed and critical

²⁶ The hub of anti-colonial dissent in a labyrinth of students' and workers' associations was the Casa dos Estudantes do Imperio, established in 1945 under the Colonial Act to function as a social centre for African students. See Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *A Luta pela Independência: A Formação das Elites Fundadoras da FRELIMO, MPLA e PAIGC*, 1999 (Mems Martins: Editorial Inquérito), p.67

²⁷ A similar journal called *Meridiano* was set up in Coimbra, where the publication *Momento – Antologia de Literatura e Arte* was run by Neto, Lúcio Lara and the Mozambican Orlando Albuquerque.

²⁸ David Bradshaw, *op.cit.*

²⁹ Ana Mafalda Leite, 'Angola', in *ibid.*, p.110

³⁰ Nelson Saúte (ed.), *Nunca Mais é Sábado: Antologia de Poesia Moçambicana*, 2004 (Lisbon: Dom Quixote)

³¹ The PCP was the only political party that managed to maintain an effective clandestine network during the Salazar regime, with support from the USSR. This was despite brutal repression during the 1950s, especially of its peasant activists in the impoverished rural area of Alentejo, where the PCP organised a series of revolts.

³² The first film club established in Portugal was set up in Porto in 1956. Interview with Guilherme Alphonso, Maputo, 2 September 2005. See Appendix

³³ Interview with Maria Delurdes Tocato, Maputo, 31 August 2005. See Appendix

³⁴ One of the founding members of the Beira film club, which was considered the second film club in Portugal when it was established in 1957, was José Cardoso. Cardoso later worked as a director and as head

culture of cinema, and many of the politically-conscious members became involved in anti-colonial activity. Maria Delurdes Tocato recalls how the atmosphere of intellectual discussion 'opened the doors' to her own political consciousness.³⁵ This happened not necessarily via propagandistic material for a particular cause, but through appreciation of films such as Vittorio de Sica's *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and Tony Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962), which were political in their address of social realities and in making visible poverty, suffering and alienation.³⁶

In Cape Verde, by contrast, where there was an established Creole elite, the screen became a short-lived site of gathering for an intellectual movement concerned specifically with cultural resistance by re-connecting to African forms of expression.³⁷ Stimulated by the cinematic and revolutionary ideals emanating from the film clubs in Portugal, the first ciné club was set up in 1961 in Praia, on the island of Sao Tiago. The first meeting was held at the Cine-teatro Municipal da Praia, where members planned a cultural programme of Cape Verdean poetry, film, music and literary events. However, the ciné club never even got to show a film before it drew the attention of PIDE, who suspected anti-colonial agitation. The only activities they were able to carry out were a number of radio broadcasts made by the president of the club in which he discussed social and cultural issues raised by films being shown commercially on the island.³⁸ In April 1961 PIDE officers raided the ciné club and arrested the organisers. Anastacio Filinto Correia e Silva and Alcides Barros were imprisoned and others were deported.³⁹ It was not until after Independence that there was any revival of the ciné club movement on the Cape Verde archipelago.

By the end of the 1950s many of the first generation of anti-colonialist activists had been imprisoned, exiled, or had gone underground.⁴⁰ The ferocity with which the fascist regime suppressed peaceful protests in Portugal and across the colonies increased and atrocities mounted: in Guinea-Bissau, Portuguese police killed 50 sailors and injured more than 100 others at the Pidjiguiti port of Bissau in 1959. Five hundred peaceful protestors were killed in Mueda, Mozambique in 1960. In 1961, the Portuguese military killed around 10,000 in air attacks in Baixa do Cassange in Angola, following protests by workers at the firm

of production at the INC, but he made his name as an 'amateur' filmmaker in Beira. The Beira film club provided a space for screening and discussion of his amateur films made during the 1960s, many of which were critical of the regime. *Annuncio* (1961) adopts a neo-realist style to tell the story of a *mulatto* boy responding to a job advertisement and experiencing discrimination. Another of Cardoso's amateur films called *O Pesadelo* (1969), which means 'the nightmare', was banned by the colonial regime because of its critique of the militarism of the fascist State, even though it adopted a more symbolic approach. It showed animated marching boots against which a group of children use catapults to launch stones.

³⁵ Maria Delurdes Tocato was a member of the Lorenzo Marques film club and after Independence worked for the Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC). The official 'Statutes' of the Lorenzo Marques Film Club, which lay out its objectives, rules and democratic procedures, specifically reject alignment to 'political, racial or religious ends'. See Article 3: 'O Cine-Clube é completamente alheio a fins politicos, raciais ou religiosos.' In *Estatutos: Ciné-Clube de Lourenço Marques*, Portaria No. 12:155, 12 October 1957, p.5

³⁶ Maria Delurdes Tocato, *ibid*

³⁷ The Cape Verdian intellectuals were influenced by the activities of Cabral, Neto, Andrade and others at the Casa dos Estudantes do Imperio, and by intellectual currents of *Négritude* and Pan-Africanism through the writings of Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire and W.E.B DuBois.

³⁸ Claire Andrade-Watkins, 'Portuguese African Cinema: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives 1969–1993', in Imruh Bakari and Mbe Cham, *African Experiences of Cinema*, 1996 (London: BFI), pp.132–147

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ Those imprisoned included Angolan writer José Luandino Vieira, various members of the Angolan music band N'gola Ritmos, and Mozambicans such as the poet José Craveirinha and the painter Malangatanga.

Cotonang. Each was a turning point in the recognition that armed struggle was the only way to end Portuguese rule. By this time, therefore, the anti-colonial movements were turning to other means, violent if necessary, in which cinema would take on new roles. Centres of resistance had moved back to the Continent of Africa and the educated elite were connecting with the peasant masses, not through poetry and art, but in the planning of a Revolution. The armed struggle in Angola began on 4 February 1961, PAIGC started its military campaign on 23 January 1963, and FRELIMO called for armed insurrection to begin in Mozambique on 25 September 1964. Cinema would no longer be the pretext or cover for clandestine activism. With the armed struggle it would become an agent of Revolution.

The liberation movements had no filmmaking resources of their own, but the MPLA, FRELIMO and PAIGC recognised that cinema could be a vital resource in making the world aware of the Portuguese colonial situation and of the battle being waged against it by the peoples of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Although in the Foucaultian understanding of governmentality, statistics and censors are part of the technologies of control through which the modern State consolidates its power, in the case of Salazar's regime, lack of information and secrecy masked the poverty and underdevelopment in Portugal and in the colonies, thus serving to maintain the myth of its 'civilizing' mission.⁴¹ The liberation movements thus took the initiative in the war of information. Portuguese propaganda only began in earnest in response to the insurrections in Africa, seeking to counter the successes of the liberation movements and mask the scale and integrity of their political ambitions.⁴² Ambitions of cinema that emerged during the liberation struggles form the two broad threads that reappear in the chapters that follow: The first involves an internationalist cinema activism and a set of liberationist, anti-imperialist aesthetics that travelled through radical filmmakers seeking out revolutionary situations. Their productions sometimes articulate a trans-national spirit of Revolution that connects disparate times and places through a radical drive expressed in avant-garde forms that emerge in each new revolutionary situation. The second is a dream of what a liberated revolutionary national cinema might be that various post-Independence revolutionary governments tried to realise, drawing on trans-national networks of solidarity across the African Continent and the Tricontinental, and with other Socialist countries.

According to Cabral, the Revolution was what made Guinea-Bissau 'the vanguard of the world'. It was the means by which the people of Guinea-Bissau defined themselves and showed, through the innovations of their revolution, that 'We too are in the World'.⁴³ However, as Davidson notes, 'the outside world, including other Africans, was slow to believe in the PAIGC's successes.'⁴⁴ From the first years of the armed struggle, foreign filmmakers sympathetic to PAIGC were invited to make documentaries that would show the reality of colonial war in Guinea-Bissau and the new type of society being constructed in the

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 1977 (New York: Vintage)

⁴² The Centro de Informação e Turismo was the State organ responsible for propaganda about the colonies. It commissioned newsreels and documentaries that reflected the fascist regime's colonialism ideology. See the speech by Jorge Rebelo at the opening of the Conferência Africana de Cooperação Cinegráfica, held in Maputo between 21 and 24 February 1977, reprinted in Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Republica Popular de Moçambique, *Retrospectiva do cinema Moçambicana*, June 1982 (Maputo: INC)

⁴³ Amílcar Cabral, *op.cit.*, p.161

⁴⁴ Basil Davidson, *op.cit.*, p.104

liberated zones. The liberated zones had a political and cultural significance beyond their strategic importance. It was here that PAIGC mobilised villagers to create a new social reality that was to be a precursor to the Independent nation-state. Basildon paraphrases the explanation given to him by Armando Ramos, the PAIGC commander in charge of economic coordination in the liberated zones:

Their existence after the early phases of insurrection is crucial to the further building of party and army, and so of the revolution itself. This building of liberated zones has to be begun, even in a small and partial way, before the movement is strong enough to ensure major control of large areas. But the movement cannot be successfully developed into further and finally victorious phases without the continued extension of liberated zones in the political, social, and cultural senses as well as the military one. Liberated zones are a proof of a nationalist fighting movement's efficacy, a demonstration of what is to come after victory, but also a vital means of achieving that victory. In the case of the PAIGC, liberated zones can be seen to have yielded their full meaning after 1963 in the emergence of a modern if still limited socio-economic structure of an entirely new kind.⁴⁵

Films made during the 1960s include many made by European teams, which were important in shifting public opinion at a time when NATO was backing Portugal in its colonial wars.⁴⁶ The British film *A Small Group of Terrorists Attacked* (1968) made by John Sheppard, Michael Dodds and Christian Wrangler for the World in Action series on Granada television, demonstrates many of the key functions these films performed internationally in terms of disseminating information about the struggle and building credibility for PAIGC. The title quotes the opening words from a Portuguese press report on the PAIGC assault on the fortified camp at Buba, one that typically sought to underplay their success, to undermine their political integrity and deny the grassroots support on which the movement was built. The film gives evidence of this crucial battle but Basildon reports that even with this footage the veracity of the film's account was questioned by some right-wing elements in the British media as (unsurprisingly!) no Portuguese soldiers were caught on film lingering in the fort's ruined remains.⁴⁷ *A Small Group of Terrorists Attacked* opens with footage of guerrillas moving through the forest, and sets the armed struggle in the context of an emerging tradition of African Revolution with a quotation from Julius Nyerere (Plate 5). As the crew accompanies guerrillas on patrol, they document basic health care being administered at clinics in the forest, and schools where peasants learn to read and write. The voiceover comments that this is a peculiar kind of army, in which officers and foot soldiers greet one another as equals with handshakes and decide on military tactics through discussion (Plate 6).

⁴⁵ David Basildon, *op.cit.*, pp.117–118

⁴⁶ European films include: Mario Marret's *Lala Quema* (1964), Mario Marret and I Romero's *Nossa Terra* (1966), both French productions; the Italian film by P. Nelli and E. Bentivoglio, *Labanta Negro* (1966). Other short documentaries include ones from East Germany in 1964; Netherlands Television, 1966; a film by M.M. Honorin and Dumez called *Panorama* shown on French television in 1966; and one by the Italian V. Orsini in 1967.⁴⁶ Basildon records that in 1968 a Soviet team were also shooting a film in Guinea-Bissau.⁴⁶ According to Diana Andringa, a number of films were also made by Swedish teams, complimenting the considerable humanitarian support the Nordic countries gave to the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. Interview with Diana Andringa, April 2005, Lisbon. See Appendix

⁴⁷ Basil Davidson, *op.cit.*, p.104

While relations with the biggest Communist powers, the USSR and China, shifted during the conflict and were sometimes ambiguous, connections between PAIGC and the Cuban government were strong and reciprocal, and cinema was one of the areas in which this Tricontinental solidarity manifested itself.⁴⁸ The Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) was the body set up immediately after the Cuban Revolution of 1959 to allocate state funding for filmmaking. ICAIC frequently collaborated with Cuban armed forces to make frontline documentaries on liberation struggles in Africa, and this was how Cuba initially gave support to the PAIGC struggle, particularly with José Massip's *Madina Boe* (1968). Michael Chanan claims that 'Massip brings to the screen a close identification with African culture which is one of the constant features of his work'. He also points out that the film makes innovative use of text rather than voiceover commentary to create a sense of intense actuality, cross-cutting between different sites – the hospital, the camp where preparations are being made for an attack, and the battle scene (actually recreated in the studio because it was not possible to film it in reality).⁴⁹ Chanan describes how Massip 'selects individuals from the group in the guerrilla band he is filming for individual portraits: Braima, the Hunter, who performs ancestral rites before going out hunting; Idrissa, who is a Builder of Canoes; Kalunda d'Acosta, a Football Player; and Fode, the Poet ... a doctor from Portugal is one of the personnel, a white man whose antifascist commitment leads him to give his services to the liberation struggle.'⁵⁰

By the mid-1960s in Mozambique FRELIMO's Department of Information had begun experimenting with Super-8 with a view to making propaganda films with some rudimentary filmmaking equipment that had been provided by the USSR.⁵¹ However, they lacked the resources, technical skills and facilities to turn these hours of footage into films, and for this they drew on the support of foreign film crews and solidarity delegations that arrived from the late 1960s. FRELIMO's objective was to produce an archive of daily life in the liberated zones that would show the new kind of society they were constructing.⁵² One of the earlier films, *Venceremos* (1968), made by Yugoslav director Dragustin Popovitch, showed scenes of everyday activities in the liberated zones, focusing on the work carried out by women living in the FRELIMO bases, children doing exercises in school, and the medical centres set up in the bush where previously there had been no doctors.⁵³ The films about the armed struggle were made to expand international support for FRELIMO, and were intended to emphasize those activities of the *Forças Populares* ('People's Army') and the communities in the liberated zones that were oriented towards agricultural production and social change rather than heroic narratives of combat. In fact, the only film about the Mozambican armed

⁴⁸ While some leading figures in PAIGC went for military training in Nanking during the early years of the struggle, the USSR was the largest military backer, which meant that after 1961 the Chinese government viewed PAIGC with suspicion. David Basildon, *op.cit.*, p.88. Cabral consolidated PAIGC's bond with Cuba in 1966, when he gave the keynote address at the meeting of the Tricontinental in Havana with one of his seminal theoretical texts 'The Weapon of Theory'. During this trip he also had a number of meetings with Fidel Castro and saw in the lauch of the Organização de Solidariedade dos Povos da Ásia, África e América Latina (OSPAAAL). See *Amílcar Cabral: Sou um Simples Africano*, 2000 (Lisbon: Arquivo Mário Soares), p.85

⁴⁹ Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, 2004 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p.236

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ Interview with José Soares Acolette, Maputo, 22 August 2005. See Appendix

⁵² Interview with Oscar Monteiro, Maputo, 13 August 2005. See Appendix

⁵³ As described by Oscar Monteiro, who in 1968 travelled to Yugoslavia with Eduardo Mondlane to view the film while it was being edited and, in the absence of Samora Machel, did the voiceover of his speeches. Interview with Oscar Monteiro, Maputo, 13 August 2005. See Appendix

struggle that has actual battle scenes is American Robert Van Lierop's *A Luta Continua* (1971), because the film crew were accidentally caught in the middle of a surprise attack.

The reality of combat thus meant that there were limits to the kinds of films that could be made. British filmmaker Margaret Dickinson, who intended to spend extended periods with communities so as to film how the struggle was transforming their lives, found that such an approach, a kind of in-depth ethnography of radical change, was impossible. Dickinson had been recruited with her friend Polly Gaster by Eduardo Mondlane in Cairo, and both were based at FRELIMO's centre of operations in Tanzania for a time during the armed struggle. FRELIMO had some footage that they hoped to make into a film, but Dickinson found the material and facilities to be completely inadequate. Instead while in Tanzania she worked with Sergio Vieira to ghost-write Mondlane's book *The Struggle for Mozambique*, which was first published in English. The British women then returned to London, where they set up the ginger group Magic, an organisation set up to garner support for the liberation struggle and affiliated to the Anti-Apartheid Movement.⁵⁴ FRELIMO had no resources of its own to fund the film, so Dickinson sought out investors from those sympathetic to the cause, securing a guarantee that the film would be screened at The Academy on Oxford Street in London, a commercial cinema whose owner Charles Cooper was a member of the British Communist Party.

Dickinson's crew arrived in Niassa with the *Forças Populares* to make *Behind the Lines* (1971) just as the Portuguese launched an intense campaign to recapture the region, meaning that filmmaking had to be done at daybreak, the team in a continual state of exhaustion because of being constantly on the move to avoid attacks. *Behind the Lines* opens with Makondé sculptures that illustrate the exploitative relation between coloniser and colonised. The wooden sculptures made by the Makondé in the North of Mozambique characteristically feature complex representations combining multiple different human, animal and spirit figures carved out of a single piece of wood, and under Portuguese rule they sometimes became the vehicle for expressing anti-colonial and anti-clerical messages.⁵⁵ A voiceover (with that BBC accent so peculiar to the time that signifies professional objectivity) gives a historical introduction to the armed insurrection that situates it geopolitically as part of a struggle against capitalist Apartheid.⁵⁶ *Behind the Lines* then follows with footage from FRELIMO camps and interviews with militants about their roles as soldiers, teachers and interpreters, through which they describe their personal trajectories and subjective investments in the struggle.

Dieci giorni con I guerriglieri nel Mozambico Livro (*Ten Days with the Guerillas in Free Mozambique*, 1972) was also filmed in the liberated zones, this time by an Italian team led by director Franco Cigarini from Reggio

⁵⁴ Magic was kept small and those involved consciously decided not to turn it into an organisation that would seek mass membership so as to avoid the risk of it being hijacked by more reactionary forces within the nationalist movement, a struggle that was played out within FRELIMO itself after Mondlane's assassination, in which the Marxist-Leninist camp achieved ascendancy and Machel was declared leader. Dickinson and Gaster returned to Mozambique and played pivotal roles in establishing the INC after Independence (see chapters 4 and 5). Interview with Margaret Dickinson, London, 13 October 2005. See Appendix

⁵⁵ See Eduardo Mondlane, *op.cit.*

⁵⁶ This regional contextualisation needs to be understood in relation to the way in which the film circulated in Europe, and how FRELIMO's struggle signified for radical sympathisers abroad.

Emilia, an Italian municipality with a long tradition of socialism. Although similarly emphasising the construction of a new society rather than the military campaigns of the struggle, it is far more bombastic and fast-paced, focusing on the politics of FRELIMO by emphasising the exemplary conduct of its militants. *Dieci Giorni* exposes colonial brutality through archive images, and has many sweeping shots of children, women and peasants marching with wooden implements and guns, captured in heroic poses from low camera angles (Plate 7). The scenes of schools, the FRELIMO University at Bagamoyo in Tanzania, agricultural production and medical centres are populated with militants who would become key figures in the post-Independence revolutionary government.⁵⁷ Samora Machel delivers a speech directly facing the camera in close-up, the film using his charismatic, combative mode of delivery to maximum effect (Plate 8). It thus contributes to the construction of the figure of Machel that was to dominate the cinematic imaginary of postcolonial Mozambique, by means of which the sovereignty of the State was consolidated and reaffirmed through the repetition of his speeches and gestures. During the armed struggle such films circulated primarily through radical support groups abroad. But FRELIMO also recognised their potential effectiveness in the task of nation-building after Independence, a factor of crucial significance for the direction film production would take in Mozambique after 1975 (see Chapter 4).

Nationalist Angolan cinema was also born in the struggle for Independence. Short documentaries made by the MPLA's Department of Information about the war of liberation marked out a direction for postcolonial film production characterised by the attempt to use cinema for the purposes of political intervention and mobilisation. Two Cuban films about anti-colonial war in Angola were made just after Independence through cooperation between the MPLA and the film department of the Cuban Armed Forces. These were José Massip's *Angola, Victoria de la esperanza* (1976) and Miguel Fleitas' *La Guerra en Angola* (1976). However, the Angolan struggle was the source for a number of films that were either more experimental in form or pitched at a grander scale than the numerous documentaries. In 1970 the Brazilian Glauber Rocha was in Angola and made *Der Leone Have Sept Cabeças*, a flamboyant agit-prop film, the title of which mingles the five languages of the main European imperialist powers who carved up Africa at the Conference of Berlin. A multi-lingual, multi-national cast depict the rape of a Continent by symbolic figures such as 'puppet dictators, a singing ex-Nazi, a mysterious blonde, a sadistic missionary and a Portuguese mercenary'.⁵⁸ Underlining the extent to which the various forms of colonial exploitation carried out by different European countries was grounded in the same racism and greed, Rocha has a French actor play the German colonist, an Italian accented speaker as the American, and so on.⁵⁹

MPLA militants outside the country also participated in two films inspired by novels by José Luandino Vieira, a novelist of Portuguese origin raised in Luanda, the city from which he took his name in a gesture of commitment to the impoverished multiracial community that brought together the Africans, Europeans and *mestiços* who collaborated in the liberation movement. Vieira was arrested in 1959 by PIDE for political activities while working on a construction site. He spent four months in prison, only to be arrested again

⁵⁷ For instance, Armando Guebuza (who was elected President of Mozambique in 2004) is shown teaching children to read and write Portuguese.

⁵⁸ The Museum of Modern Art, New York, film programme for *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994*, 2001

⁵⁹ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *op.cit.*, p.191

and sentenced to another fourteen years in 1961.⁶⁰ Both films departed from the documentary format that dominated filmmaking about the armed struggles and were directed by the Guadalupean filmmaker Sarah Maldoror. Maldoror had been part of the circle of Negritude intellectuals associated with the journal *Presence Africain* in Paris, where she adopted her name from the French courtly love poem *Chanson de Maldoror*. She had filmed in Guinea-Bissau but was also linked to the Angolan struggle through her husband, Mário Pinto de Andrade, a leading militant in the MPLA who later became Minister of Culture in Guinea-Bissau.⁶¹ Her first film about the situation in Angola was *Monangambée* (1970), which was shot in Algeria and based on Luandino Vieira's short story 'O Fato Completo de Lucas Matesso'. Though not viewed critically as a success, it sought to 'show how the Portuguese had a basic incomprehension of African society'.⁶²

Maldoror's *Sambizanga* (1972) was made in Congo-Brazzaville on a far more ambitious scale, adapting the novel *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* (1961) into a feature film about militant commitment and sacrifice to the nationalist cause. Luandino Vieira finished *A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier* during a brief period in Portugal between his arrests, and although the Portuguese authorities banned the novel, copies circulated clandestinely during the 1960s, while Russian and French translations were published during the war to mobilise European support.⁶³ It was written in a unique literary language through which Vieira sought to express the particular dialect of Creole spoken in the *musseques* that had developed over centuries out of a combination of Portuguese and Kimbundu. In the novel this language embodies the collective vision of the liberation movement, and many of the characters and elements of the narrative are based on historical fact. Domingo's arrest reflects Vieira's own experience; the tailor Mussunda, one of the organisers of the resistance, was a real person exalted in a poem by Agostinho Neto; and another character, Liceu, was the nickname of Carlos Aniceto Vieira Dias, leader of N'gola Ritmos, whose songs sung in the Kimbundu language drew on traditional Angolan music. *Sambizanga* takes its title from the name of a poor neighbourhood of Luanda where the armed struggle began when the MPLA's launched an attack on three PIDE prisons in 1961.

The film tells the story of Domingos Xavier, a worker arrested by PIDE for his underground political activity, imprisoned, tortured and eventually killed. However the narrative focuses on two searches: that of the underground movement, who want to ascertain the prisoner's identity and contact him to strengthen his resolve, and that of Domingos Xavier's wife Maria (Plate 9). Maria's physical journey to the city to find her husband mirrors the awakening of her own political consciousness. While the film is a close adaptation of the novel, certain elements reflect the fact that the film was made when the resistance movement had

⁶⁰ Josef Gugler, 'African Writing Projected onto the Screen: *Sambizanga*, *Xala* and *Kongi's Harvest*', in *African Studies Review*, Volume 42, Number 1, April 1999, p.81

⁶¹ Mbye Cham, 'Film and History in Africa: A Critical Survey of Current Trends and Tendencies', in Françoise Pfaff (ed.), *Focus on African Films*, 2004 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), p.51

⁶² José de Matos-Cruz and José Mena Abrantes, *op.cit.*, p.21

⁶³ Gugler points out that production of the film was sponsored not only by the Congolese government but by the Coopération Française, an organ of the French government, which was not of Portugal's NATO allies! It was only after the Carnation Revolution of 1974 that the official Portuguese version was published, and this was followed by translations into English, German, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish. Josef Gugler, *op.cit.*, pp.83 and 84

become a force to be reckoned with: while in the book Domingos is a thin long-suffering victim of colonial repression, in the film he is portrayed by a tall muscular actor, and the scenes of his withstanding torture by PIDE officers are graphically depicted (Plate 10). Similarly Maria, who wavers in her resolve to find her husband several times in the novel, becomes a more determined character, who, in a moving scene when she learns of Domingos' arrest, draws on the collective strength offered by the women in her village. The film also communicates its collective vision of struggle through song. In the first sequence we hear 'Monangambéee', an Angolan rebel song, and later at different points in Maria's search a female voice sings a song of mourning.⁶⁴ According to Luandino Vieira, the film is about a people committed to struggle 'still linked to the past but preparing for the future.'⁶⁵ Sounds and images of a people united through the struggle constituting a new kind of liberationist aesthetic that would circulate through different revolutionary situations in the following years. Made towards the end of the armed struggle, the film constitutes an act of remembrance and reflection on the nature of the revolutionary movement it describes from those acting within it.

The political leaders and intellectual elites of the liberation movements in Angola and Guinea-Bissau were intimately connected. Maldoror's husband Mário Pinto de Andrade was a key figure in the MPLA during the armed struggle and later became Minister of Culture in Guinea-Bissau. Even before the declaration of Guinea-Bissau as an Independent nation-state in 1974, the nurturing of indigenous filmmakers (who previously had no possibility to learn film production) was understood as being the first step in developing a national cinema after Independence. Cuban solidarity with PAIGC, fed by its spirit of revolutionary internationalism, provided the opportunity to look beyond the immediate military and propaganda demands of the war. ICAIC offered the possibility of training African directors at its facilities, and before his death Cabral picked out the school students Flora (Florentino) Gomes and Sana Na N'Hada to learn filmmaking in Cuba. The two boys first experienced the cinema screen on board the cargo ship that took them across the Atlantic to Cuba. They attended high school in Cuba, then studied at ICAIC.

When they returned to Guinea-Bissau, Cabral had already been assassinated, but by then the revolutionary possibilities of filmmaking were firmly on the horizon.⁶⁶ In 1973, when the eventual defeat of the Portuguese was imminent, Gomes participated in the Third World Film-Makers Meeting in Algiers. This brought together Africans from north and south of the Sahara to 'discuss common problems and goals and to lay the groundwork for an organisation of Third World film-makers'.⁶⁷ Committees of mixed national and continental composition brought filmmakers together to discuss common problems and to study different aspects of what a liberated cinema might look like.⁶⁸ Gomes joined a committee that looked at the role of cinema in the fight against imperialism, sitting alongside Ousmane Sembene, Med Hondo and the

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.83 and 85

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ Gomes and N'Hada got their first professional experiences of filmmaking on their return to Guinea-Bissau, working on films about the armed struggle made by foreign teams. Interview with Diana Andringa, Lisbon, April 2005. See Appendix

⁶⁷ 'Resolution of the Third World Film-Makers Meeting', Algiers, 1973. Reprinted in Teshome H. Gabriel, *op.cit.*, pp.103–107

⁶⁸ Maria Roof, 'African and Latin American Cinemas: Contexts and Contacts', in François Pfaff (ed.), *Focus on African Films*, 2004 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p.243

Cuban Santiago Alvarez. On the eve of Independence, the reality of a global network committed to a cinema engaged in the struggle for social justice and radical change was palpable.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the figure of Cabral was everywhere in post-Independence Bissau. When the Brazilian journalists Licínio Azevedo and Maria da Paz Rodrigues arrived in Bissau in 1976 they saw pictures of Cabral pinned to every wall, in shops, schools and murals, his words echoing through the streets in Creole and in Portuguese.⁶⁹ Like many Leftists living under the military dictatorship in Brazil, Azevedo and Paz Rodrigues had been drawn to Portugal by the Carnation Revolution of 1974, but soon it became apparent that its radical promise was to be short-lived (see Chapter 3). They came to Guinea to work as *cooperantes* on the PAIGC newspaper *Nô Pintcha*, and the book they wrote together about the revolutionary situation they encountered is a rare and beautiful account of the effort to build an Independent country. It depicts the city of Bissau with cinematic vistas and incorporates dialogues with the active and passive agents in the unfolding process of liberation.

The small fortified town of Bissau took shape as a city during the colonial war, when its population jumped from 15,000 in 1960 to 100,000 in 1974.⁷⁰ Unlike Luanda in Angola and Maputo and Beira in Mozambique, built as modern citadels of the Empire that exceeded in modernist grandeur anything found in Portugal, Bissau was a colonial backwater. Only when General António de Spínola launched his campaign for a 'Better Guinea' did it belatedly receive some investment, the Portuguese authorities encouraging people to abandon their rural communities so as to weaken PAIGC's support and create a buttress against direct military assault on the capital. Spínola had been appointed governor of Guinea-Bissau in 1968. He began a revision of Portuguese colonial strategy of 'pacification' in Guinea-Bissau, and in 1971 launched investments in infrastructure in the few mainly urban zones still under colonial control, with the promise that Portuguese rule would deliver a 'better Guinea'. Such belated conciliatory gestures were combined with other more desperate and sinister tactics. On 20th January 1973 Cabral was assassinated. The fatal shots were fired by a member of his own Party, but the plot was orchestrated by Portuguese agents in a last-ditch attempt to derail the liberation of Guinea-Bissau. It failed. On 24th September PAIGC proclaimed the Independence of the State of Guinea-Bissau in the liberated zones, and shortly afterwards on 30 November this was recognised by the United Nations, whose inspectors had been surveying the territory. Only in the following year, after the Carnation Revolution on 25th April 1974, did Portugal finally concede defeat and acknowledge the sovereignty of Guinea Bissau; the Independence of Cape Verde, which was too far from the mainland for PAIGC to launch an attack during the struggle, was proclaimed in 5 July 1975.

During the war the Portuguese army attacked villages indiscriminately if they suspected guerrilla activity, and by the end of the struggle in 1974, over 15 percent of the country's population had moved to the city to escape the conflict. Around the colonial centre, seven *bairros* grew, made up of tiny mud-brick houses

⁶⁹ The Creole language spoken in Guinea-Bissau, which developed out of a mixing of Portuguese with local languages, became widespread during the struggle, when it was taken up as a *lingua franca* that was an alternative to Portuguese. Licínio Azevedo and Maria da Paz Rodrigues, *Diário da Libertação a Guiné-Bissau da Nova África*, 1977 (San Paulo: Versus), p.82

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.19

heaped on top of each other. Peasants shorn from their rural roots became a huge marginalised class of the unemployed, casual labourers and prostitutes, inhabiting slums without electricity, clean water or sewage. While PAIGC was able to recruit in urban areas, it was here that the magnetic attraction of a visible but unattainable European lifestyle held most sway, its population alienated from the struggle for national liberation. Despite the suffering, therefore, Portuguese propaganda was most effective in Bissau, installing aspirations and ways of life that would remain alien to the vast majority. If PAIGC encountered obstacles in the rural interior, what might the African Revolution look like in the city?

Azevedo and Paz Rodrigues record the impact of Bissau when they first arrived with a poetic drift through the city streets that takes in its images, sounds and voices:

On the left is the beauty salon that previously only served whites; today it is allotted to blacks plaiting children's hair close to the head. We meet sailors in short trousers speaking Creole, street workers from the centre, pigs wandering around. A monkey hangs from its tail in the window of a white house. A goat is tied to a tree trunk by its leg. The modern shirts of adolescents, with the faces of Amílcar Cabral, Jimi Hendrix, Humphrey Bogart, a night in Casablanca. The bark of flea-bitten dogs, pathetic skeletons.⁷¹

The passage sketches the inhabitation of the public spaces of Bissau, its offices, shops and pavements, by the Guinean population, the city's youth experimenting with their own articulations of what a liberated African modernity might be.⁷² Yet the material and psychological structures of the city were still haunted by the violent separations of colonialism:

It takes root in the very foundations of houses, in the paving of the streets. In the figure of the woman, the beggar, the madman. In the people in the street. In the black man who goes unnoticed in the queue for the bakery, where petty-bourgeois whites, or even Africans with some social standing, are waited on first... In the rigid division of the cinema projection room built by the Portuguese. The cheapest entrance in the stalls: hard uncomfortable wooden benches. The most expensive are in the balcony, in the upholstered armchairs.⁷³

In the first years of Independence, institutes of cinema were set up in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, though on the islands this was concerned with organising the importation of films rather than film production. During these early years, just as during the armed struggle, the emphasis in Guinean film production was on documentaries, which were more affordable and were thought to advance the revolutionary agenda more directly by responding to immediate needs such as health education and so

⁷¹ Licínio Azevedo and Maria da Paz Rodrigues, *op. cit.*, p.18

⁷² Manthia Diawara's description of the sub-cultures of Bamako, Mali during the 1960s when the revolutionary government makes an interesting comparison. The styles and accoutrements of groups of youths constituted that generation's experiment with what liberation might mean outside the austere traditionalist vision of revolutionary nationalism proscribed by authority. Manthia Diawara, 'The 1960s in Bamako: Malick Sidibé and James Brown', in Greg Tate (ed.), *Everything but the Burden: What White People are Taking from Black Culture*, 2003 (New York: Broadway Books), pp.164–190

⁷³ *Ibid*, p.26

on.⁷⁴ Together Gomes and Sana Na N'Hada made *Regresso de Cabral* (*Return of Cabral*, 1976), *A Reconstrução* (1978) and *Anós na oça luta* (*We Dare to Fight*, 1978). Gomes also trained with Chris Marker and Anita Fernandez, which whom he made *Le Balcon* at the time when Mário Pinto de Andrade ran the Ministry of Culture in Guinea-Bissau.⁷⁵ Their first opportunity to work on a feature film that might begin to address the complexities of national liberation came years later, after the coup of 1980, when Gomes directed *Mortu Nega* (*Those Whom Death Refused*, 1988).⁷⁶ Unlike later films that could only be made as co-productions, *Mortu Nega* was produced by the Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC) of Guinea-Bissau, an achievement appropriate to the dignity and ethos of the film. It entailed the collaboration of over thirty State agencies and financial support from Portugal and the Nordic countries.

The cultural philosophy of *Mortu Nega* reflects Cabral's vision of liberation as an 'act of culture', an understanding in which Independence without the decolonisation of cultural expression, a commitment to social justice and a Revolution that endures at the heart of each individual is a false victory. Yet the film was made in a different political climate from the early years of the Revolution. After the 1980 coup, President Luís Cabral (Amílcar's brother) was deposed and went into exile in Cuba; Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau separated, and 'economic liberatisation' was pushed through by the autocratic President Nino Vieira under pressure from the World Bank and the IMF.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, *Mortu Nega* is a key articulation of the ambitions, sacrifices and dilemmas of the Revolution in Guinea-Bissau, crafted through an intricate exposition of the new relations and subjectivities born in the emergence of a people through the struggle.

The opening of *Mortu Nega* announces that the time and place is January 1973 on the border of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry. PAIGC forces, women and children work together to transport weapons on foot to guerrillas fighting on the frontline in the interior. The scene introduces Diminga, whose husband is fighting in the interior, but the shots focus not on individuals but on how the group works collectively to carry out its mission. Hands carefully wrap the weapons in leaves, each box is placed deftly on the head, and the soldiers, women and children form a column that sets out single-file through heavily mined forests, muddy rivers and dangerously open paths. At one point the screen becomes a sea of long grass, their bodies a single formation that makes a visual paraphrase of Mao – the guerrillas moving among the peasants like 'a fish in water' (Plate 13). The camp that is their destination has an open-air surgery and soldiers listen to a radio report about a successful attack. Diminga immediately sets off with a band of guerrillas to join her husband Sako, whom she has not seen for many months. She comments that 'Death is everywhere today', and when she returns to camp the radio announces that Cabral has been assassinated.

⁷⁴ N. Frank Ukadike, 'In Guinea-Bissau, Cinema Trickles Down: An Interview with Flora Gomes', *Research in African Literatures*, 26, Fall 1995, p.179

⁷⁵ Cristina Fina, 'Entrevista com Flora Gomes', in *Cinemas de África*, 1995 (exh.cat. Cinemateca Portuguesa and Culturgest, Lisbon), p.49

⁷⁶ Sana N'Hada was assistant director.

⁷⁷ The Guinean government embarked on privatisation reforms in 1984. Joshua Forrest remarks 'However, from the outset, instead of ... engaging in direct dialogue with the country's own traders, the government decided to work ever more closely with international advisers and lenders.' The IMF backed privatisation reforms from 1984, and by 1987, on the advice of the IMF and the World Bank, the State initiated structural adjustment programmes. Joshua Forrest, 'Guinea-Bissau', in Patrick Chabal et al, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, 2002 (London: Hurst), pp.240–241

Seamlessly, the film shows the gradual realisation that the war is coming to an end – a war, an old woman says, that started before her mother and her grandmother were born. As Diminga makes the long walk home the transition becomes a moment for reflection. Framed by rippling water as she crosses a river by boat to go home after nine years of separation from her village and her husband, she wonders what she will find on her return. While the spirit of the struggle continues in everyday acts of kindness, generosity and collective work, corruption seeps in as people's basic needs are not met. The Party distributes rice, only to find villagers selling it at higher prices at the market. Drought threatens and vultures gather as the well runs dry. At the village school, a young teacher from Bissau asks the meaning of 'Unity' and of 'Struggle'. For Sako, the struggle was what he gave up everything for so as to fight the Portuguese; for a young mother, it is what she must do everyday in order for her children to survive.

Sako returns to the village but is dogged by an old war wound that comes to symbolise the 'gangrene' of corruption and the corrosive influence of market forces on the Revolution.⁷⁸ Finally Diminga takes him to hospital in Bissau, where she wanders the streets, passing ruined statues abandoned by the Portuguese. She looks for help from his old comrades, but one of these, now a government bureaucrat, claims not to remember him. The film climaxes when Diminga has a premonitory dream in which drought ravages the land, houses burn and the country slides into civil war. The women of the village decide the time has come to take action – to call on all the different ethnic groups to carry out a 'Ceremony of the Dead'. As hundreds of dancers and drummers move in rotating circles, Diminga comes to the fore, 'I am Diminga from the generation of sorrows'. They are those who forewent the chance of have their own children by dedicating their lives to securing Independence for future generations. She calls for the spirit Djon Gado to send rain and unity, and, one by one, other women lead the incantation and fight off dancers that bear a funeral bier. However, calling to spiritual ancestors is not a negation of the Revolution. In building on the strength of indigenous culture her action constitutes a radical continuation of it.⁷⁹ *Mortu Nega* ends with the arrival of rain, and, as Sako and Diminga watch, hundreds of children run out to dance in the puddles (Plate 14). The older generation delivered them to Independence through so much sacrifice, but, the film suggests, the future is in their hands.

The waning of late *lusophone* African Revolutions in the 1980s formed part of global geopolitical shifts that were reflected in policies on cinema. The years immediately after the making of *Mortu Nega* marked the end of the financial, political and cultural influence across Africa of the Soviet bloc. After 1989 Soviet aid disappeared, making it necessary for Guinean filmmakers to work independently to procure funding for projects from European sources that were wary of supporting filmmaking through the model of State-to-

⁷⁸ Mustafa Dhada, 'A Deadly Cinematic Discourse on Love and War', in *Visual Anthropology Review*, 14, Autumn/Winter 1998/91, pp.109–112

⁷⁹ Mustafa Dhada points out that 'During the Revolution traditional dances, rituals, theatre, and other cultural media including the use of palvers were used extensively for mobilisation, for recrafting a new national identity.' Mustafa Dhada, *Warriors at Work: How Guinea Was Set Free*, 1994 (Niwot: University of Colorado), p.6

State cooperation, preferring to give grants to individual *auteurs*.⁸⁰ From 1986 the European Community began offering financial and technical assistance to cultural projects in countries from 'Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean' (APC), to enable the affirmation of cultural identities, encourage cultural exchange and improve the organisation and economic structures of African and other 'developing' cinemas.⁸¹ European television companies such as WDR in Germany, Channel 4 in Britain and Arte in France began financing North-South co-productions with African filmmakers, and filmmakers from *lusophone* African countries were also able to get some support from the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP), the Instituto Português de Cinema (IPC) and Portuguese television.

It was in these changed cultural, economic and political circumstances that Gomes made *Udju arzul di Yonta* (*The Blue Eyes of Yonta*, 1991). Like *Mortu Nega*, the film refuses to eulogise the past by separating off the act of remembering from the problems of the present. The questions the film poses – what it means to remember the struggle as time passes, and what kind of future might live up to its promise of freedom – are explored through the interactions of a community in the Tchada *bairro* of Bissau. It centres on the family and friends of Yonta, 'the most beautiful girl in Bissau' (Plate 15) and her younger brother Amílcar, whose name and actions signify a certain hope for the future. Both admire Vicente, who fought in the armed struggle with their father, but he is now a troubled man, 'caught in the past' and abandoned by his wife and children. Yet he is clearly also a man of principles, concerned with conducting his business in ways that support rather than exploit local fishermen and market vendors. He brings gifts for the children from Europe – a football for Amílcar, and a belt for Yonta with a huge clock as a buckle. Yonta is in love with Vicente, but receives an anonymous love letter, full of poetry and compliments to her 'blue eyes'. Confused but flattered, Yonta determines to find out who was the sender.

The question of how the future can live up to the promise of the Revolution is evoked from the first images of the film. *Udju arzul di Yonta* opens with a large gang of children running across the screen. As in *Mortu Nega*, these crucial questions facing Guinea-Bissau are expressed symbolically through the gestures and movements of a swarm of children. They race through the streets, propelling tyres with their hands, disrupting the traffic in a frenzy of excitement. Each tyre has a different year painted on it, and the dates punctuate the history of post-Independence Guinea-Bissau: 1973, the year the Guinean State was declared fully operational in the liberated zones; 1974, year of official independence; 1980, when, following the military coup and the country's split with Cape Verde, 'economic liberalisation' was declared; 1991, the present day, and 2000, the future. An angry truck driver whose path they block is unimpressed and scornful, but Vicente understands their game. It is a commemoration – a celebration to remember.

Yet the film makes clear that for many in Bissau reality has not lived up to the promises of Independence. Water floods the roads, the students crammed into night schools are plagued with power cuts, the

⁸⁰ Mozambican filmmaker Moira Forjaz recounts how she secured a promise of funding from the French government, which did not materialise because the Mozambican State would not commit to spending the money on that particular film. Interview with Moira Forjaz, Lisbon, October 2005. See Appendix

⁸¹ The ACP first offered financial support to FESPACO in 1989. Claire Andrade-Watkins, 'Le cinéma et la culture au Cap Vert et en Guinée-Bissau', in special edition: 'Cinéma africains, une oasis dans le désert?', *Cinéma Action*, no.106, 1st trimestre, 2003, p.150

unemployed flock to the docks everyday in the hope of finding work. The uncle of Zé, an impoverished student, tells his nephew: 'I used to carry loads for the Portuguese. When Independence came I thought everything would change, but nothing did. I still carry boxes, and they are just as heavy.' In place of the dreams of Independence, the supermarket where Yonta and her friend Mana work signifies an invading culture of Western commodities. Imported luxuries sold to ex-pats give a glimpse of a world outside that feeds the aspirations of the urban young. A friend of Zé's tells him of his plans to immigrate to Europe, and scoffs at the idea he'll end up sweeping pavements, boasting of the walkman his cousin sent him from Lisbon, though so far he's only received the earphones. Back in Tchada, the old woman Santa is evicted from her house by corrupt officials. She arranges her furniture in the middle of the street, leaving her belongings only to visit the fortune teller. When she returns, Amílcar and his friends have broken in and put her furniture back where it belonged. Santa sits in the darkness, unsure of what the future will bring.

Nando, Vicente's old comrade, returns to Bissau after years in the countryside. In the South, he tells Vicente, nothing has changed from the poverty people lived in under colonialism. Vicente responds that 'Independence is here in Bissau... Stay and you'll get your share of Independence'. There is 'progress', it would seem, but 'not for everyone'. Nando's face reveals his disgust. When Vicente finds his friend is gone, he is sent into a crisis, locking himself away and calling on his ancestors to 'Deliver me from the weight of my past'. Bissau is 'divorced' from its roots, he says: 'the river is now for container ships, and the mango trees that lined the streets and reminded us of the jungle are gone'. Meanwhile, preparations are being made for a huge wedding for Mana. When Yonta goes to Vicente to persuade him to come to the party, she finds him in the midst of a frenzied ritual. He turns on her, accusing her generation of having 'traded in our ideals for clothes and discos'. Yonta leaves, but makes the parting shot: 'We respect the past but we can't live in it... I choose to be free – isn't that what you fought for?'

Back at Mana and Maecas's ostentatious wedding, the guests dance and pluck food and drinks from a table that revolves around a swimming pool. The bride is dressing in a European-style white dress that matches an enormous tiered wedding cake. But it is here that the pretence of the love letter finally comes apart at the seams. Yonta recognises its words when a poet invited to the wedding recites a poem he wrote for his Swedish girlfriend. Zé confronts Yonta, admitting the letter is from him and is a meaningless copy. Yonta stands aghast, and her watch stops. Gomes has commented on this moment when time freezes that:

... We have to stop and start again because the model, the way we want to develop our country, is the dream of others. It is not the dream of us Africans who want to see our country as beautiful as France, the United States, Japan, like every other place. Ironically, never before has Africa been so dependent on the big powers, and I might even go so far as to say, not even before Independence.⁸²

Next morning revellers from the night before are slumped in plastic chairs by the pool, around which the table continues its desultory trundle, and as it lurches at a corner the fancy wedding cake tips into the

⁸² Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *Questioning African Cinema: Conversations with Filmmakers*, 2002 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p.106

water. With Yonta in their midst they laugh and start to dance, feet stamping to their own rhythm. In *Mortu Nega* and *Udju arzul di Yonta* time can no longer be imagined marching in the direction of 'progress', nor is modernity synonymous with liberation. Instead both films deal with the continuing conditions of change in which people struggle to survive and understand the meaning of their lives.

The Independence of Guinea-Bissau in 1974 was welcomed and celebrated across Africa and other parts of the World with unusual intensity, taking on a particular significance in radical imaginaries. In part this is because it was the only country that managed to defeat the Portuguese army and unilaterally declare itself an Independent State recognised by the United Nations. But it was also due to the fact that in Amílcar Cabral, PAIGC had found a charismatic leader who articulated and theorised the justice of the Revolution and its people's right to self-determination and dignity. Through his writings and interventions at the United Nations, Cabral 'placed Guinea-Bissau on the international map', and himself became an icon for liberationist struggles across the Continent.⁸³ The figure of Cabral thus haunts the films that remember and tell stories of Revolution. In *Udju arzul di Yonta* the figure of Cabral is still present, but receding. In Gomes' latest film *Nha fala (My Voice, 2002)*, a musical set in Cape Verde and Paris, Cabral appears merely as a mass-produced statue purchased for the town by a flashy businessman. Barely recognisable, it is either passed from hand to hand; and when no one agrees on where to erect the monument, it lies discarded on the street like the statues of Lenin in the former Soviet Union.

Speaking of Guinea-Bissau, the narrator in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* (1982) says:

Why should so small a country, and so poor, interest the world? They did what they could. They freed themselves. They chased out the Portuguese. They traumatised the Portuguese army to such an extent that it gave rise to a movement that overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship and led one, for a moment, to believe in a new revolution in Europe. Who remembers all that?

Sans Soleil questions of cinematic memory of Revolution from the perspective of a strand of European radicalism that was deeply invested in the anti-colonial struggle. The possibility of revolutionary change that briefly opened up in France in 1968 was preceded by a long period during which French militants came to identify with liberation struggles firstly in Algeria and later in Vietnam. When this finally culminated in the events of May '68, the French Left made what Kristin Ross describes as a 'conceptual leap or relay back to the Other at home, to pass from the figure of the foreign peasant militant to the indigenous worker to affirm... that "Vietnam is in our factories"'.⁸⁴ Marker was a key figure in the actions to radically overhaul the French film industry in 1968, but prior to that he had demonstrated his sympathies with anti-imperialist politics with the film *Les Statues meurent aussi* (1953). Made with Alain Renais, *Les Statues* is a documentary commissioned by *Presence Africain* that questioned France's mission

⁸³ Patrick Chabal, Amílcar Cabral, *Revolutionary Leadership and People's War*, 2002 (London: Hurst)

⁸⁴ Kristin Ross quotes Sartre's comment that 'The fundamental impact of the war on American or European militants was its extension of the field of the possible.' Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*, 2002 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), p.81

civilisatrice, arguing that colonialism murders African art by severing it from traditional ways of life.⁸⁵ *Les Statues* was banned by the French authorities under the Laval Decree, which was the legislation that also prevented African filmmakers from making films in their own countries, but a version was shown at the first edition of FESPACO in 1969 (see Chapter 6).⁸⁶

Sans Soleil is constructed out of a collection of highly personal ethnographic journeys placed in relation to old newsreel, Japanese television advertisements and extracts of films about the Revolution in Guinea-Bissau. These films about the armed struggle, mostly made for radical audiences abroad and now lost, damaged and/or rarely seen, testify to a radical desire that defied the boundary of the nation and to a moment in which Africa was the site of innovations that gave the West the opportunity to radically re-think itself. As Irit Rogoff comments, 'these struggles for liberation and independence pierced the fabric of European and American political culture and ruptured the twentieth century in the middle.'⁸⁷ These fragments have *marked* the protagonist, a fictional filmmaker called Krasner, whose letters read out by an unnamed woman form the voiceover. They are images that 'quicken the heart', but they are also in turn *marked* by his desire, an entanglement that makes a subjective mapping, given form through the rhythm and conjunction of disparate sounds and images, creating a textile in the weave of cinematic montage. Remnants from the liberation struggle of Guinea-Bissau are inter-cut with long sections shot in 1980s Japan, then the centre of a new culture of high-tech global capitalism. Sometimes images from the present make a kind of echo of the past, as when protestors at an airport in Japan suddenly seem to the filmmaker like 'a tattered hologram of the generation of the 1960s'. If the 'total recall' the filmmaker fantasizes about is 'memory anesthetised', the work of memory is an ethical act, the subjective stitching together of images over a 'wound' in history.

In *Sans Soleil* a cinematographic memory of Revolution is entangled with a slick and soporific flow of images colonised by commercialism. In *Sans Soleil* this might be understood as a kind of ritual, like the Japanese couple who pray for their missing cat so as to repair death's 'tear in time'. What is mourned is the dream of a global struggle for social justice, symbolised through the death of Cabral, betrayed by members of his own Party. Critical attention has tended to focus on Marker's play with the 'ethnographic gaze' in the much-discussed sequence in which the filmmaker exchanges looks with a woman in a Guinean market. But with Cabral functioning as the figure of the African Revolution, the film exhibits a certain disappointment with what became of the 'Third World' revolutions it is sympathetic to. Images of radical change, new collective subjectivities and international solidarities only 'find their place' in the cinematic time of *Sans Soleil* when brought together with those of betrayal. The Revolution is conjured through a screen of sounds and images that implies a particular point of view – a subjectivity that filters the fragments of a dream.

⁸⁵ According to Catherine Lupton, Alain Renais later sought to underplay the film's political stance, but the anti-colonial critique is made explicit in Marker's voiceover: 'We are the Martians of Africa. We arrive from our planet with our ways of seeing, our white magic, our machines. We will cure the black of his illnesses, that is certain; and he will catch ours, that is certain too. Whether he loses or gains from the change, his art will not survive.' Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future*, 2005 (London: Reaktion Books), p.36

⁸⁶ This is why one of the first films made by African filmmakers, *Afrique sur Seine* (1955) by Paulin Soumarou Vieyra and others, was shot in Paris. It is an early example of ethnography-in-reverse that captures the alienation felt by African immigrants living in the Metropole.

⁸⁷ Irit Rogoff, 'Hit and Run – Museums and Cultural Difference', in *Art Journal*, Winter 2002

At a certain point the narrator says: 'He wrote me that the images of Guinea-Bissau should be accompanied by music from the Cape Verde islands – a tribute to the unity dreamed of by Amílcar Cabral'. The first reference to the Revolution in Guinea-Bissau is a series of shots of the dock at Pidjiguiti, scene of the massacre in 1959, which was a turning point in the realisation that armed struggle was the only remaining way to challenge Portugal's recalcitrant regime. But the filmmaker finds it 'difficult to recognise struggle in the ... movements of the shore-men'. The aspirations of the Revolution seem at odds with the mundane slowness of the struggles for day-to-day survival in the present (Plate 11). The place where the images of Guinea-Bissau begin to 'find their place' comes later in the film, when a long shot tracks the banks of islands that make up the Bejago archipelago. Along these banks spirits perform a ritual on a journey from island to island, following 'the itinerary of the dead'. Present-day colour cuts to a black and white clip from *Guerilla in Bissau* (1966) about the armed struggle that shows Cabral crossing these same waters in a canoe (Plate 12).⁸⁸ He waves to the shore, which he will never see again. The film then cuts to the same gesture performed in the same place by Amílcar's brother, Luís Cabral, in a sequence supposedly taken by Krasner after Independence when Luís was President. The scene then moves to Cassaca, to a military ceremony in 1980. Luís hands out medals to old war-heroes whose eyes are full of tears. But, the narrator says:

...to understand it properly, one must move forward in time. In a year Luís Cabral the President will be in prison and the weeping man he has just decorated, Major Nino, will have taken power. The Party will have split, and Guineans and Cape Verdeans separated one from the other will be fighting over Cabral's legacy. We will learn that behind the ceremony of promotions, which in the eyes of visitors perpetuated the brotherhood of the struggle, there lay a pit of post-victory bitterness, and that Nino's tears do not express an ex-warrior's emotions, but the wounded pride of a hero who felt he had not been raised high enough above the others. And beneath each of these faces, a memory. And in place of what you have been told had been forged into a collective memory, a thousand memories of men who parade their personal lacerations in the great wound of history.

What kind of suturing stitch does *Sans Soleil* make over this wound? In *Sans Soleil* 'time is out of joint' in the aftermath of Revolution; dreams of radical change are replaced by the bitterness of betrayal. Doubt is cast over the motivations that underlay the socialist friendships and solidarities of Western radicals with the African liberation movements, relationships which those organisations were dependent upon for the resources to fight their armed struggles. Images of European delegations embracing guerrillas are positioned alongside shots of PAIGC comrades caught in the same gestures. We are told the PAIGC militants later betrayed each other and the ideals of the Revolution, but the discomfort with these rare instances of radical solidarity between Africa and Europe is never entirely justified, only characterised elsewhere in the film as a moment in which the privileged youth of the West sympathised with the poor of the world. The disappointment here is not only with the demise of the Revolution of Guinea-Bissau but with the perceived death of a global movement to create societies based on dignity and social justice, of

⁸⁸ *Guerilla in Bissau* was made by Mario Marret and Eugenio Bentivoglio

which the African Revolution was at certain moments the vanguard. In the pool of disillusionment, a collective dream fractures into a thousand individual wounds and resentments. No wonder, then, that the movements of the shore men on the dock of Pidjiguiti no longer resonate with the struggle. This is a kind of disappointment with the African Revolution perhaps not available to those who still live directly in its shadow; it has as much to do with the unravelling of radical hopes in Europe as it does with Guinea-Bissau. But to understand this, it is necessary to 'tell the story from the beginning' again. Part of that story is that in liberating so many of its peoples from the grip of Portuguese colonialism the African Revolution did something else. In the late twentieth century it opened up something that to many at the time had seemed impossible: the possibility of Socialist Revolution in the heart of Western Europe.

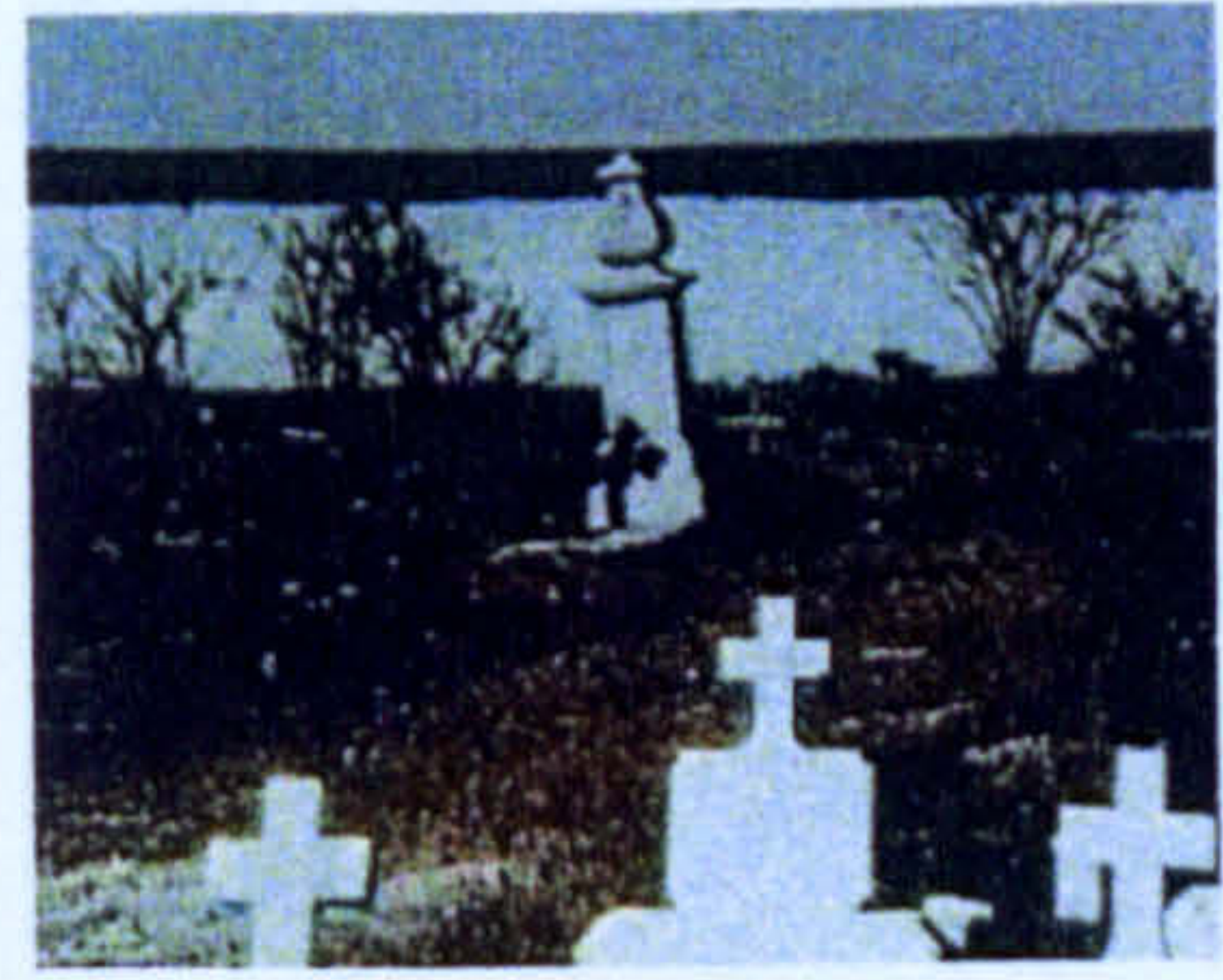
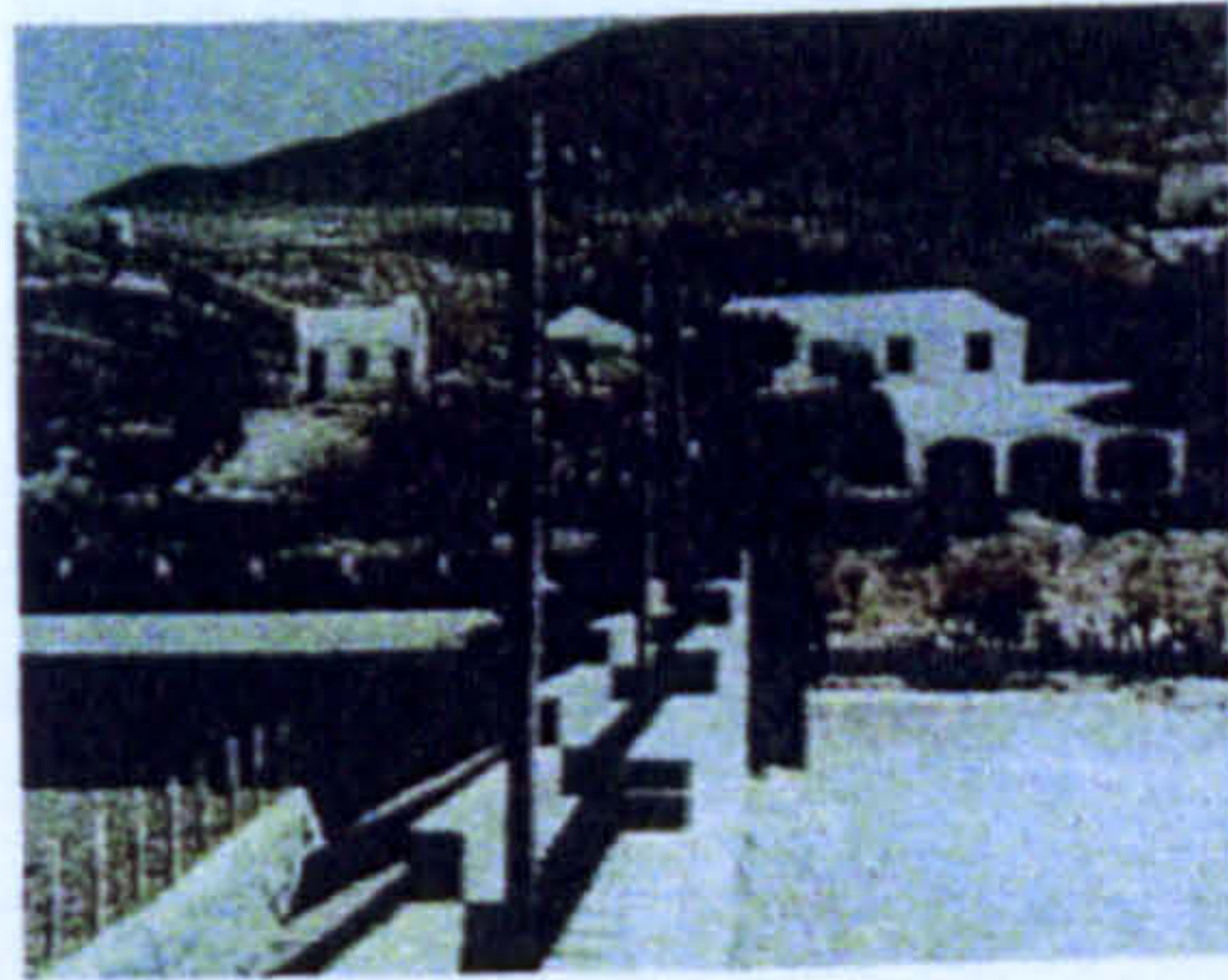
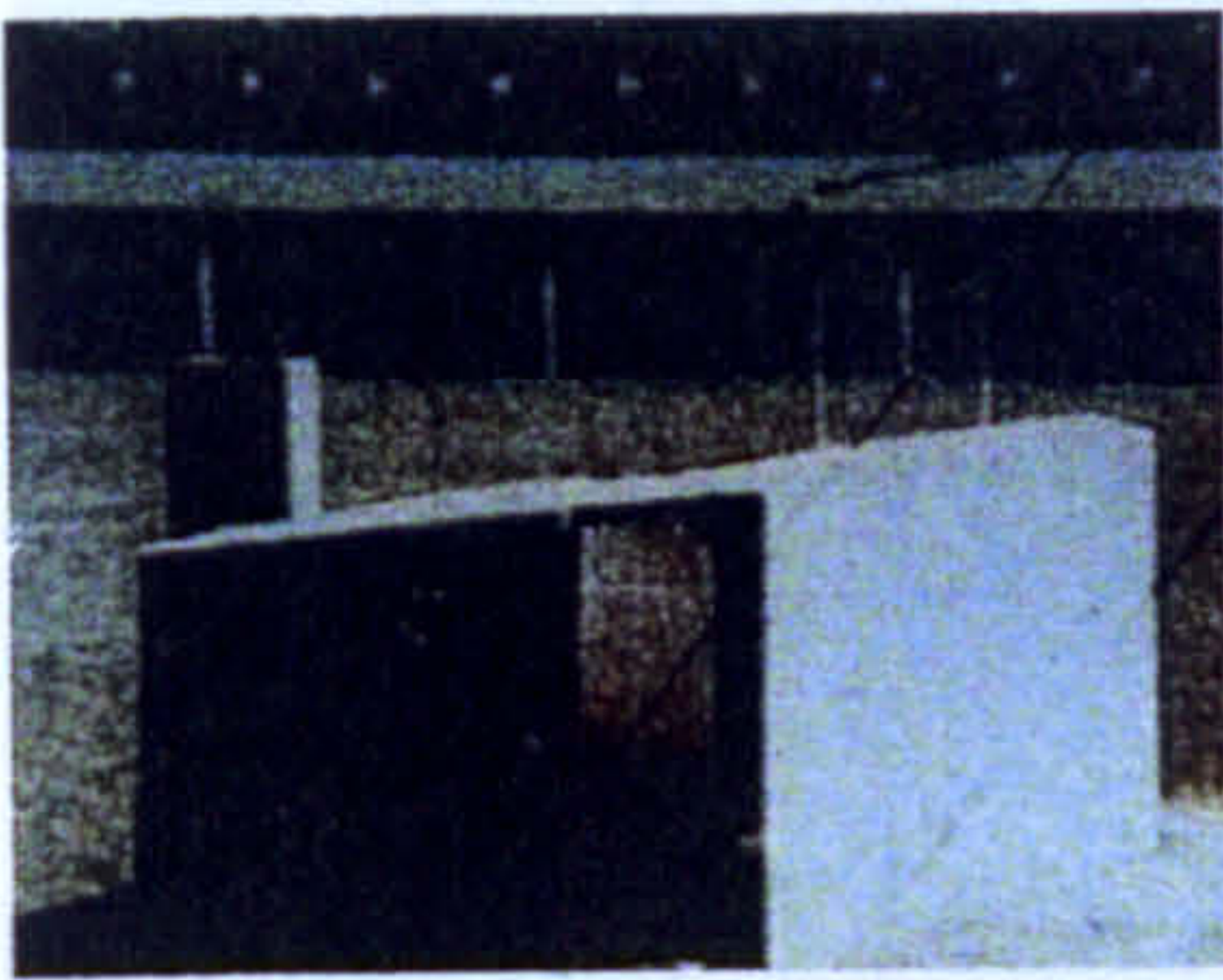
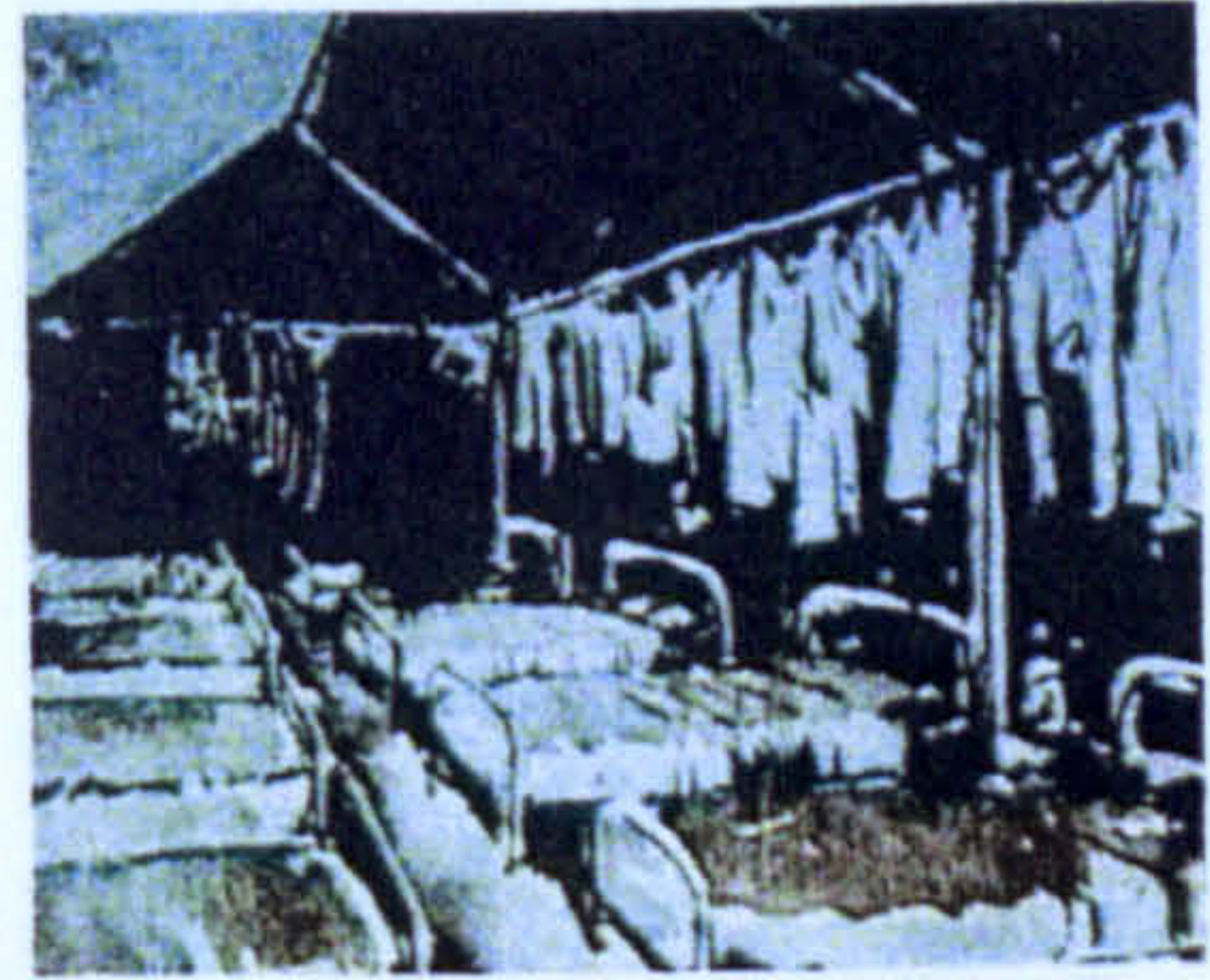
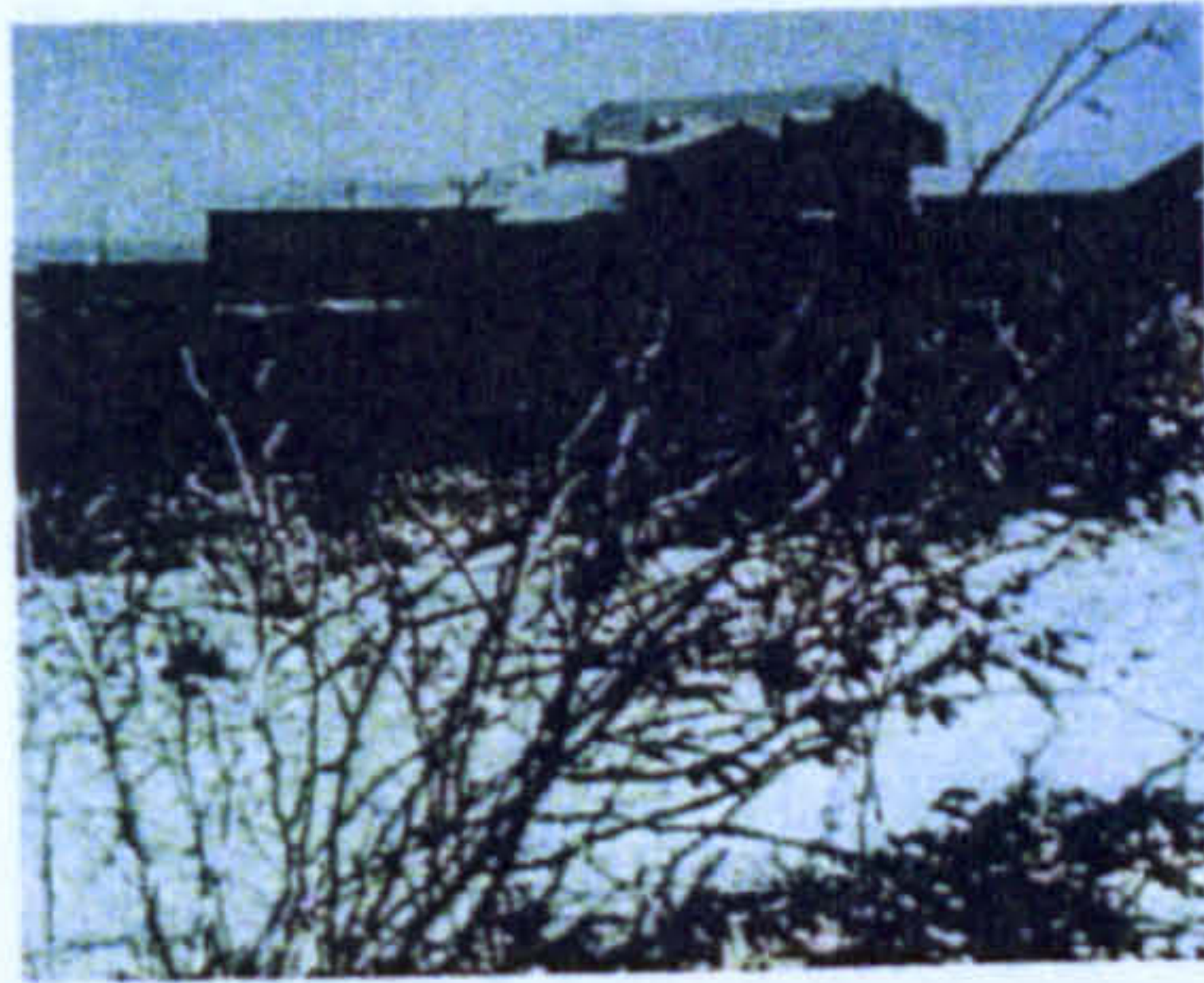
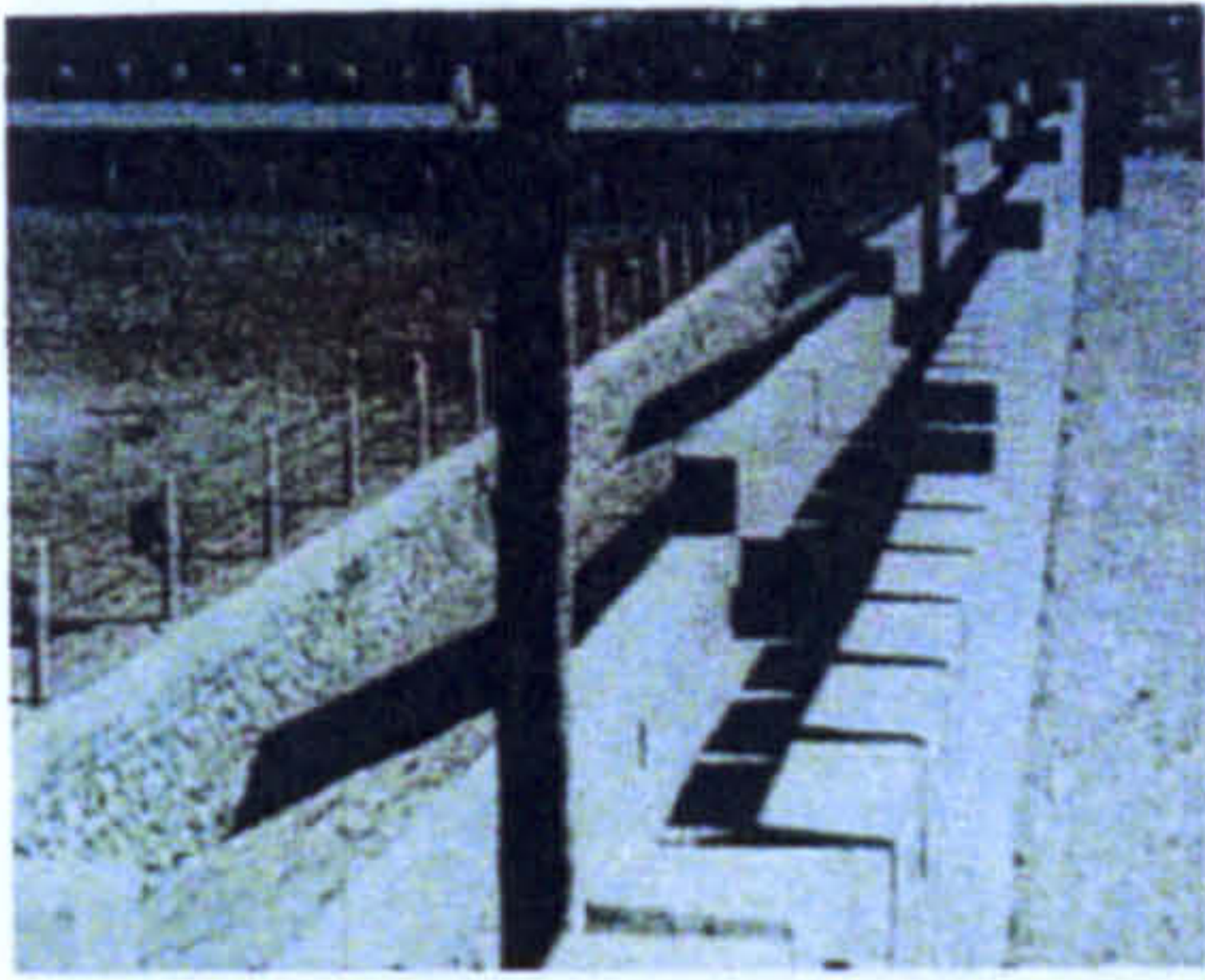
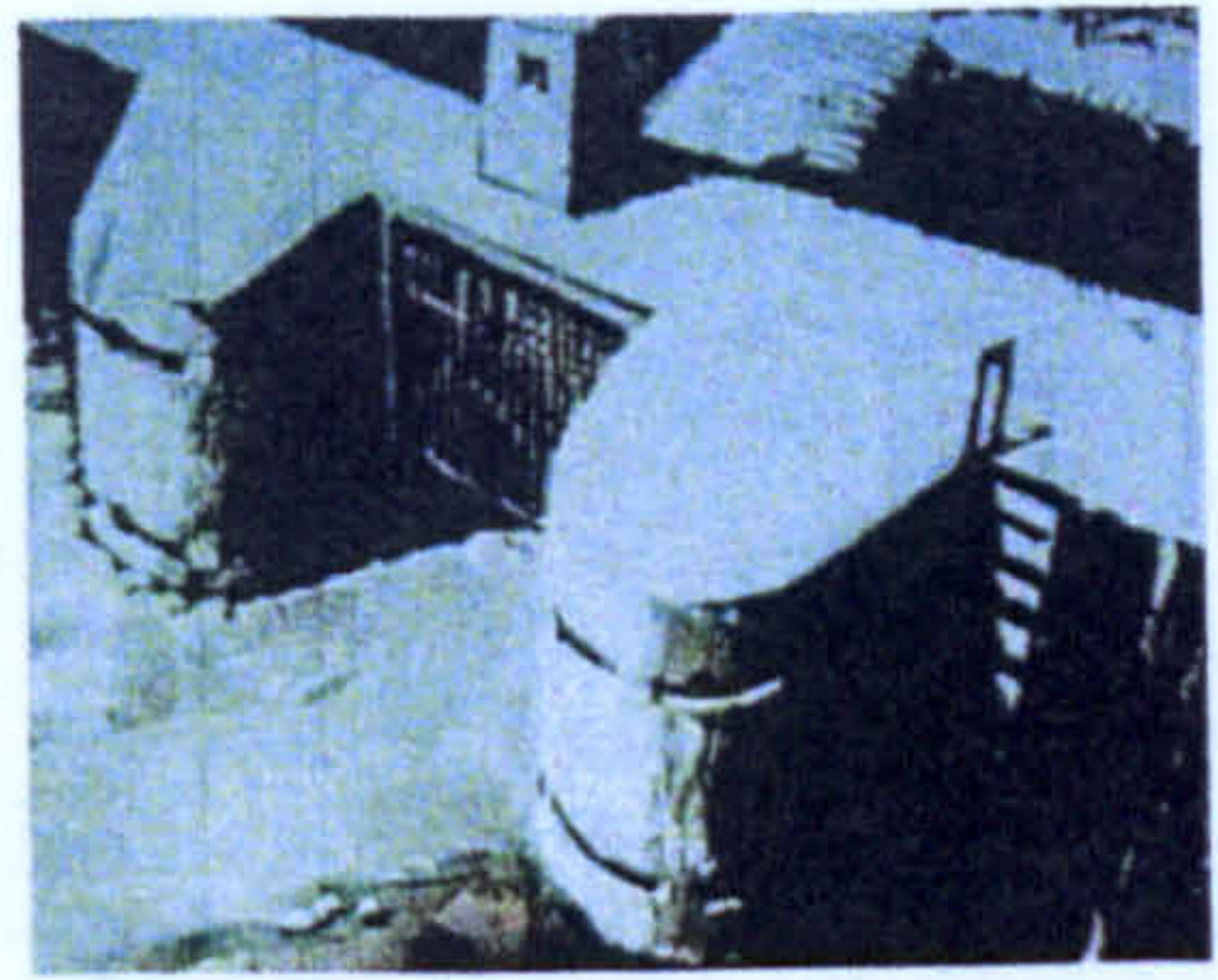


Plate 3
O Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos, 1978

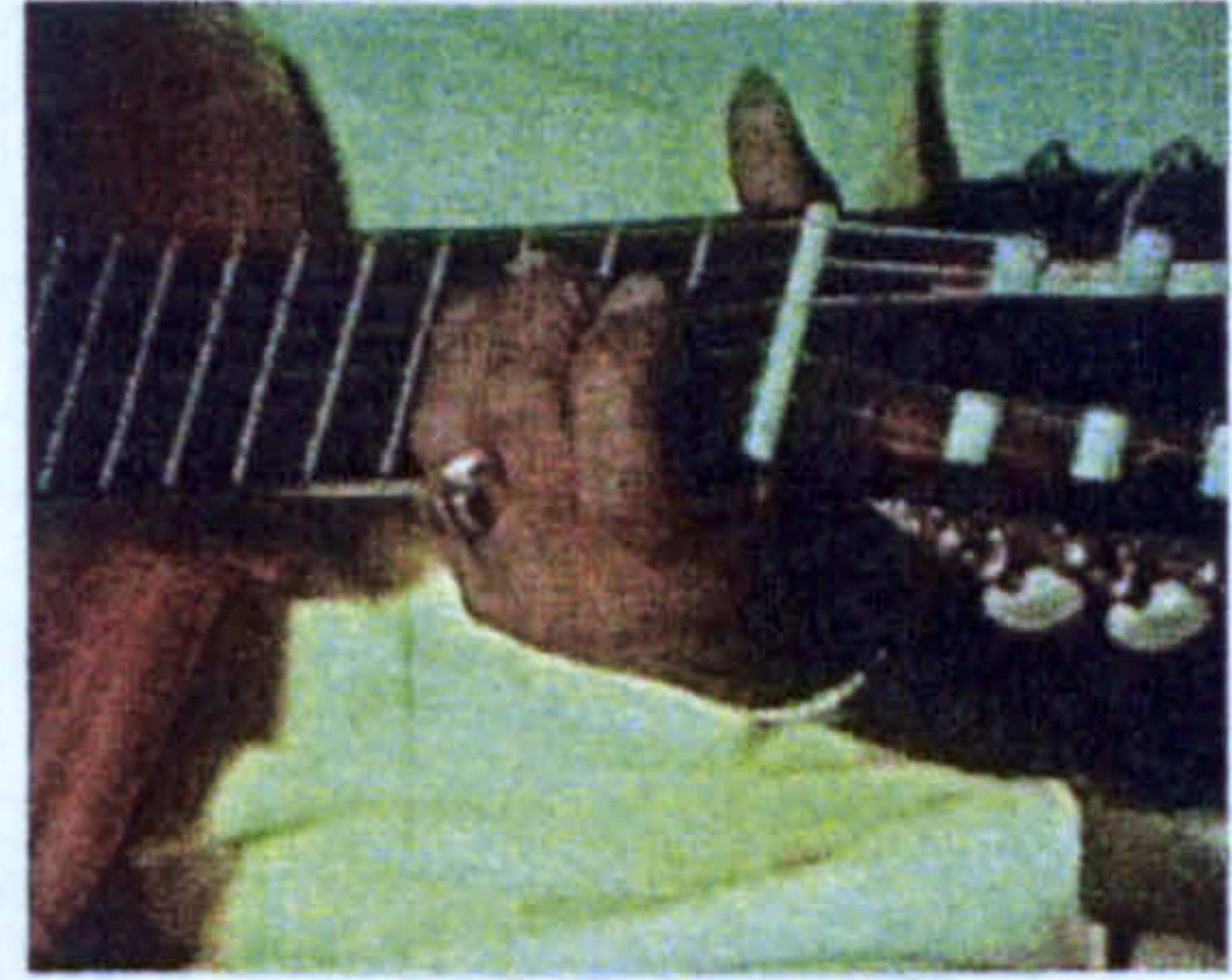
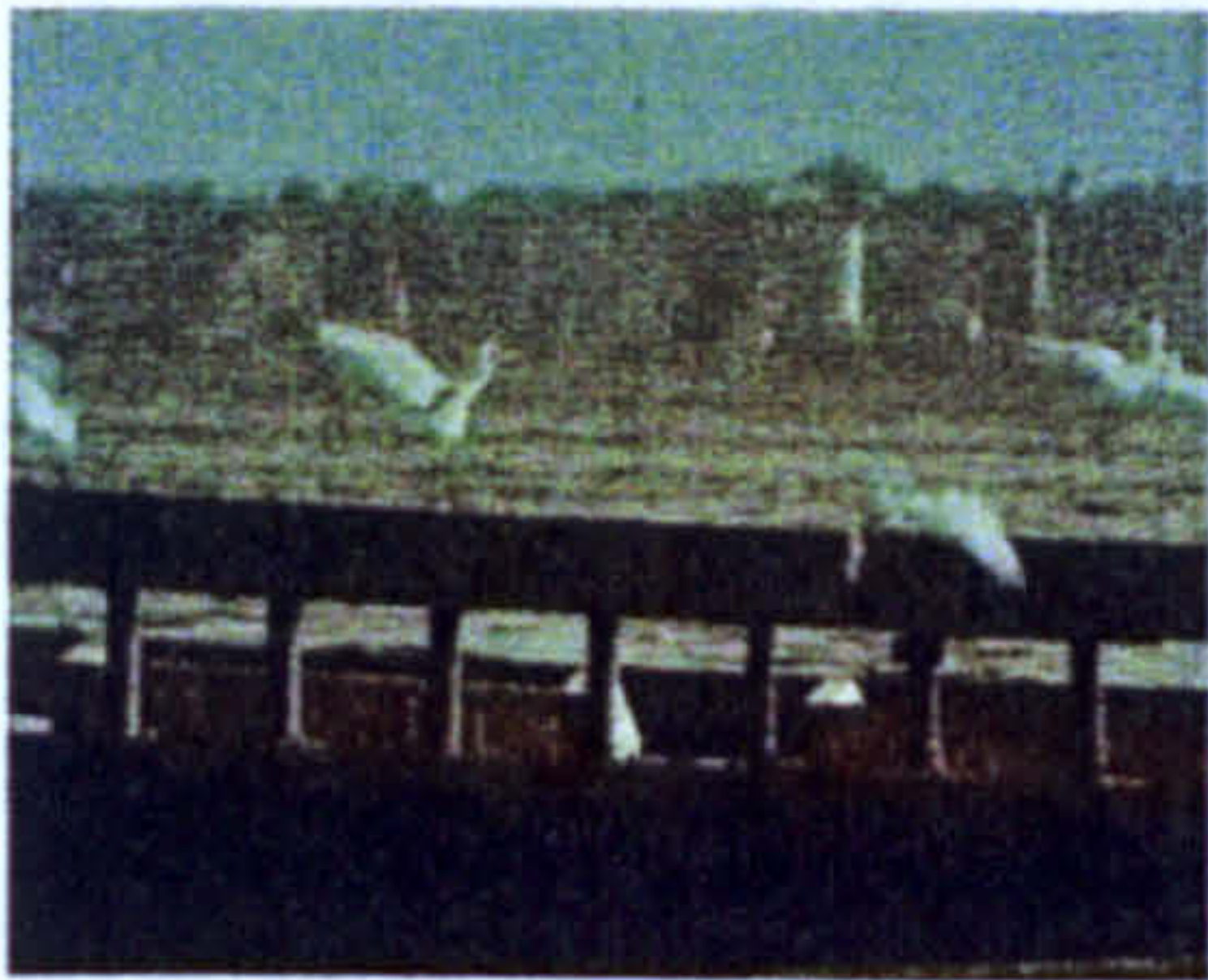


Plate 4
O Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos, 1978

**'Change is the definition of Africa...
A revolution has begun in Africa
which we hope to channel so
that our lives are transformed.
It is a revolution with a purpose,
and that purpose is the extension
to all African citizens, of the
requirements of human dignity.'**

JULIUS NYERERE
President of Tanzania

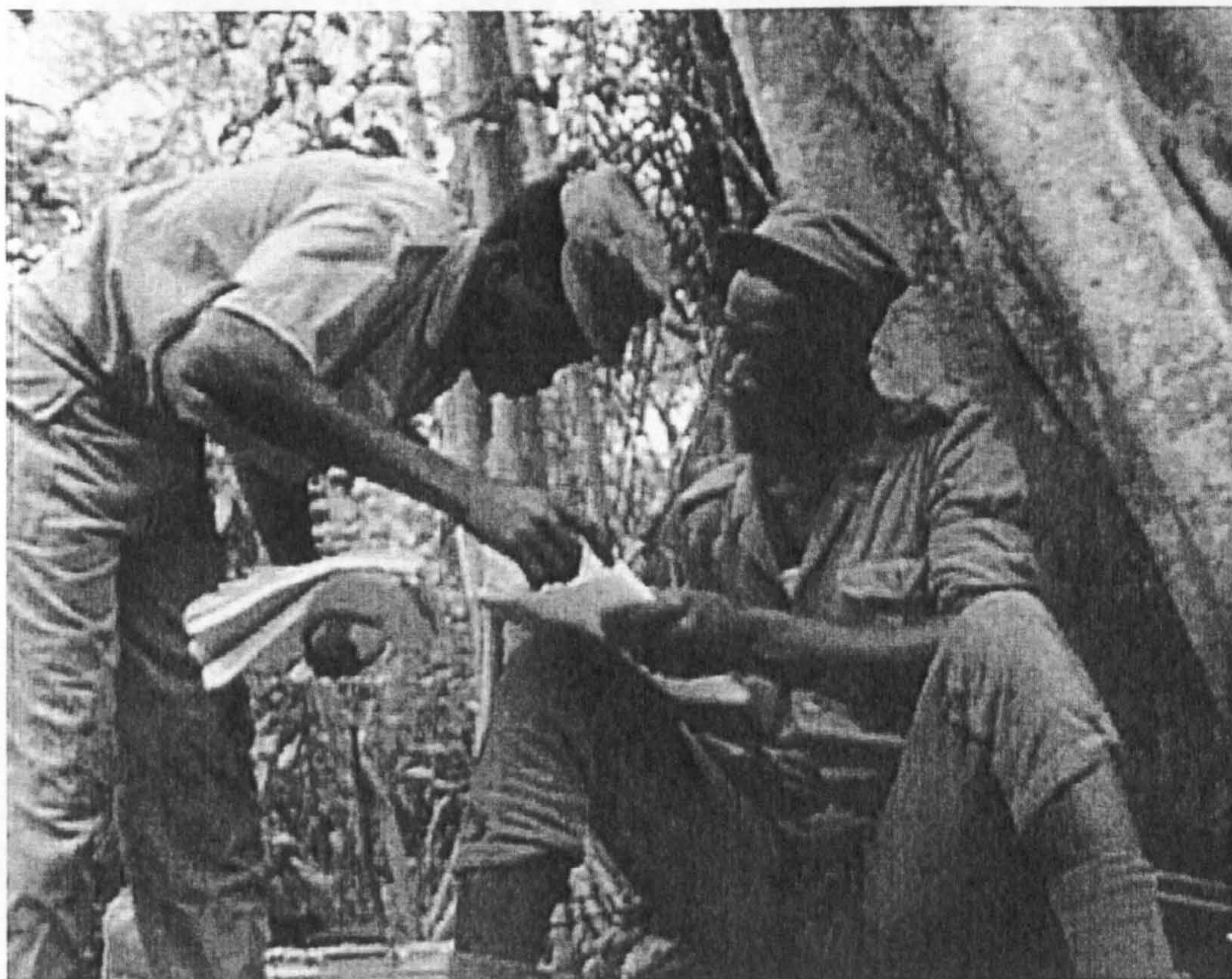


Plate 5
A Small Group of Terrorists Attacked..., 1968

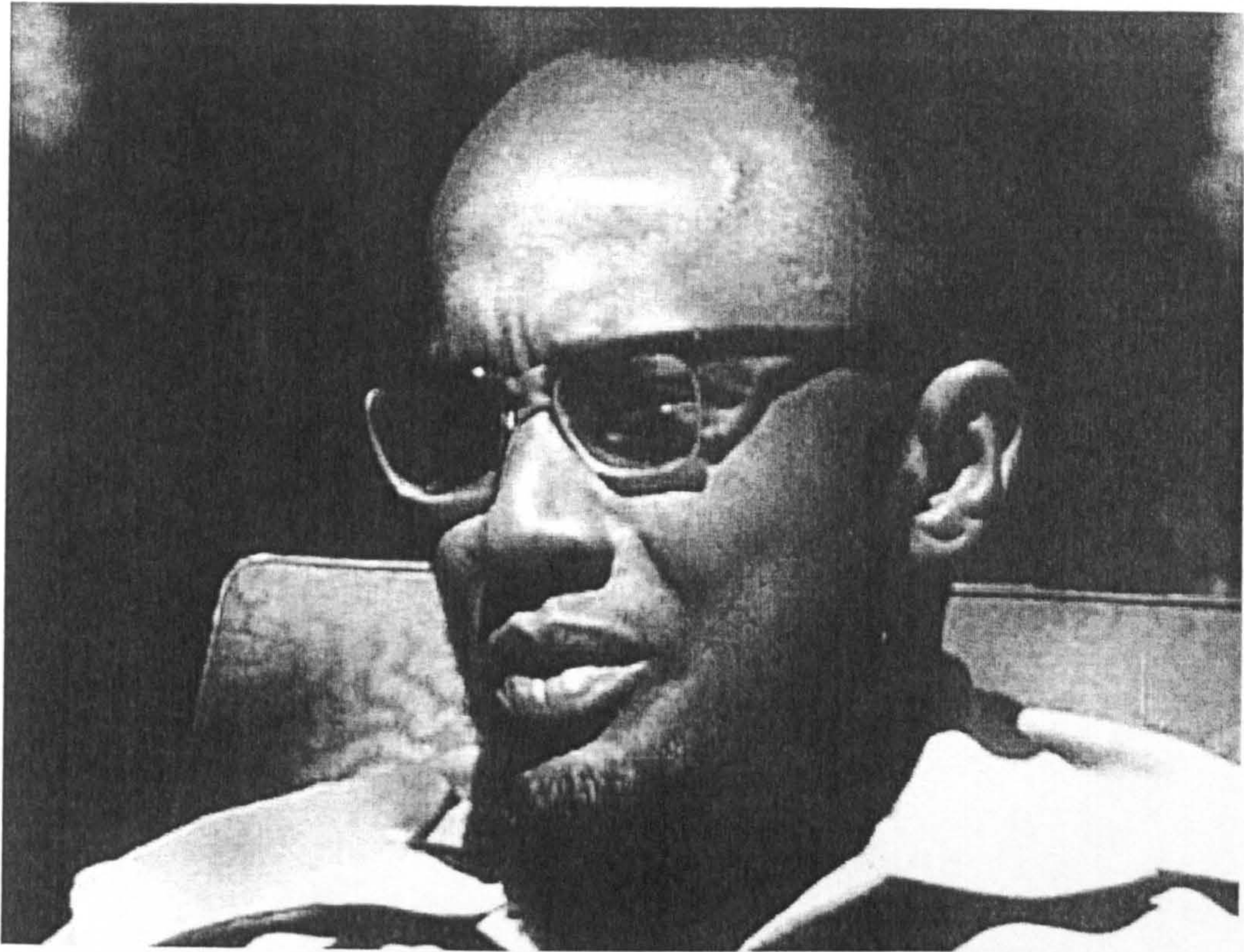


Plate 6
A Small Group of Terrorists Attacked..., 1968

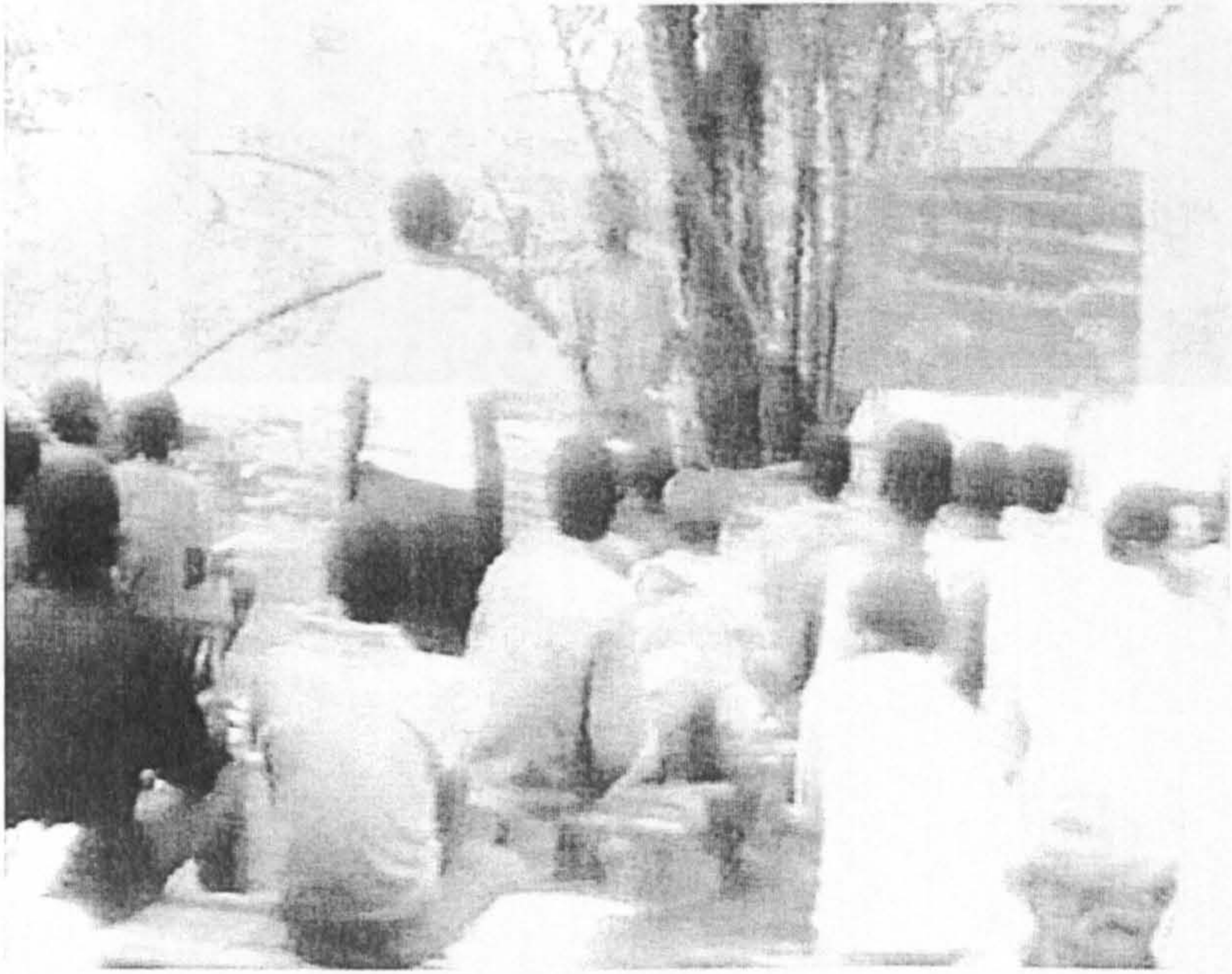


Plate 7
Dieci giorni con I guerriglieri nel Mozambico Livro, 1972

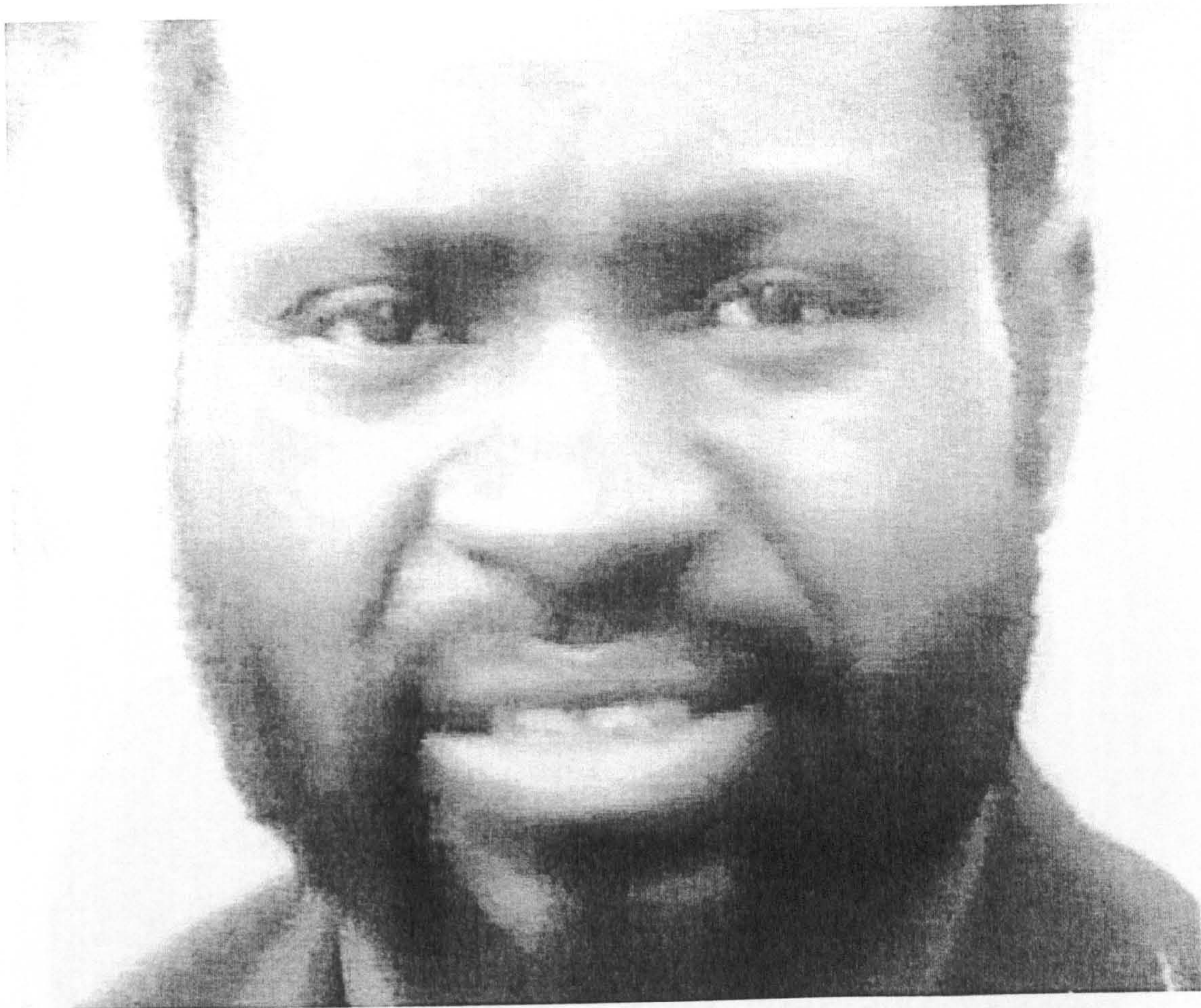


Plate 8
Dieci giorni con I guerriglieri nel Mozambico Livro, 1972



Plate 9
Sambiganza, 1972



Plate 10
Sambiganza, 1972



Plate 11
Sans Soleil, 1982



Plate 12
Sans Soleil, 1982



Plate 13
Mortu Nega, 1988



Plate 14
Mortu Nega, 1988



Plate 15
Udju azul di Yonta, 1988

Chapter 3

Portugal in Revolution

There is a place, a kind of hippy anarchist association... I gave them copies of the films in my film... Pev Holmqvist, Thomas Harlan, Newsreel Collective, all of them who came to make films here in Portugal during the Revolution... you can find them there...' Sérgio Trefaut takes a piece of paper and starts to draw me a map. He knows the route, but can't think how to describe it, so he crosses bits out, starts again, draws a square for a metro station, an arch for a bridge, a meandering line, steps stained with urine and scratched with graffiti, and a cluster of dots for the huddle of junkies that, sure enough, are the final marker before reaching the bookshop of Abril em Maio. I mill around the shelves of pamphlets and poetry, bootlegged videos and political tomes. Then a small green book catches my eye, and it takes me a moment to realise Em Defesa da Revolução Africana is the translation into Portuguese of Fanon's Towards the African Revolution. But unlike the English edition, which has Fanon's portrait on the cover, here the picture is different. As I peer forward I recognise the image of Amílcar Cabral, in a scene that re-appears in Chris Marker's Sans Soleil. Cabral stands in a small boat, his hands on hips and looking up straight into the camera. The photograph, taken in a liberated zone of Guinea-Bissau shortly before his assassination, has become saturated with significance — a snapshot from an African independence struggle, which eventually came to spark some few hundred days of Revolution in Portugal. It is a giddy moment. Suddenly in this circulation of images, languages and texts, Fanon's 'African Revolution' slides into a different time and place. The African Revolution becomes something else...

April 2005, Lisbon

This little story of the map describes an ambulatory route through Lisbon that lead to an image of the African Revolution lodged as a forgotten fragment in the midst of an eccentric archive of European radicalism (Plate 16). The kind of stuff that has dust gathered in Abril em Maio for some ten years now speaks of a brief moment when Portugal was the place where a new kind of Revolution could be imagined in Europe. The Carnation Revolution that began on 25 April 1974 is surely the event that, more than any other in the late twentieth century, makes apparent the extent to which the armed struggles of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique did not so much follow those taking place elsewhere, but instead made Africa 'the vanguard of the world'.¹ Events in Africa preceded and made possible a Revolution in Europe. As articulated in the films made during and after the *Processo Revolucionário em Curso* (PREC), which lasted between 1974 and 1976, this Revolution gave Portugal the opportunity to 'radically re-think itself' – to question its past and future, and to ask what it means to be Portuguese after the African Revolution.²

Anti-imperialist sentiments were shared not only across the Tricontinental but were expressed in revolutionary Portugal as well, filmmakers on the Left seeing themselves as being under threat from American consumer culture and as acting in solidarity with efforts across the world to decolonise cinema. In the attempt to radically overturn the mainstream commercial film industry so as to create conditions in which cinema could be a dynamic agent in the revolutionary process, there was also resistance to filmmaking becoming solely an instrument of professional Party politics, so that the Revolution might provide instead an opportunity to experiment with what liberation might mean. Radical filmmakers flocked to Portugal, but when the possibilities of radical change were foreclosed, many of them dispersed to other revolutionary situations in Africa, where the liberation movements were attempting to make their aspirations for social transformation after Independence into a reality. Portugal is the focus here to the extent that it was part of a route through which a series of radical drives circulated, appearing whenever the event of Revolution enabled the manifestation of such desires in new and unexpected forms. Ironically, the country that held on to its African colonies most tenaciously was where the African Revolution most directly enabled the liberation of a people in Europe and the unleashing of a set of revolutionary ambitions for cinema.

There is a tradition of scepticism about revolutionary ideas and sentiments that travel, Trotsky dismissing as 'radical tourists' those who 'are incapable of rebelling against their own capitalism and are therefore that much more eager to support themselves with a revolution that is already subsiding.'³ Enszemberger points out that the guests invited to the USSR, China or Vietnam rarely questioned their own position of privilege or their desire to maintain a dream of the Socialist State in the face of evidence that should have put it in question. His aim in reading their accounts is not to pick out the blind-spots of individuals, but to point out the inadequacies of an institution in which these 'tourists of the Revolution' functioned as the only conduits that catered to a desire for knowledge about and connection with actually existing Socialism behind the iron curtain.⁴

¹ Amílcar Cabral, *op.cit.*, p.161

² Irit Rogoff, 'Hit and Run – Museums and Cultural Difference', *op.cit.*

³ Cited in Hans Magus Enszemberger, 'Tourists of the Revolution', in *op.cit.*, p.229

⁴ The 'institution' was the '*delegacija*' system, whereby individuals representing radical groups from the West were invited to the USSR as guests of the State to see the Revolution at first-hand, their experience filtered

But what is mapped out here through cinema is a different phenomenon. It involves a nomadic radicalism that seeks out revolutionary situations and uses cinema not only to document but to make an intervention. This is a tradition of filmmaking activism for which the contribution of Dutch socialist filmmaker Joris Ivens to the Spanish Civil War, the Chinese struggle against the Japanese Invasion and the Cuban Revolution serves as an earlier example.⁵ In the chapters that follow, various cinematic aesthetics emerge in which specific revolutions and struggles for social justice appear as fragments of a dispersed radical drive that connects different places and times. It is manifested through cinema in the trajectories of a network of filmmakers and films, some of which already mentioned, that appear and re-appear wherever the revolutionary event makes the demand. While it may be the ambition of cinema to express and be an agent of Revolution, its manifestations testify to something more complicated – a nomadic revolutionary desire that transcends the political frame of the nation-state or the Party and yet is fully implicated in the projects that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s to create national cinemas through the revolutionary State.

In a moment of bravura in the face of decolonisation across Africa, Salazar once claimed that now Britain and France had ceded their colonial territories fascist Portugal stood 'gloriously alone'.⁶ Yet for years Portugal had been part of numerous overlapping clandestine networks of resistance linked to the liberation movements in Africa, to radical groups in Europe, to the USSR and other Socialist States in Eastern Europe, chiefly through the Portuguese communist party (*Partido Comunista Portuguesa*, PCP).⁷ Toward the end of the armed struggles, when it was becoming clear that the eventual success of the liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique was inevitable, colonial war was consuming 40% of the national budget. The regime's decision to keep hold of Portugal's colonies at any cost, whether social or economic, stripped the State of credibility and support internally and internationally, and even divided the military elite.⁸ Conditions were ripe for Revolution, but precisely when and where it would spring from was unexpected.

In the early hours of 25 April 1974, Zeca Afonso's rebel song 'Grândola, Vila Morena' was broadcast on the radio, a signal to troops who, following a plan devised by Captain Otelo de Carvalho, had the night before begun a silent, simultaneous advance on Lisbon, Mafra, Tomar, Figueira da Foz, and other cities. With this signal, they began seizing key targets, one of the most critical being the occupation of Rádio

through the luxurious hospitality with which they were often received, language barriers, and the fact that tours and interviews were organised and scripted for them in advance. *Ibid*, pp.225–252

⁵ Joris Ivens was a pivotal figure in the setting up of ICAIC in Cuba, and his pedagogical flair was given its greatest challenge when he took on the task of training military cameramen to film the People's Militia. They had only two months and had to learn from wooden models of cameras. Michael Chanan comments that with Ivens, 'direct filming' comes 'not as a normative stylistic principle ... but as a way of making the filmmaker answerable to the ideals of the Revolution as they are lived out by those around them. As ICAIC developed, this idea – though doubtless Ivens wasn't its only source – became the linchpin of its system of apprenticeship in which all directors in ICAIC would be required to serve in either documentary or newsreel work.' Michael Chanan, *op.cit.*, p.198. Ivens' films were amongst those included in the first edition of FESPACO in Ouagadougou in 1969, which indicates how his work was recognised by the festival organisers as sharing similar revolutionary objectives to their own (see Chapter 6).

⁶ Footage of this speech is included in Rui Simões' *Bom Povo Português* (1977)

⁷ See Chapter 2

⁸ Steward Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.*, p.144

Clube Português in Lisbon. The first of a series of broadcasts broke the news that the army was rising up against the government to liberate Portugal. They stated their purpose:

...the Armed Forces began a series of operations at dawn today with the aim of liberating the country from the regime that has ruled for so long. In our broadcasts the Armed Forces have called for the police force not to intervene so as to avoid any loss of life.... Conscious that it is interpreting the true desires of the nation, the Movement of the Armed Forces will pursue its actions of liberation and asks the population to remain calm and stay inside their residences. VIVA Portugal!⁹

As day broke, the broadcasts continued, interspersed with military marching tunes and banned Portuguese songs. People gathered in the streets as troops circled the palaces and prisons where the functionaries and secret police of the fascist regime were enclosed. The Revolution had begun.

During the course of the day, the airport and national bank were seized and a series of government institutions fell. As crowds joined the sieges of State buildings, the euphoric multitude claimed their freedom throbbing to the lyrics of Zeca Afonso, and with slogans of 'The People United Will Never be Defeated!', 'Death to PIDE' and 'Freedom for Political Prisoners'. Having initially evaded capture by escaping from the Ministry of Marine Affairs through a hole in the wall, Caetano finally gave himself up at National Guard barracks at Largo do Carmo when the young captains of the MFA agreed to allow Spínola to parlay his surrender, ostensibly to avoid bloodshed.¹⁰ Flower-sellers in Chiado released their wears to the crowd, and women greeted with carnations the young soldiers in dishevelled uniforms who unbuttoned their shirts and unlaced their boots to signify their overthrow of authority. Miraculously, in this mass protest barely contained by the armed forces, only four people were killed when PIDE officers, surrounded at their headquarters, opened fire in a last desperate attempt at suppression. While elements of PIDE and the National Guard resisted at their headquarters and at the prison, the armed forces subdued them and many of the political prisoners were released in the early hours of the following day.¹¹

Strangely perhaps, given the proclaimed desire of the young captains of the MFA to 'interpret the desires of the people', they preferred to let Spínola take over the reigns of government rather than let power 'fall into the street'.¹² At 1.26 am on 26 April Spínola unexpectedly found himself president of the 'Junta for National Salvation' and made a television statement declaring that the army had formed the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA) and named the senior officers in charge.¹³ These officers, who had all overseen

⁹ Cited in Afonso Praça *et al.*, *25 de Abril, 1974* (Lisbon: Casaviva), pp.11–12

¹⁰ Stewart Lloyd-Jones, 'An End of a Beginning for Portugal? Some Notes on the Legacy of 25 April 1974', *Lusotopie* 2002/2, p.143

¹¹ Afonso Praça *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.32

¹² As Stewart Lloyd-Jones points out, the fallen regime was in no position to argue, suggesting that the myth of the MFA's revolutionary fervour perhaps masks more contradictory and conservative motives for the rebellion. Stewart Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.*

¹³ General Spínola had been the governor and commander-in-chief of the armed forces in Guinea (see Chapter 2); General Francisco da Costa Gomes was former deputy Secretary of State for the army and former commander-in-chief of the armed forces in Angola; Capitán José Baptista Pinheiro Azevedo, professor of the naval school and veteran of various missions in Africa and member of NATO; Captain of

colonial repression and military campaigns on the three African fronts of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, were now the unlikely crew to steer the Junta for National Salvation. Yet the readiness with which the MFA handed power over to the establishment is perhaps not as surprising as it might at first seem. Discontent in the army had been brewing for years, and the Captain's movement, the organisation that was the precursor to the MFA, did not begin as a political organisation, let alone a radical anti-fascist one. It had been set up to protect the interests of the officers' corps, who felt threatened by new regulations that gave soldiers with combat experience the chance of accelerated promotion – hardly a revolutionary or democratic aim.¹⁴ But beneath the figureheads appointed by Spínola, the MFA was dominated by more radical factions from a different tradition of political activism.¹⁵ Communists such as Otelo de Carvalho had served in Mozambique, where he mingled with other young Marxists in the cafés of Lorenzo Marques.¹⁶ Such figures would shortly come to the fore in the MFA and be the driving forces as the country plunged into Revolution.

As Arendt points out, while Revolution may start with the rhetoric of restoring rights denied by the fallen regime that which answers to the call of freedom and is entirely new opens up as a possibility only in the unfolding of the Event itself.¹⁷ On the streets of Lisbon, the people were becoming visible as a political constituency with conflicting desires and demands. The MFA had no film cameras of their own and the only opposition force to have organised filmmaking units in operation at the time of 25 April was the PCP.¹⁸ Independently, therefore, filmmakers avidly documented the fall of fascism that was unfolding before them. They were joined by foreign photographers and broadcasters who international press agencies had been sending to Portugal in the preceding months, sensing that some kind of radical change was imminent.¹⁹ Events both long anticipated and utterly unexpected were captured in film by professionals and amateurs from Portugal and around the world. Although the iconic image created at the time to symbolize the Carnation Revolution, reproduced in countless posters, was a studio shot of a child placing a carnation in the shaft of a rifle, the images taken in the streets of jubilant crowds greeting soldiers with flowers and heaving together against military cordons now seem more expressive of the feverish excitement of those first extraordinary hours of freedom. The collective memory of the Revolution was to be woven in the circulation of these cinematic sounds and images.

the Fregatta António Alva Rosa Coutinho, former provincial director of Marine Services of Mozambique; Brigadier Jaime Silvério Marques, former governor of Macau, commissioner to NATO; General of Aeronautics Diogo Neto, former commander of the Aerial Zone of Cape Verde and Guinea; Colonel of Aeronautics Carlos Galvão de Melo. Afonso Praça *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp.33–34

¹⁴ Stewart Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.* p.144

¹⁵ Botelho Moniz and Humberto Delgado are two of the most important figures that exemplify this progressive tendency within the Portuguese armed forces. Delgado was a general in the air force who led the main challenge to Salazar by standing for presidential elections in 1959, following which he was suspended from the armed forces, forced to seek refuge in the Brazilian embassy, from where he escaped to exile in Algeria. In Algeria he sought the support of Ben Bella, the PCP and the *lusophone* liberation movements, but was assassinated by PIDE in 1965. In March 1961 Moniz, who was a general and the Minister of Defence, wrote to Salazar following the beginning of the armed struggle in Angola calling for reforms in colonial policies. His recommendations were rejected and in April that same year he led an attempted coup against Salazar.

¹⁶ Interview with Sol de Carvalho, Maputo, 12 September 2005. See Appendix

¹⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, *op.cit.*, p.37

¹⁸ José Filipe Costa, *O Cinema ao Poder!*, 2002 (Lisbon: Hugin), p.23

¹⁹ Dominique Isserman, Jean Gaumy and others describe how they were sent to Portugal as novice photographers in *Outro País: Memórias, sonhos, ilusões* (1999), directed by Sérgio Trefaut

In impromptu gatherings and mass political rallies, flags, banners and walls were draped, painted and plastered with the figures of Marx, Lenin and Mao (Plate 17). Photographer Jean Gaumy recalls scenes seeped in clichés and gestures from other places and times, but re-appearing with utter sincerity in a new revolutionary situation.²⁰ Graffiti scrawled across the walls of Lisbon proclaimed solidarity with PAIGC, FRELIMO and the MPLA, recognising how the freedom of the Portuguese people had been brought about through the struggles for Independence of other peoples held under the same fascist yoke. The initial giddy whirl of Revolution finds expression in the sonic and visual traces that Ana Hatherly gathers in the video *Revolução* (1976), a work that resulted directly from the intersection of her art practice with the new revolutionary manifestations then appearing in public for the first time.²¹ Roaming the streets of Lisbon, she tore down large pieces of posters stuck to the walls, recombining them in a series of nine panels called *Descolagens da Cidade* ('unsticking of the city'), in which political propaganda and iconic figures such as Che Guervara are juxtaposed with circus posters and other advertisements. This lyrical play with the surfaces of Lisbon continues in *Revolução*, shot on 16mm, for which Hatherly filmed the graffiti and political posters that covered the city.²² To the rhythm of rebel songs, posters announcing a Communist Youth Congress and spray-can slogans of solidarity with the MFA flash up against lions and acrobats. The screen dances in gleeful chaos before the loop starts again.

Cinema became a protagonist of Revolution in a more expanded political and social sense in the months that followed, as every institution became the subject of radical overhaul. On 26 April an amnesty for political prisoners and exiles was called, and the Portuguese people's right to free association and political organisation was proclaimed. Alvaro Cunhal, who had suffered terrible torture under Salazar's regime, returned from exile in Czechoslovakia to take up the leadership of the PCP. The PCP was a highly structured and disciplined party, which was the only political force that managed effective underground operations against the fascist regime with support from the USSR.²³ Mário Soares travelled back from exile in Western Europe to lead a coalition of political parties on the Left that made up the Partido Socialista (PS). A panoply of other parties sprang up to contest elections that were promised for March 1975. The Centro Democrático Social (CDS) was formed by members of the former regime, while the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) became the main centre-right party. In the meantime, however, people had not waited on the professional politicians to begin organising collectively to realise a Revolution. The MFA urged peasant labourers to seize the land, promising that legal measures to follow would support their actions; the homeless occupied empty properties; shipyard and underground workers went on strike for a

²⁰ Jean Gaumy interviewed by Sérgio Trefaut in *Outro País*

²¹ Hatherly participated in the show 'Alternativa Zero', held shortly after 25 April, for which she exhibited an installation, *Poema d'Entro*, originally conceived as a small room of black walls entirely covered with white posters illuminated by sporadic flashes of light. She was forced to continually re-make the work when the audience persistently ripped the panels of white paper, perhaps expressing a desire for freedom from containment.²¹ The experience led to the series of investigative works that followed.

²² Hatherly's *Revolução* appeared in the Portuguese pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1976.

²³ During the 1940s the PCP infiltrated the rural population of Alentejo, an extremely poor rural area in the South of Portugal. Political organisation of the peasants led to a number of uprisings during the 1950s, all of which were brutally suppressed.

50% pay rise; train and tram conductors refused to collect fares; private clubs and commercial properties were seized and turned into community centres and crèche.²⁴

On the morning of 26 April, however, the structures that had governed cinema under fascism were still in place. As yet, the functionaries of the previous regime had not been dislodged from positions controlling commissioning, production, distribution, censorship and the national archives. Acting in the spirit of the day before, a group of filmmakers of varying leftist persuasions gathered to organise those working in the industry to form a cohesive front. Their objectives revolved around two poles. First, they wanted a new 'Law of Cinema' to replace the legislation brought in with the establishment of the Instituto Português de Cinema (IPC) in 1971. This would facilitate new revolutionary modes of production and distribution to replace those that served imperialism. Second, they demanded an end to censorship and protection of the national archives at the Cinemateca. This held vital historical evidence, which they feared remaining fascist elements might try to destroy. The ambitions for cinema were to make filmmaking in Portugal dynamic as an instrument of political consciousness *and* as an experiment with freedom, the often conflicting aspirations of the propagandistic, the instructional and the expressive co-present from the outset. Cinema would be at the centre of a liberated national culture capable of constructing new and untold narratives of Portuguese history and identity.

In the atmosphere of camaraderie and enthusiasm for the MFA, professional filmmakers came together, many of whom had not been involved in collective struggle before, to debate their course of action. The dossier 'Cinema: Não à censura', published in *Cinéfilo* some weeks later, describes the crucial events, beginning with the meeting held on 28 April, in which the old union elected under the former regime was disbanded, and the Commission of Anti-fascist Cineastes was formed.²⁵ The Commission of Anti-fascist Cineastes agreed on a series of actions and demands including the immediate suspension of censorship; occupation of the buildings of the Inspeção Geral dos Espectáculos (where the censorship of films, theatre, records and visual arts was carried out); and occupation of the IPC. The filmmakers also resolved immediately to begin showing films that previously had been censored, especially those that were Portuguese, and to keep the Cinemateca Nacional running so as to project these films in public.

The filmmakers called on the MFA for support in realising these objectives, and the intervention of the military proved critical in their actions.²⁶ On 29 April filmmakers gathered at rua de São Pedro de Alcântara, where the union of cinema professionals, the Sindicato dos Profissionais de Cinema (SPC) had been housed, and from there descended on the IPC.²⁷ The group succeeded in occupying the building without incident: they had a 'cordial conversation' with the secretary of the Instituto Carlos Assis Brito, in which

²⁴ See the accounts given by the participants in these actions in *Setubal: Ville Rouge* (1975), directed by Daniel Edinger and Michel Lequenne

²⁵ Dossier 'Cinema: Não à censura', *Cinéfilo*, no.31, 4 May 1974. Reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *25 de Abril no Cinema: Antologia de Textos*, 1999 (exh.cat. Cinemateca Portuguesa—Museu de Cinema, Lisbon), pp.24–25

²⁶ Comissão de Profissionais de Cinema Antifascistas ao Movimento de Forças Armadas, 28 April 1974. Reprinted in *ibid*, p.28

²⁷ José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.9

they discussed the immediate projection of films that had previously been banned.²⁸ Back at the Sindicato, more filmmakers hung two banners from the windows reading 'For a Free Portugal/End to the Censorship of Spectacles' and 'Professionals of Cinema Support the Junta'.²⁹ With shouts of 'Victory!' they then marched the few hundred yards to the occupied building, which they picketed, barring entry to all those except functionaries, journalists and the armed forces.

At midday an MFA brigade arrived to guard the IPC and its archives. A contingent of armed forces and filmmakers then went to the offices of the former Secretary of State for Information and Tourism, which commissioned propaganda films about Portugal and her 'overseas territories', and sealed off the national archive. Members of the Commission of Anti-fascist Professional Cineastes linked to the ciné club movement made arrangements with the MFA to enter the offices of the State censor to relieve him of his position. It was discovered that head censor José Maria Alves was continuing to carry out the functions assigned to him by the toppled regime despite the directives he had received from the MFA. Eventually he was forced from his office, where a small cache of arms was later discovered. Thus the filmmakers were finally able to protect the archives that would reveal the extent of repression through censorship under the *Estado Novo*.

With the national archives secured, the ciné clubs also began showing films that had been prohibited. On 26 April the Porto ciné club had issued a communiqué stating their 'rejoicing' at the re-establishment of essential liberties and the right of association, the renunciation of censorship and the promise of new laws to govern media and arts.³⁰ They welcomed the radical overhaul of State institutions such as the Cinemateca and the IPC, but insisted they should not only serve the interests of professional elites. Fernando Lopes, one of the founders of the Centro Português de Cinema, points out that the influence of the PCP was pronounced from the earliest days of the struggle to re-organise cinema, and that this was particularly evident in the ciné clubs, which, as elsewhere across the Portuguese empire, had been sites of resistance to the fascist regime.³¹ The film clubs drew those with anti-fascist sympathies, and the PCP members among them constituted a clandestine network of committed activists with a disciplined political organisation in place to take a leading role when the Revolution finally came.

Under fascism a huge number of films were banned or cut, either for political reasons or because they were deemed offensive to the prudish moralism of the *Estado Novo*. They ranged from the Charlie Chaplin film *The Great Dictator* (1940), which was only shown publicly in Portugal in 1974, to Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972). In many films the censor would order that parts of a woman's body would be crudely painted over frame by frame to give her more modest apparel. The lifting of censorship opened the floodgates to films of all kinds, including overtly political social realist films, sexually explicit films 'of quality', and a rush of hardcore pornography. At the moment of Revolution, therefore, various kinds of liberation and freedom, not necessarily progressive, came into the open. During the public celebrations of 1 May, a number of films were projected for the first time in Portugal in a veritable festival of *cinophilia*. As well as

²⁸ Dossier 'Cinema: Não à Censura', *op.cit.*, p.24

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ Comunicado Cine-Clube do Porto, 26 April 1974, reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.28

³¹ Interview with Fernando Lopes, José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, pp.135–150

iconic revolutionary films such as Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, Sarah Maldoror's *Sambiganza* and Glauber Rocha's *Terra em Transe*, avant-garde Portuguese films such as Eduardo Guedes's *Sofia e a Educação Sexual* (1974), António Reis' *Jaime* (1974) were included alongside examples of the French *Nouvelle vague*, ranging from Alain Renais' *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) to Jean-Luc Godard's *Tout va bien* (1972).³² These presented different modes and traditions of radical filmmaking, from Soviet montage, through narratives of African liberation, to the provocations of the European avant-garde.

The Portuguese films included Faria de Almeida's *Catembe – 7 dias em Lourenço Marques* (1964) and Alberto Seixas Santos' *Brandos Costumes* (1974), which indicate the radical potential of realism on the one hand and experimentation with form on the other to unravel fascist ideology. *Catembe* had been made in Mozambique ten years before but was immediately prohibited as its seemingly straightforward use of reportage uncovered the realities of racial segregation in the colony through the juxtaposition of what it puts in plain view and what cannot be spoken (see Chapter 5). *Brandos Costumes*, made just before the Revolution, unpicks the discourses of fascism through the deconstruction of its images, building up stifling Brechtian tableaux that show the 'gentle customs' of repression in the intimate zone of the family to be at breaking point. In one scene, for instance, the family gathered in the kitchen sit, eyes averted, as the father speaks, ventriloquising a speech by Salazar. Such scenes are inter-cut with archive footage of mass fascist rallies in support of colonial war. These sequences in the film were possible because the filmmaker was able to appropriate footage from the national archive that was made as propaganda for the previous regime. When *Brandos Costumes* was finally released it presented a society on the cusp of radical change – on the verge of a Revolution that was now underway.

On 30 April the collectivisation of film production began. Tracking the trajectories, aesthetics and political commitments of the groups who gathered and formed in Portugal during the Revolution is a means to map out a relational geography of cinema that constitutes a different way to understand the mutual imbrications of Africa and Europe as sites of radical innovation. The films made during the revolutionary process are to varying degrees expressive of a new-found freedom manifested either through experimentation with form, a concern for realism, a desire to deconstruct the discourse and ideology of fascism at work within every aspect of public and private life, or a combination of these tactics. One of the first collective projects involved the gathering and organising of footage taken haphazardly as events unfolded to make an archive of moving images that would constitute a document of the Revolution. *Cinéfilo* made a public call to all filmmakers who had footage of 25 April to make their material available to the Committee. At the same time, a group at the Sindicato Nacional dos Profissionais de Cinema (SNPC) agreed to collaborate on a collective film of 1 May (*Dia dos Trabalhadores*). The 'Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica', as the collective called itself, secured financial support from the IPC and dispersed around the city to document the mass demonstration.

Glauber Rocha was among those involved. Rocha, one of the main protagonists of the Brazilian *Cinema Novo* movement, came to Portugal to participate in the Revolution, convinced that 'cinema should be both

³² Teresa Barreto Borges, 'Exibição em Portugal 15 de Abril de 1974–30 de Setembro de 1976', Maria João Madeira (ed.), *ibid*, pp.66–77

a method and an expression ... integrated into the revolutionary process'.³³ Like many of his contemporaries, Rocha believed that 'through qualitative international action' of collaboration between filmmakers who organised at a national level, 'cinema could be a revolutionary instrument as effective as the political instrument of colonisation that is America cinema.'³⁴ The film was released soon afterwards with the title *As Armas e o Povo* (1975), and features Rocha among the crowd firing questions at workers, soldiers, peasants and former political prisoners (Plate 18). People interviewed express a range of views, experiences and desires about the Revolution, suggesting that the direction it will take is radically open. However, José Filipe Costa points out that PCP dominance is evident in the editing of *As Armas e o Povo*, in the hierarchy apparent in the images of the 1 May speeches.³⁵ Following the contributions of Mário Soares and various trade unionists, the film ends triumphantly with the intervention of PCP leader Álvaro Cunhal, who symbolically embraces a soldier and a sailor.

As Armas e o Povo was among the first of a number of films quickly released across different global circuits of distribution. In the two years of revolutionary turbulence that followed, a plethora of films was made by foreign and Portuguese teams espousing various political lines. Returning from political exile in Belgium, filmmaker Rui Simões spent the first months of PREC gathering documentary images of the Revolution.³⁶ Soon, however, he and his team felt the need to cast some ideological clarity over the national situation through an analysis of fascism from its first appearance in 1910 to its final overdue defeat. Their aim was to make 'a simple film, at times didactic, whose principal function would be the consciousness-raising of the working masses, victims of the ignorance imposed by the capitalist colonial and fascist regime.'³⁷ Simões' *Deus, Pátria, Autoridade* (1975) proceeded according to a tactic of tracing and deconstructing Salazarist facism, applying Marxist theory to dissect its three core ideological dogmas – Catholicism, nationalism and authority.

Groups for the Action and Animation of Cinema (Grupos de Acção e Animação Cinematográfica) were formed, comprising a director, an assistant director, a cameraman and assistant, a sound engineer and an official from the MFA. They took didactic films across the country to project to different communities, where they would also make films to further augment knowledge about the country, especially in rural areas where largely illiterate populations of peasant labourers had long been held in the grip of wealthy landowners, with little exposure to the world beyond. The aim was not only to produce an image of Revolution, but an image of the country closer to reality than the picturesque mystifications through which the *Estado Novo* had sought to mask the poverty and exploitation many Portuguese endured. The groups also had an interventionist role. They aimed to incite rural communities to participate in agrarian reform by seizing the land, and to encourage workers to occupy factories and to collectivise production. The content was to be critical, but made in film languages accessible to a wide audience, thus expressing a new social, political and pedagogical role for cinema in the Revolution.

³³ Glauber Rocha, *Revolução do Cinema Novo*, 1981 (Rio: Alhambra–Embrafilme), p.71

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.69

³⁵ *Cinéfilo*, no.33, 25 May 1974

³⁶ Rui Simões: A propósito de *Deus, Pátria, Autoridade*, reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.42

³⁷ *Ibid*

Foreign filmmakers took part in this cinema of intervention. Sérgio Tréfaut's documentary *Outro País: Méórias, sonhos, ilusões* (1999) is an amalgam of recollections and reflections on the fascination Portugal briefly exerted for radical filmmakers from around the world. Three initial examples of films made during the early days of the Carnation Revolution demonstrate the range of this dispersed archive: The Russian film *Portugal: First Days of Freedom* by Studio Dokumentalnykh records and explains the fall of fascism. As the voiceover runs over scenes of Portuguese families grieving over sons killed in the regime's colonial adventures the film argues that the revolutionary movement was born out of the disillusionment of the army. *O Parto* (meaning 'the delivery', 1974) was made by the Brazilian group Oficina Samba (which included José Celso and Celso Luccas, who then travelled to Mozambique to film Independence in 1975, see Chapter 4). It celebrates the birth into revolutionary freedom of the Portuguese people. *Milagro en la Tierra Morena* (1974), made by Cuban Santiago Alvarez, begins with the title scrawled as graffiti across a wall, and, in his signature style of rapid montage and animated text, documents the revolutionary enthusiasm of the May Day demonstration in 'anti-fascist sounds and images' (Plate 19).

Many other films describe microcosms of the Revolution being enacted by people working collectively for the first time. British Newsreel Collective's *On the Side of the People* (1976) is about the seizing of a laundry in Lisbon by the women who work there; they describe how getting rid of the boss enabled them to work together without exploitation. Pev Holmqvist made a series of films, including *We Will Never Return to the Old System* (1975), which follows PCP activists such as the peasant woman Custódia, documenting their fight for land reform in a revolutionary process in which they start to dream of a better world. Similarly Thomas Harlan's *Torre Bela* (1975–1977) documents a sequence of days in which the people of Manique rise up against the local landowner, seize the land and form a cooperative.

Torre Bela begins with a long aerial shot which pans across an immense tract of land in Alentejo. This land reserved for hunting is the property of the family of Dom Miguel de Bragança. As the camera sweeps over the palace walls peasant labourers are gathering to take over of the estate. *Torre Bela* then cuts to an interview in grainy black and white made on 23 April 1975 with the Duke. Dom Miguel boasts arrogantly of his family's academic achievements, but as the interviewer presses him on the running of the estate his mood shifts to one of exasperation. There is 'no problem here' with the workers, he exclaims, and as to the unemployed farm labourers outside his palace gates, 'I don't know what these people want!' Thereafter, the film tracks the activities of the villagers in the days that follow as they hold meetings, give speeches, share communal meals and collectivise their tools. Eventually, with the blessing of the MFA, they seize the palace. Supposedly to make an inventory, the jubilant and drunken villagers wander through the abandoned rooms, rifle through draws, personal photographs and jewellery, and dress up in velvet coats and the cassock owned by the noble family's priest.

Harlan has described how he and his team became 'seduced' by filming people unaware of the power of their own image but rapidly becoming empowered by the process.³⁸ Shot-by-shot analysis reveals how the film encourages identification with certain of the peasant activists who are in the process of a revolutionary *becoming*. The camera often weaves through groups of people in heated debate, and descends to knee-height

³⁸ Interview with Thomas Harlan in Sérgio Tréfaut's *Outro País*

for shots of labourers bending to scythe the grass. One charismatic young man called Wilson in particular is frequently shot at close quarters from an intimate shoulder height, and his growing self-assurance as a revolutionary leader is one of the dynamics of the film. The screen frames his mouth and eyes as he speaks, the camera moving with him as he turns, weeping, to be embraced by a comrade. It draws in close as he moves forward to convince one of the villagers to give his spade to the cooperative as part of the process of collectivisation, and moves rapidly to capture him stride purposefully towards the Headquarters of the Military Police in Lisbon. Here he and an older peasant woman discuss the revolutionary process with the MFA, one young soldier suggesting that tanks and armoured vehicles now being returned from the colonial war in Mozambique could be used to plough the fields. Structured into the film is a revolutionary *becoming*, in which the people are taking control of their own lives so as to radically change the world.

By autumn of 1975, however, the winds of change had turned. On 1 December 1975, 219 days after the land occupation, the *Comunidade Popular de Torre Bela* was occupied by loyalist troops, the members of the Worker's Committee were arrested and production was suspended. In the 1980s the Torre Bela lands were returned to the Bragança family, and the land is now a hunting reserve, in the midst of which the palace stands in ruins. A myth circulates that the estate is now owned by Eduardo dos Santos, leader of the MPLA since the assassination of Agostinho Neto in 1979. Whether or not this is true, the very uncertainty of this persistent rumour makes ironic comment on the more tragic outcomes of the African Revolution. Since becoming President of Angola, Dos Santos has presided over rampant corruption by the country's political elite. Martin Meredith comments that by 1990, when the Party officially abandoned Marxist-Leninism, the MPLA 'was little more than a front for a cabal of wealthy inter-related families linked to the presidency – the *futungos* – whose central purpose was self-enrichment.'³⁹ Initially *Torre Bela* was adopted as 'Portuguese' by the Instituto Português de Cinema. When the political climate changed, however, it was rejected because, it was claimed, the film shows Portuguese people behaving as if they were 'animals'.⁴⁰

The films often express as much the desires and projections of the filmmakers as they do the realities of the Portuguese Revolution. French directors Daniel Edinger and Michel Lequenne recall that Portugal appealed because it seemed to offer the 'near impossibility' of a socialist State on the Western tip of Europe.⁴¹ Sent as a contingent from a French Leninist group, they made *Setubal Ville Rouge* because this town had a workers' committee that resembled the Russian *soviets*. This was a rare instance of mass urban proletarian action in a country whose economy was overwhelmingly rural and underdeveloped. However, Setubal fitted their Leninist criteria for how a Revolution should be conducted. The workers take over Movauto, the town's car manufacturing plant, switching production from Mercedes cars and other luxury exports to goods needed in Portugal.

If the political ideologies of filmmakers coloured how they documented the events, these stories of Revolution were also shaped by how it signified in other situations. Robert Kramer had filmed *People's War* (1969) in Vietnam, had witnessed the rebellion of the Black Power movement in the United States, and had

³⁹ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*, 2006 (London: Simon & Schuster), p.603

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ Interview with Daniel Edinger and Michel Lequenne in Sérgio Tréfaut's *Outro País*

accompanied guerrilla fighters in South America and Angola. Yet he found in Portugal something he had never known before: a 'pre-revolutionary situation', which he experienced as a 'laboratory of experimentation'.⁴² Here every institution was a battleground and a 'childlike' enthusiasm was released for questioning the very assumptions and foundations upon which social relations and production might be organised.⁴³ The film Kramer made with Phillip Spinelli, *Scenes from the Class Struggle* (1976), shows footage of the soldiers' assemblies and peasants' land reform in action and describes the dynamisation teams organised by the MFA. It points out that the armed forces were divided politically between Leftists, far-right extremists, and others who tried to negotiate between these different positions, arguing that this made the MFA unsuitable to be the driving force in the Revolution. A new kind of Revolution, then, was being carried through on a wave of conflicting desires for radical change.

To those involved, the making of a specifically Portuguese revolutionary cinema demanded not only the creation of new film languages, but a radical re-organisation of the activity of filmmaking. During PREC, various forms of collectivisation were proposed – from democratically run collectives to a centralised system of production units. The provisional government agreed with the filmmakers that the key task in the dismantling of the commercial structures that had governed cinema under fascism was the formation of a new law to replace the 7/71 legislation. This decree presided over a situation in which two monopolies, 'Lusomundo' and 'SARL and Intercine', dominated distribution, feeding audiences with programmes that consisted overwhelmingly of American movies, and made no contribution towards local productions, which were taxed more heavily than imported films. Prior to the revolution, filmmakers and technicians with Leftist sympathies and a commitment to formal experimentation began organising themselves against these 'imperialist' market forces, setting up a cooperative called the Centro Português de Cinema (CPC).⁴⁴ The CPC was funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation and subsidised a number of *Cinema Novo* films that highlighted the contradictions of the status quo. Formal experimentation became a means of pre-revolutionary ideological struggle, breaking with naturalism and including social realities to disrupt fascist constructions of Portuguese national culture.

During the Revolution, the discourse of anti-Imperialism was shared across a wide political spectrum. The lifting of censorship, as Rocha pointed out in an interview with *Cinéfilo*, carried a potential risk as it opened the doors to the violent, racist and sexist commercial cinema 'of the police'.⁴⁵ Portuguese cineastes looked to Cuban and South American filmmakers for solidarity in this struggle against capitalist cultural

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ Founding members of the CPC included the filmmakers Alberto Seixas Santos, António Pedro Vasconcelos, Fernando Lopes, Fonseca e Costa, Paulo Rocha and Eduardo Gueda

⁴⁵ 'I'll take the liberty to say to you that, at this moment, in Portugal, this is vital for your revolutionary struggle, because if freedom from censorship permits violent Italian Westerns, the erotic comedies of Italy, that have a sado-masochist vision of sex, with the woman as instrument of the market, that make an apology for machoism, a cinema that makes propaganda out for violence and the police as in the case of Don Siegel and Clint Eastwood... as with Duccio Tessari and Alain Delon, in whose heroes are the faces of the police... James Bond films, in which the bad guys are black (so against the international black movement), these are the political films, seen by millions of people.' Interview with Glauba Rocha, *Cinéfilo*, 32, 18 May 1974. Reprinted in Glauber Rocha, *op.cit.*, pp.241–242

imperialism.⁴⁶ Italian neo-realism and the innovations of the French *Nouvelle vague* directors were also important influences, especially with the theoretical and aesthetic experiments that emerged with the events of Paris 1968. Following protests against government intervention with the Paris Cinémathèque and the removal of its director Henri Langlois in February 1968, French filmmakers had been quick to organise themselves during the month of May to form the Estates General of the Cinema. This organisation took its name from the States General set up during the French Revolution of 1789 and sought to unite filmmakers within the frame of a progressive body that would critique existing film infrastructures and radically re-think how the cinematic apparatus might be transformed so that it could serve the interests of the French working class.⁴⁷ French theorists in turn followed events in Portugal closely, and Serge Daney was among those who contributed to the debates on cinema during the Revolution.

Despite the broad anti-imperialist consensus, a cluster of organisations, some pre-existing, others formed out of alliances born in the revolutionary process, became associated with different political alignments and approaches to filmmaking. Previously, all professionals working in cinema were represented by the Sindicato dos Profissionais de Cinema (SPC), and it was here that filmmakers gathered to form the Comissão de Cineastas Antifascistas on 29 April. However, a split became apparent between those working in distribution and exhibition, and filmmakers and technicians in production. Workers in exhibition and distribution were in favour of a market-led approach. They relied on tips to supplement their paltry wages, and avant-garde Portuguese films drew tiny audiences in comparison with the huge crowds that flocked to see Hollywood movies. By contrast, those in production expected the Revolution to be a new beginning in which avant-garde Portuguese cinema would be nurtured.

Within a month, most production workers broke from the SPC to form their own union, the Sindicato dos Trabalhadores do Filme (later Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Produção do Cinema e Televisão, STPCT). The reasons for this schism were expressed in an open letter by the directors Fonseca e Costa and Luís Galvão Teles to the Ministry of Social Communication and published in *Cinéfilo*.⁴⁸ The letter was a manifesto that argued it was necessary to overthrow existing 'fascist-corporatist' legislation, which favoured the dominance of foreign distribution monopolies, described as a form of 'cultural and political colonialism'.⁴⁹ In its place a national cinema should be built 'from the roots' that would serve the objectives of the MFA. For cinema to play its part in the Revolution, the filmmakers declared, it would have to be 'Portuguese, anti-imperialist and with a social and political function that has been systematically denied'.⁵⁰

In August 1974 the provisional government addressed the situation by appointing Vasco Pinto Leite Director-General of Spectacles. One of his first acts was to create the Comissão Consultiva para as Actividades Cinematográficas (CCAC), through which to begin a process of consultation between interested parties. The CCAC was to determine how filmmaking would be financed, its modes of operation

⁴⁶ See Fernando Lopes' interview with Santiago Alvarez, who visited Portugal at the time of the Carnation Revolution. Fernando Lopes, 'De Cuba um amigo: Santiago Alvarez', *Cinéfilo*, 33, 25 May 1974, pp.13–15

⁴⁷ Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture*, 1980 (London: BFI), pp.16–27

⁴⁸ Fonseca e Costa and Luís Galvão Teles, 'O cinema em Portugal na queda do Fascismo', *Cinéfilo*, 33, 25 May 1974. Reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.28–29

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

and organisation, and how it could meet the objectives of the Revolution both by breaking the hold of the distribution monopolies and by forging a new kind of interventionist cinema that would be a driving force in social transformation. It brought together representatives from the ciné clubs, anti-fascist political parties and organisations connected to production and distribution.

This consultative mode soon floundered, however, with conflicts between the State, those working in production and the distributors proving insurmountable. The SPC, which now represented those in distribution and exhibition, abandoned the CCAC after its fourth meeting, claiming it was not capable of elaborating a new law of cinema 'objectively', correctly perceiving that most of the groups represented on the commission were committed to a radical overhaul of the commercial film industry.⁵¹ On 11 April 1975 the government ordered an inquiry into the financial dealings of 'Sarl and Intercine' and 'Lusomundo', one of a series of steps towards the State's objective of nationalisation. The Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA) responded to this possibility by threatening an international boycott. For the first time there seemed to be an opportunity for filmmakers to unite with the State against the corporate monopolies.

Yet in the turbulent 'Hot Summer' of 1975 new conflicts emerged between the State and the production sector that over-shadowed this possibility. The roots of this conflict lay in different notions of how film production should be collectivised. Ironically, the very desire to produce collectivity led to the breakdown in the cohesiveness with which those on the Left could challenge reactionary forces emanating both from within Portugal and from abroad. Already the Groups of Action and Animation of Cinema had been in operation, and in October 1974 some filmmakers who had been members of the Centro Português de Cinema (CPC) broke off to form two new cooperatives: Cinequanon and Cinequipa.

While the CPC was made up of individuals of various political persuasions, including socialists, communists, Maoists and anarchists, Cinequanon was associated with extreme Leftism and Cinequipa with the Socialist Party. All the cooperatives, however, were founded on anti-imperialist and collectivist objectives and saw the destruction of capitalist distribution and exhibition structures as essential. Together, these three cooperatives established the Associação de Cooperativas e Organismos de Base da Actividade Cinematográfica (ACOBAC) in 1975. ACOBAC functioned as a collective front against what the cooperatives perceived to be the increasing infiltration of the PCP into the institutions making critical decisions about the future of cinema.

The cooperatives believed that they should keep control over their own projects and profits, which they saw as necessary to maintain autonomy from the State as part of a plural, liberated system of film production. By contrast, the communist line was that cinema should be collectivised through a centralised project of nationalisation. Following the disintegration of the CCAC, Vasco Pinto Leite replaced it with the Grupo de Trabalho. This time, however, the provisional government was determined not to be hampered by an obligation to consult. Instead, the Grupo de Trabalho was tasked to set up a new infrastructure of cinema in which the interests of the State would go before the commercial interests of the distributors. The

⁵¹ See 'Comunicado do Sindicato de Profissionais de Cinema', in *Celulóide*, 202/203, vol. XVII, November 1974, p.18

Grupo de Trabalho recognised cinema as key to constructing a new national revolutionary consciousness, spread through alternative networks such as the ciné clubs and worker's associations.⁵²

This new determination on the part of the government to make rapid progress towards revolutionising cinema coincided with its radical swing to accelerate the transition to State socialism. On 28 September 1974 supporters of General Spínola planned a 'silent majority' march on the 'Red City' of Lisbon, but were prevented when the MFA and armed PCP activists blocked the roads around the city. Violent confrontations followed.⁵³ Finally on 11 March 1975 a long anticipated attempted coup by right-wing extremists led by Spínola was crushed instantly by the MFA. Paratroopers Spínola had mobilised mutinied and met with embraces the MFA troops sent to suppress them.⁵⁴ Around one hundred military personnel and civilian bankers ended up joining former PIDE officers in prison.⁵⁵

Spínola resigned on 30 September and fled to South America, his credibility shattered. The PCP seized the opportunity to push the provisional government further to the Left, and a military council was set up to oversee the running of the State, dominated by members of the MFA and CopCom.⁵⁶ Some right-wing parties and a Maoist organisation were banned, and centrist and socialist activists were harassed. By the end of July, ministers from both the Socialist Party and the PPD left the provisional government. Soares, who previously aligned the Partido Socialista with the Left, now seized the centre ground and accused the MFA of attempting to impose a 'communist-style police state'.⁵⁷ To many, the idea that the PCP would function within a multi-party democracy seemed increasingly unlikely.⁵⁸

The Grupo de Trabalho's Plan of Production, launched 3 June 1975, marked an irreparable rupture between the State and the cooperatives. Although no 'law of cinema' had yet replaced that of the 7/71 legislation, new roles were defined for the IPC, its task now to organise collectivisation so as to make the

⁵² 'The existence of a cinema of national expression will be assured, which will not be sacrificed to the interests of a distribution/exhibition that is a servant to international capitalism, but guaranteed political and economic independence. The State must intervene with the objective of disciplining the economic situation effecting production, distribution and exhibition, through pursuing an anti-monopolies strategy and the adoption of systems of protection or incentives that favour films of quality... Within the scheme resulting from an adequate definition of the status of non-commercial cinema, a network of distribution and exhibition will be encouraged, centring in turn around the Cinemateca Nacional, the ciné clubs, teaching establishments, People's and Fishermen's associations, cultural and recreational associations, country parishes, factories and other similar institutions. 'Declaração de Princípios da Actividade Cinematográfica', from the personal archive of Vasco Pinto Leite, cited in José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.59

⁵³ On 25 January the first national congress of the right-wing CDS party, which had been formed by members of the former regime, was besieged by left-wing protestors. Then on 7 March a meeting of the centre-right PPD in Setúbal was broken up and two protestors were shot dead in clashes with the police.

⁵⁴ Footage of these extraordinary scenes is included in Rui Simões' *Bom Povo Português*.

⁵⁵ The civilians imprisoned included members of the Espírito Santo banking family, who had been siphoning off money allocated to provide jobs for demobbed troops to safeguard their own private wealth in the event of nationalisation.

⁵⁶ CopCom was an elite military force with the means to maintain the State's tentative control of the unstable political situation. It was headed by Otelo de Carvalho, who had strong Communist sympathies and was made a member of the military council.

⁵⁷ Cited in '1974, Revolution in Portugal', www.socialistworld.net/eng/2004/04/25port.html, p.2

⁵⁸ During the 1970s, some European Communist parties identified themselves with 'Euro-communism', seeking distance from the Soviet regime and to integrate into multi-party parliamentary politics. The Italian Communist Party, for instance, was brought into the coalition government led by the Aldo Moro. Moro was kidnapped and killed by the Red Brigade in 1978.

entire industry a Socialist structure that would 'destroy the imperialist distribution apparatus' and 'put cinema in the service of the Portuguese workers'.⁵⁹ The Plan of Production proposed that all films produced by the IPC were to be made by 'Units of Production', although the cooperatives would be able to get financial support for projects if they were approved by the Grupo de Trabalho.⁶⁰ These would be assessed according to the director's credentials and extent to which the project advanced the revolutionary process.⁶¹ Some of the IPC's resources were also re-directed to the campaigns of cultural dynamisation. On the same day the plan was launched, a large number of directors signed a declaration denouncing the proposals.⁶² Filmmakers in the cooperatives objected that these measures were the antithesis of a genuinely revolutionary cinema, the role of which they understood as being to provoke critical engagement and thought. They objected that the Plan of Production had not involved the participation of any filmmakers and pointed out that the criteria for assessment failed to take account of the new cinematic reality that had emerged since the 1960s, namely, the avant-garde experiments with form of the *Cinema Novo* directors. Ritualised projections of didactic material by the campaigns of cultural dynamisation were criticised for stripping the viewer of the capacity to question the voice of the Party, which was presented as the sole source of knowledge and authority.⁶³

Across the long 'hot summer' questions of what constituted revolutionary cinema was the subject of heated public debates.⁶⁴ But the Grupo de Trabalho began rejecting all attempts at intervention by the union set up by those working in production, citing legislation to argue that all professionals in cinema should unite under one trade union only. This forced the cooperatives back into the SPC, now dominated by workers in distribution and exhibition. Filmmakers associated with *Cinema Novo* claimed the IPC was being infiltrated by a new political force described, in a CPC text expressing solidarity with the other cooperatives, as 'activist bureaucrats, who entered the carpeted chambers of no.45 São Pedro de Alcântara through the back door'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Manuel Neves and Henrique Espirito Santo, both underground PCP militants and members of the ciné clubs under the previous regime, had been given key posts at the IPC. Manuel Neves was put in charge of the Grupo de Trabalho, while Henrique Espirito Santo was made director of production of the Núcleo de Produção, envisaged in the Plan of Production as the body that would control the management of filmmaking.

⁵⁹ *Boletim do Sindicato da Actividade Cinematográfica*, 7, September to December 1975, pp.4–5. Cited in José Filipe Costa *op.cit.*, p.88

⁶⁰ See 'Definição de Unidades de Produção', which was functional between August 1975 and June 1976. Reproduced in *ibid*, Appendix

⁶¹ See 'Proposta para aprovação dos projectos cinematográficos apresentados ao IPC', from the personal archive of Henrique Espirito Santo, cited in José Filipe Costa, *ibid*, p.68

⁶² The declaration was signed by Alberto Seixas Santos António Pedro Vasconcelos, João Roque, António de Macedo, Amílcar Lyra, Leonel Brito, João Matos Silva, Fernando Matos Silva, Manuel Costa e Silva, Fernando Lopes, Rogério Ceitil, Solveig Nordlund, Luís Galvão Telles, Manuela Mourão and Cremilde Mourão, with Manuel de Oliveira, António Reis and José Nascimento giving their approval by telephone. See 'Declaração de um grupo de profissionais de cinema', 6 June 1975, reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.29

⁶³ José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.81

⁶⁴ Discussions included one between filmmakers and other commentators that was televised on the RTP programme *Teleforum*, and the conversation between Robert Kramer, Serge Daney and António Pedro Vasconcelos at the Festival da Figueira da Foz in September. Extracts of these are included in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.43

⁶⁵ 'Afinal o que se passa com o cinema português?', *op.cit.*, p.9

Against the centralised structure being promoted by the authorities, the filmmakers favoured a mixed system in which aesthetic freedom could flourish, tempered only by a form of self-censorship that they identified with the Cuban film institute ICAIC.⁶⁶ In Cuba censorship was supposed to function as a preventative measure against reactionary productions. Its boundaries were open to a degree of interpretation, permitting the address of controversial subjects and formal innovations. This meant that there was some room for manoeuvre within Fidel Castro's directive in 'Words to the Intellectuals': 'Within the revolution, everything, against it, nothing.'⁶⁷ In revolutionary Cuba, cinema had become the focal point of a popular public sphere in which social issues such as gender inequality were subject to lively debate.

The cooperatives saw the plan for Units of Production as a direct threat to their autonomy and the possibility of different models of production co-existing that would be self-governing rather than obliged to plough all profits back to the State. They wanted to maintain intellectual property rights over their films, rather than have to hand these over with the negatives to the IPC, resolving to resist all such 'artificially created' lines of power and the 'successive obstructions raised to the free discussion of the problems of cinematographic activity in Portugal'.⁶⁸ In the eyes of the cooperatives, this meant the path to socialism was not to be a plural one of constructing, in the words of Fernando Lopes, 'a zone of creative and aesthetic liberty through three large cooperatives'.⁶⁹ Instead, it meant an authoritarian cinema structure dominated by the PCP.⁷⁰

In June 1975 bosses and workers in distribution converged in their protests against moves to dismantle the commercial running of cinemas, with workers going on strike and APELDEF, the association of distributors, accusing the government of trying to create a Stalinist structure to control cinema 'reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984'.⁷¹ Renewed pressure also came from the production sector as filmmakers in the cooperatives were forced to return to the SPC as the sole union legally able to represent those in the film industry. The SPC proposed that a percentage of ticket receipts should be put aside for supporting Portuguese productions, and suggested that private cooperatives for distribution should be set up, unlike the single State distributor favoured by the Grupo de Trabalho.

While Communist-controlled Portuguese media reported the violent incidents of the 'Hot Summer' of 1975 as being caused by fascists, the situation on the ground was more complex, with Socialists among those of different political persuasions who took part in heated confrontations to oust unelected local officials appointed by the PCP. Repeatedly these ended in violence on the streets, seizure of illegal arms

⁶⁶ José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.72–73

⁶⁷ Cited in Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema, op.cit.*, p.5

⁶⁸ 'Conclusões do II Encontro do Cinema Português, Caldas da Rainha, 27/29 June 1975. Reprinted in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.32–33

⁶⁹ Interview with Fernando Lopes, *op.cit.*, pp.

⁷⁰ By this stage, the PCP was pursuing its objectives at a national level at an accelerated pace despite the rejection of its policies at the first general elections by the majority of the Portuguese people. When the first democratic elections were held on 25 April 1975, the Partido Socialista (PS) won 37.9%, the PPD 26.4%, PCP 12.5%, CDS 7.7%, MDP-CDE 4%, UDP 0.8%.

⁷¹ Cited by José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.88

and torching of Party offices.⁷² NATO warships congregated in Portuguese waters to prevent Portugal from becoming 'another Cuba'. Although Prime Minister Gonçalves and Carvalho gave the impression that the PCP wing of the government had strengthened, on 13 November the Socialist Party and the PPD emerged as the dominant political forces. PCP members were dismissed from the ministries and Carvalho was imprisoned. Poor smallholders from the North, mobilised by right-wing groups, set up barricades on 24 November to isolate 'Red Lisbon'. The next day, troops occupied military bases and a state of emergency was called.

By 1976 the sixth provisional government since 1974 had come to power. Pressure from Western Europe, which promised financial support and membership of the European Community, forced the State to reduce the power of the military and 'normalise' economic relations. Farms, newspapers, factories, banks and houses that had been nationalised or seized by workers and tenants were almost all returned to their former owners. By the beginning of the 1980s, workers were facing unemployment, rising rents and prices. Once again they were distanced from the political elite and pitted against their employers and the government.⁷³ Relations between the different sectors of cinema were also 'normalised'. There was still no new legal regime to replace the 7/71 legislation and gradually the cooperatives reverted to functioning as independent production companies. This law still stands, Costa commenting that: 'The big question for cinema that the Revolution raised over distribution and exhibition continues suspended, reverberating into the present.'⁷⁴

But what also reverberates in the cinematic archive is a series of gaps and potentialities that were not realised in the event. What was captured in a few rare moments of film – the euphoric spirit of Revolution, its conflicts, contradictions or failures – was often passed over, subjected to self-censorship or argued over in a pedantic fashion that missed much of what was genuinely revolutionary in the unstable years of 1974 to 1976. In the case of Kramer's film, for instance, certain sequences were subject to a process of white-washing by the American Left, which was unable to acknowledge more complex critical positions beyond the dualisms of the Cold War. Kramer claims that

My Portugal film is the only film in which some of the best material was cut out. Censored by me! There is a really great sequence from a Communist party meeting in Porto late at night, with four or five couples of men, older workers, dancing very very very drunk. A very beautiful long slow scene. And somewhere in that scene is the whole history of the working

⁷² On 24 July Granada television broadcast a report on events at the small town of ..., where an initially peaceful gathering of townspeople to oust their Communist mayor ended in the ransacking of the PCP headquarters. The MFA, who removed an arms stash found in the building, became unable to control a situation in which the enraged crowd became determined to get their hands on PCP members whose lives the MFA were charged to protect. As the people met the following day to elect a new mayor, the Portuguese television reported that a small band of former PIDE officers and extremists had been responsible.

⁷³ Stewart Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.*, p.146

⁷⁴ José Filipe Costa, *op.cit.*, p.106

class movement in Europe, the courage of it, the dead end of it. I got back to the States and people said, 'You can't do that – its anti-Communist!'⁷⁵

The ambiguous effect that images of revolutionary turbulence had internationally was yet more apparent in the way in which PREC figured in mainstream Western media circuits. As alarm among NATO members mounted over Portugal's socialist turn, the right-wing press snapped up photographs of ransacked buildings and hungry, ragged children. The dispossessed, masked by the fascist regime with a screen of folkloric images, were brought to the public eye but in pictures that coincided with the West's fantasies and fears about communism. A socialist Revolution in Western Europe had only certain permissible meanings: totalitarianism or chaos. Cold war paranoia is perhaps most clear in the CBN report for US television that claimed Portugal was 'Cuba in Europe', arguing that wherever the threat of communism emerges, a nation's right to self-determination vanishes and the US is justified to intervene. Western European aid became conditional on Portugal continuing to function as a 'democracy', images of the Revolution having garnered support for an economic boycott.

When Pev Holmqvist re-visits the PCP peasant-activist Custódia in *Outro País*, she claims the Portuguese Revolution failed because of a lack of discipline. It was 'a brazen freedom when everyone could shout anything'. As Kramer points out, brief experiments with Revolution are often characterised as 'childish excess' and consigned to a corner. In Portugal, he states, the successive provisional governments spent all the country's gold reserves gained through colonial exploits on keeping the unstable political situation afloat. Yet such moments enrich humanity:

My radar is leading me to the places where people are acting in what is often called an infantile way, that is to say, they are actually asking the big question, which is 'what is the best way for people to live together?' It's also been a situation that is very dangerous. It's scary, it's chaotic, it could explode in your face, and the richness of human experience is enhanced by such moments historically. Apparently people can't stand to live like that for a very long time. In fact, the world would be fabulous if we lived like that – right on the edge of a utopian promise.⁷⁶

As the revolutionary process came to an end and the political situation 'normalised', many of the radical filmmakers, photographers and journalists dispersed to other situations in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. In place of the joy or rage that feeds the flames of radical action, what is left in the aftermath of a defeated revolution is a kind of paralyzing melancholy. Holmqvist recalls:

One time I was at the editing table... looking at the interview with Custódia when she is so sad ... about the revolution and how ... nothing came out of it... and I started to cry myself because I was feeling that 'My God, I mean, they actually believed in this, and I believed it too.'

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

For some Portuguese filmmakers, the defeat of the Revolution involved not only disappointment, but a melancholic questioning of what it meant to be Portuguese after Africa. Simões' *Bom Povo Português* (1977) begins with a graphic close-up of a baby being born, symbolising the painful, intense 'delivery' of the Portuguese people, born into the revolutionary process with a promise of liberation. *Bom Povo* is shot in black and white and makes much use of archive images from 1974 to 1976 (Plate 10). The film explains that soon after the Carnation Revolution, the MFA handed over political power to the professional politicians. It shows footage of the 1 May demonstrations, with Cunhal and Soares together on a platform in a moment of solidarity across the Left that would not endure. As Socialist leaders from across Europe join the Portuguese on the podium, it seemed that after the fall of Salazar's obsolete isolationism, Portugal was no longer 'alone'.

But, the voiceover recounts, the 1st Provisional Government of 1974 was established around a compromise between conflicting forces, meaning that 'it has to fall'. Rather than the direct democracy claimed by the tenants associations and the peasants pushing forward land reform, the State offered the 'classical' democracy of elections – 'a shop for regimes'. The camera pans across the sea of people and suddenly the screen begins to ripple, becoming a surface of moving water. While the Revolution is one of those rare historical moments 'when the possibility of a different kind of future opens up', the screen becomes an image for the people of Portugal, historically oppressed, hardworking and 'hardly changed in centuries', but as yet indecipherable. The screen becomes a liquid as the voiceover shifts to a lyrical register:

In this undefined country, like a pain that persists and cannot be described, the Good People of Portugal have, since they opened their eyes, just caught only a glimpse of the outlines of their dungeon. In the distance, as always, the sea keeps the people company and mixes its breath with this light.

Bom Povo gathers together incidents to tell a narrative of the gradual betrayal of the Revolution. For instance, workers take over a radio station and a daily newspaper, which previously were run by a corporation and the Church, and are surprised to find the main political parties on the Left are against their actions, which put these two media outside the control of the establishment. Interwoven with events in Portugal are images of Independence in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. 'What happens after Africa?' the voiceover asks. After centuries of colonisation and de-colonisation, and with the fleeting solidarity of Socialism gone, Portugal finds itself finally 'alone', trapped between the sea and the mountains in a 'suspended requiem'.

In the years during which thousands of settlers or '*retornados*' fled to Portugal from Angola and Mozambique, there is barely any reference to the colonial wars in Portuguese films made after the Revolution. The wars in Africa, in which so many lives were lost, became the source of a sadness that, it seems, could not be spoken. A rare exception is João Botelho's *Um Adeus Português* (1985) In *Um Adeus Português* this grief, repressed even within the intimacy of the family, becomes the means to explore a sentiment described in the first words of the film as 'that small pain *à portuguesa* so meek it's nearly

vegetable'. At the beginning of the film Raul, father of a young soldier who died 'over there' in Angola in the last days of the war, watches television. On the screen is an image of the Portuguese flag floating in the sky. As Marc Chevrie points out, normally it would be accompanied by the national anthem, but here there is only silence.⁷⁷ Cut off from the past but unable to leave it, the film suggests that there is a certain postcolonial Portuguese subjectivity that is marked by melancholy and is suspended in grief. *Um Adeus Português* breaks this silence that hangs over an impossible gap between the present and an 'elsewhere' that is of both time and place, and yet intimately folded into the everyday.

Um Adeus Português revolves around Laura, the young widow of the soldier, and her parents-in-law, Raul and Piedade, who come from the rural conservative North to spend a few days in Lisbon. While Laura is involved in another relationship, she is prepared to put this to one side while her dead husband's parents come to stay. The present-day is shot in colours that saturate the screen claustrophobically, capturing the figures of the family often immobile or quietly following routine gestures, their faces worn and drained. This use of colour makes a nod to the 1950s sentimental domestic melodramas made in widescreen Technicolor, through which Douglas Sirk's critical view of American society found an outlet within the Hollywood studio system. At times *Um Adeus* flashes back in black and white to Angola in 1973. Here the son's patrol moves nervously through a studio-set jungle. The soldiers sit in their studio-set barracks, silhouetted against a sun-set backdrop, one teaching African children the rivers of Portugal – a philanthropic gesture in which the geography of Europe is imposed as part of a colonial fantasy underpinned by violence, but it is one that is shortly to be rendered obsolete. The artifices of the cinematic surface are made part of the film's visual language, so that what comes to mind is the surreal world of the dream-work.⁷⁸ The soldiers move through the foreign landscape of the past, in which the brutal, the tender and the absurd mingle in the last gasp of Portuguese colonialism. Each scene ends with a fade out – action is suspended – with past and present running in parallel through the film but unable to speak across the void.

Raul and Piedade have a younger son in Lisbon, and unlike the other characters who are usually seen indoors, he first appears in a busy café, where sharply dressed black and white young people meet, romance and bicker over their coffees. A couple sit before a blue sea bordered with palm trees. It could be a postcard from Africa, and as the shot widens it turns out that it *is* just such an image, a *trompe-oil* surface of illusion that is the mundane backdrop to a scene in Lisbon, part of the fabric of the city. Despite the younger son's frustration with his traditional parents, who are disoriented by the urban bustle, he persuades

⁷⁷ Marc Chevrie, 'Entre-temps: *Um Adeus Português* de João Botelho', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.393, February 1987, p.17

⁷⁸ According to Freud, 'dream-work' is the process by which unconscious material is given the surface form of the dream through 'condensation, displacement and dramatization.' He notes that 'The psychical material of the dream-thoughts habitually includes recollections of impressive experiences' from the past, which the 'dream-work' transforms and re-composes into 'a kind of façade'. 'In the erection of a dream-façade use is not infrequently made of wishful phantasies which are present in the dream-thoughts in a pre-constructed form... The wishful phantasies revealed by analysis in night-dreams often turn out to be repetitions or modified versions of scenes from infancy; thus in some cases the façade of the dream directly reveals the dream's actual nucleus, distorted by an admixture of other material.' Sigmund Freud, 'On Dreams', in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds), *Art in Theory 1900–2000*, 2003 (Oxford: Blackwell), pp.22–23

his father to come out to a club, which is animated with music from an African jazz band. Here, dancing with a tall striking black woman, the father feels a rare throb of pleasure. Such scenes make visually apparent that Lisbon is and always has been a city of Africans, just as it is a city that was built by Africans.⁷⁹ Yet there is a certain 'goodbye' to Africa that, then at least, Portugal had not yet made.

⁷⁹ The African population of Lisbon is a long established one. Its influx continued after the official abolition of the slave trade, for which the city was an important European centre, as large numbers of Africans were brought to Portugal to work in construction. Praça de Rossio is in the historic centre of Lisbon, close to where slave ships once unloaded their cargos to the Casa dos Escravos on what is now Praça do Município, which then had at its centre a whipping post. Today Rossio is a meeting place for recent African immigrants, who sip the cherry gin *ginjinha* alongside elderly Portuguese in the bars that line the streets. Here they do deals and make international calls home. Yet historically too it was one of the places in the city centre where presence of Africans was most visible; from the sixteenth century African men and women wandered the streets with ladder and bucket offering their services to whitewash the walls of houses. One of the larger waves of immigration came when the Salazar regime brought in workers from the colonies to construct the monumental fascist architecture of the 1930s. The white cobbled pavements, pale stone edifices and white-washed walls that make Lisbon dazzle in the Atlantic sunlight were thus built through the labour of Africans. Jean-Yves Loude, *Lisboa: Na Cidade Negra*, trans. by Manuela Mendonça Torres, 2005 (Lisbon: Dom Quixote), pp.40–46



Em Defesa da Revolução Africana

**FRANTZ
FANON**



Plate 16

Cover of Frantz Fanon's *Em Defesa da Revolução Africana*, first edition in Portuguese, 1980



Plate 17
Photographs taken during the Portuguese Revolution, from *Outro País*, 1999

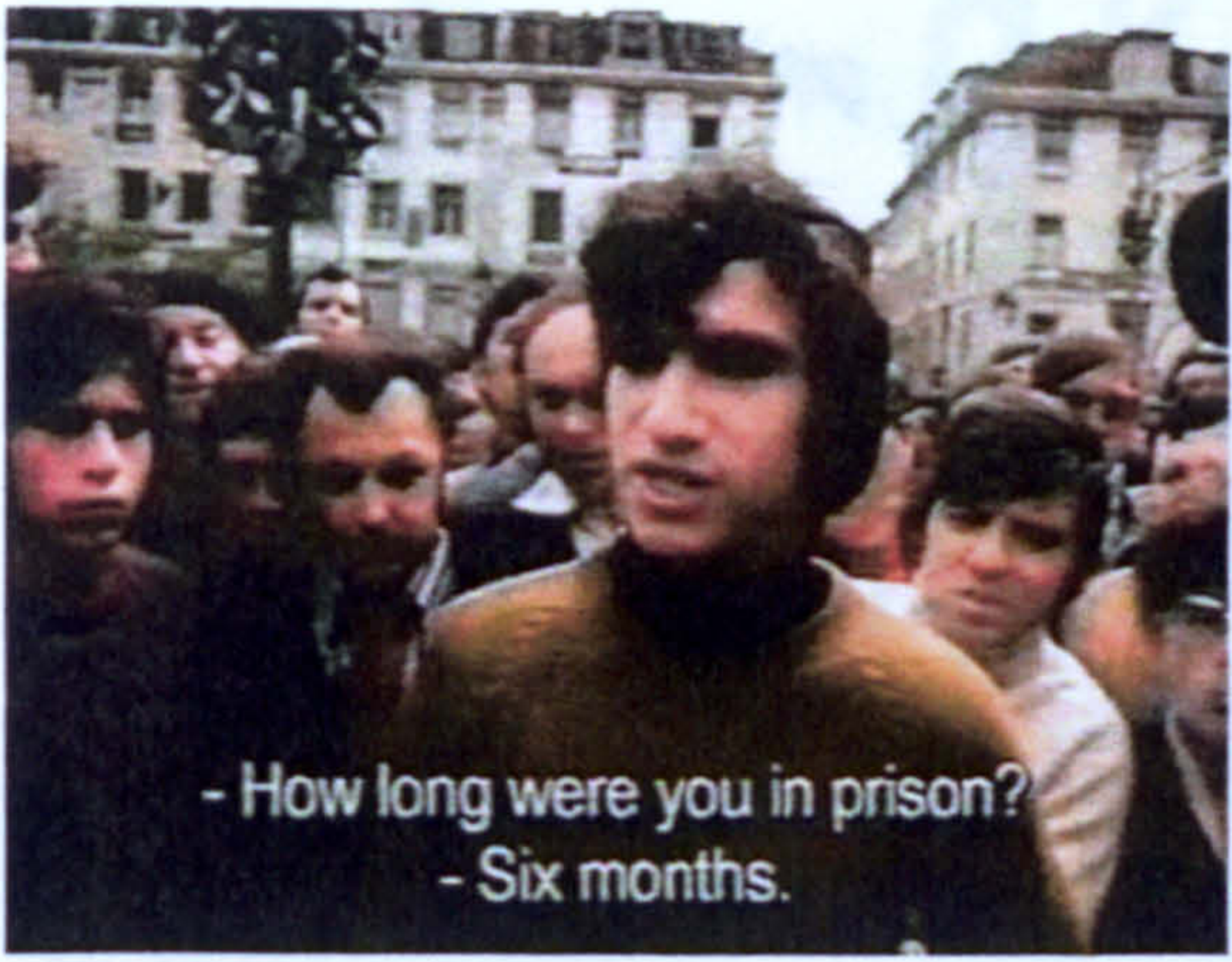
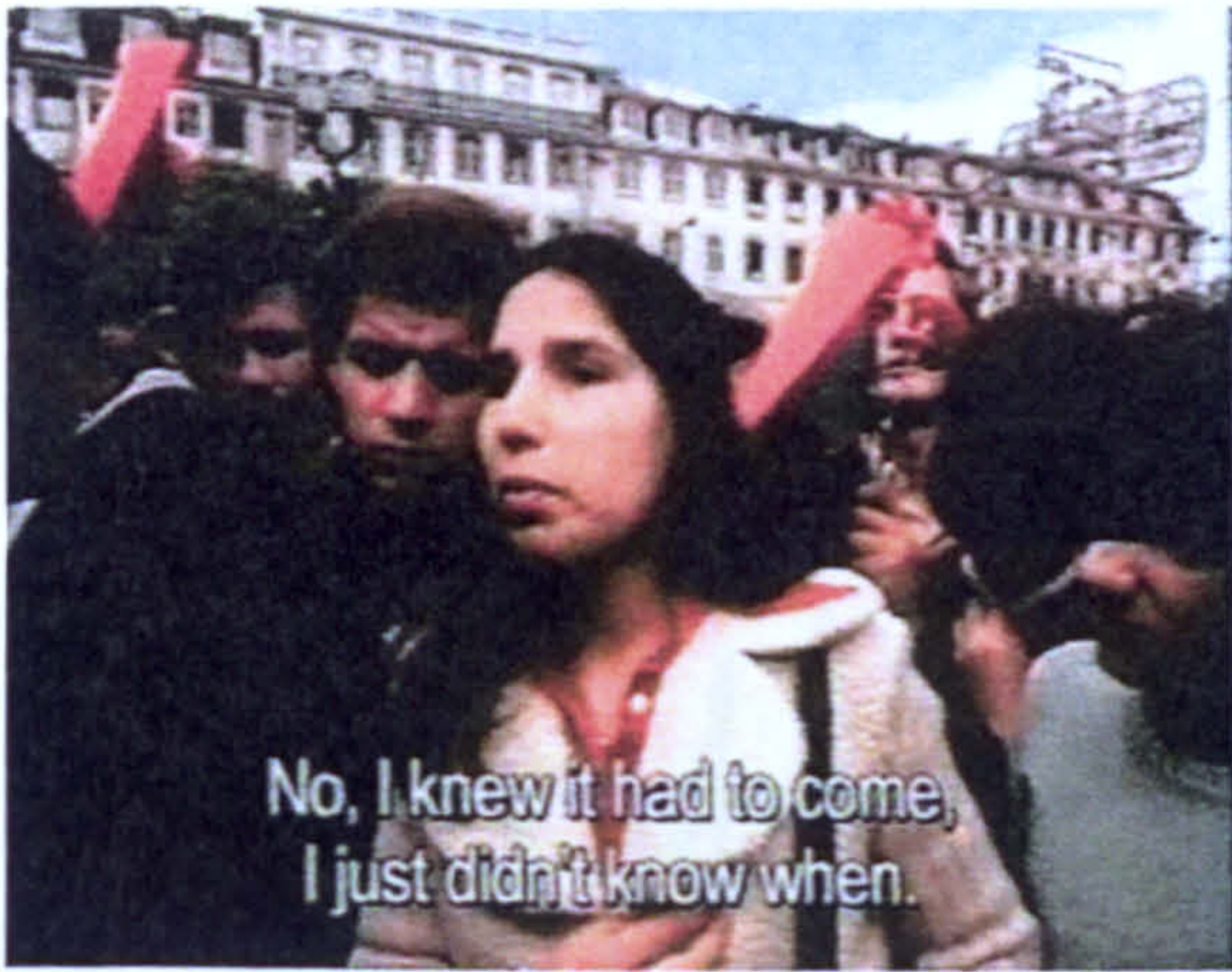


Plate 18
As Armas e o Povo, 1975

OMILAGRE
DA TERRA
MORENA

Plate 19

Milagro en a Tierra Morena, 1974

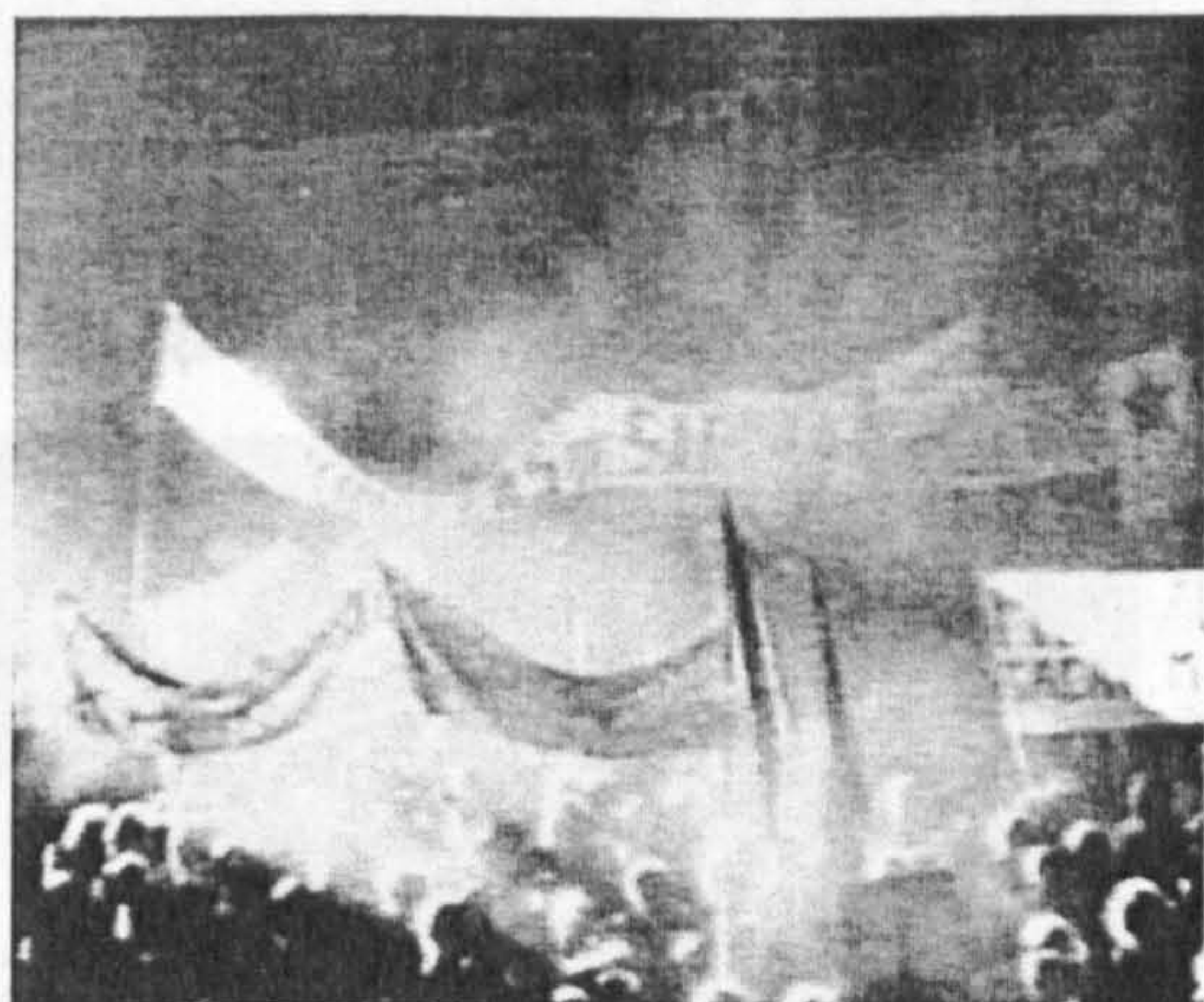
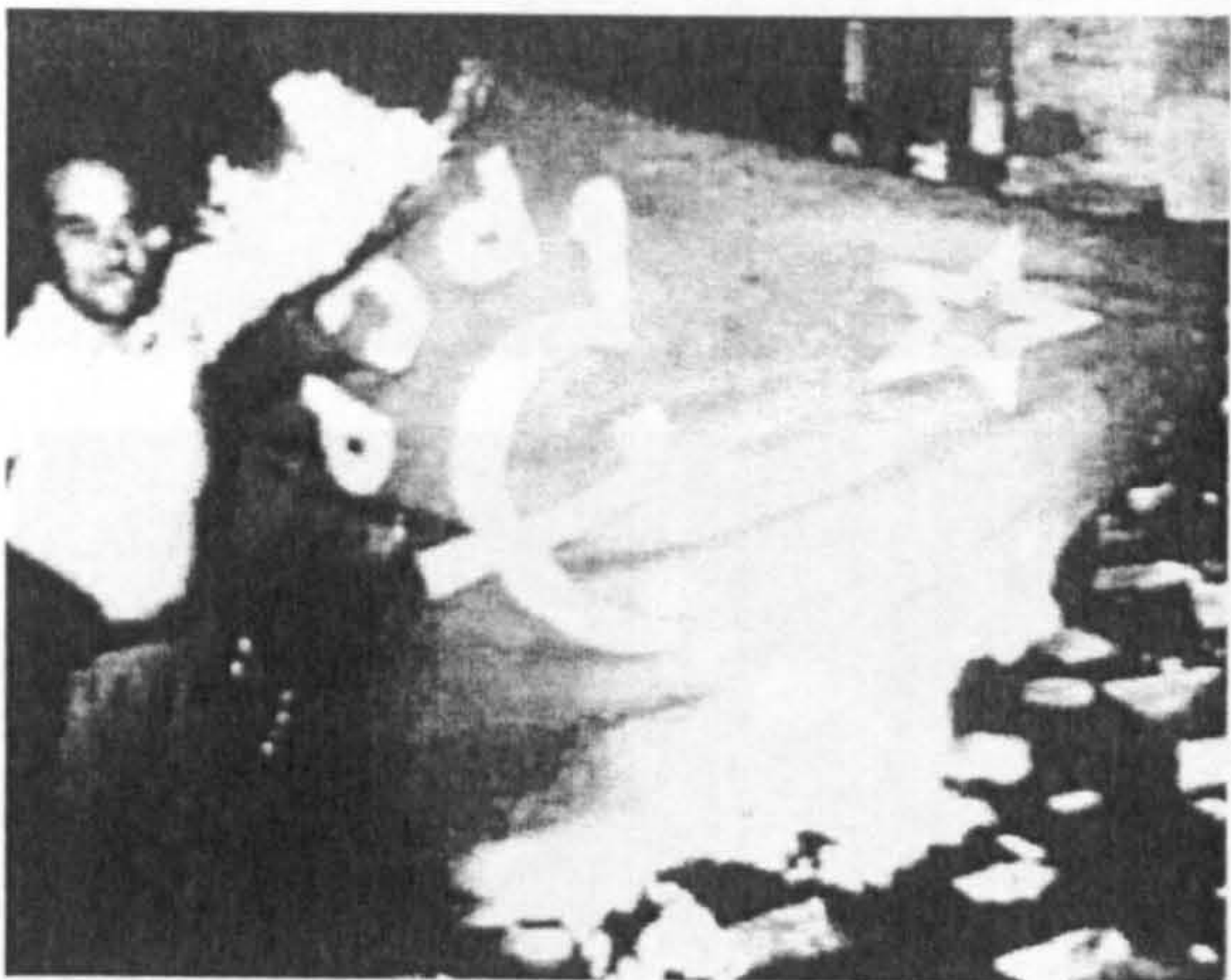


Plate 20
Bom Povo Português, 1977-1980

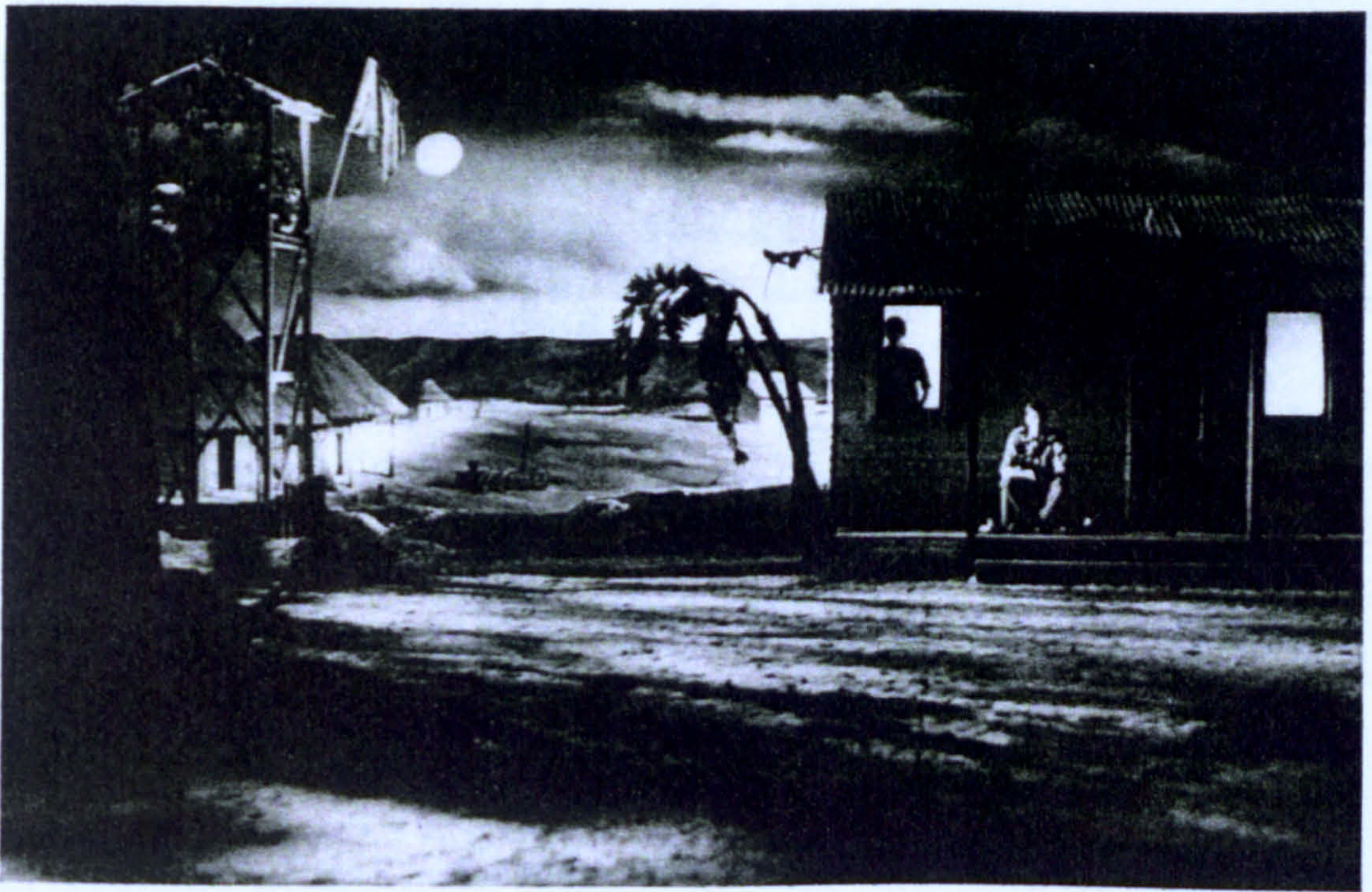


Plate 21
Um Adeus Português, 1985

Chapter 4

The Screen in a Blackboard

'Not everyone likes it', Pedro shrugs, handing me the mock-up programme for the documentary festival. He points out the street art it features, a sculpture and a print that depict village scenes of audiences watching make-shift screens. He picked them up years ago in Maputo, the kind of objects these days laid out on the pavement to sell to tourists, but he has a special fondness for them. 'Someone complained that it's an old-fashioned image I'm putting out, but I don't care. It's part of my culture, part of what's specific to the experience of cinema in Mozambique. This bit is actually a blackboard, but I got the designer to change it into a screen. Like what Sembene says about cinema being the "night-school of Africa".' I peruse the programme, noting the couple in the midst of the painting, the flatness of the image making it ambiguous if the man's hand is raised in an innocent wave or is fondling the woman's breast, nipple between thumb and finger. Her hand, tucked around his shoulder, suggests consent. It is a vignette that tenderly suggests there is an erotic seed cached within every encounter with the screen... Courting a ripple of controversy, the festival only has one 'Mozambican' film — billed with panache in 1975 as a story of 'revolutionary love' and 'starring the people of Mozambique', but not screened here for some thirty years. What kind of image might make the anticipation that attended Independence palpable again? In the scattered archive of the struggle certain set pieces recur, captured repeatedly to show the world the new society gestating in the liberated zones: young and old guerrillas marching through the bush, medical units, schools that consist of a blackboard in a forest clearing. Yet when the mise-en-scène appears in this film it slips into a different register, and the blackboard produces a magic circle. A hand reaches forward clutching a white chalk and, accompanied by a pulse of voices sounding each syllable, writes, tentatively, as if for the first time: re — vo — lu — ção. The incantation hums with a multitude of voices. The giddy camera circles until it comes to rest upon the face of a young woman standing, chalk in hand, before the board. She looks at the word so beautifully crafted in its strokes and curves, and her face lights up with a smile. The screen fills with an image of joy.

August 2005, Maputo

The anticipation that attended Mozambican Independence in 1975 found expression in ambitions for cinema to be a driving force of Revolution. The screen, it was hoped, would function as an itinerant blackboard. Taking films beyond the small educated elites in the colonial cities, mobile cinema units would traverse the huge territory, explaining the Revolution to 'the people', raising political consciousness, reversing the alienating effects of colonialism, and at the same time consolidating the authority of the State. Cinema would encourage identification with a national identity born in the armed struggle and personifying the ideals of revolutionary nationalism. The Revolution in Mozambique thus demanded the creation of new cinematic languages for a people with no prior experience of the cinema screen.¹ In the making of and experimentation with these cinematic forms, a first generation of Mozambican filmmakers were trained who would not have had the opportunity to work in film under colonialism. Independence constituted a unique event that came out of unrepeatably circumstances in which a series of hopes and conditions of possibility led to new ways for cinema to be an agent of Revolution (Plate 22).

The screen needs to be understood and theorised in relation to these experiments, which worked at different scales and involved varying aesthetics, modes of production, ideological positions and audiences. These drew on the capacity of the moving image to reveal relationships and dynamics between people, objects and ideas in specific local circumstances as well as from dissimilar places and times. At a moment in which the very idea of 'truth' was becoming redundant in radical European film theory in the late 1970s and 1980s, a different notion was being posited in Mozambique. Here, cinematic truth and 'revolutionary use-value' became intertwined and constituted through negotiation with the audience, who also, in some of the more radical experiments with documentary filmmaking, became producers rather than objects of their own moving image.² While the notion of the screen as an itinerant blackboard circulated in many places and is articulated so beautifully in Sembene's description of cinema as the 'night-school of Africa', in its realisation and experience the concept was most fully explored and realised in the experience of cinema during the Revolution in Mozambique.

Ambitions for cinema in revolutionary Mozambique centred on the Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC) set up by the FRELIMO government in 1976. It drew on the expertise of radical *cinéphiles* and amateur filmmakers who gathered at ciné clubs in colonial Beira and Lorenzo Marques, and of those who had made films with FRELIMO during the armed struggle (see Chapter 2). During the late 1970s and 1980s the INC became the most developed realisation of a strategy for decolonising African cinema that had emerged trans-nationally, pursued by FESPACI and articulated at the Meeting of Third World Filmmakers at Algiers in 1973. At a time when the nation-state could be imagined as a force through which to break the grip of global capitalism, it was thought that the decolonisation of African screens could be achieved through revolutionary governments nationalising their film industries and using international cooperation

¹ While some colonial filmmaking projects had already tried to do this for reactionary purposes, this had not been attempted before on the scale or with the ambitions of a revolutionary process of decolonisation across an entire nation. It should be noted, however, that there were instances when filmmaking projects, such as some of those set up by the British Bantu Cinema Experiment, operated with a degree of autonomy that defied the original racist and patronising ideology of the institutions from which they emanated. See Mark Nash, 'The Modernity of African Film', in Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994*, *op.cit.*, p.340

² Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', 1934, *Selected Writings: Volume 2 1927–1934*, trans. Edmund Jephcott *et al.*, 2002 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), p.775

to mount a collective challenge to the neo-colonialist distribution monopolies that strangled local productions. For FRELIMO, the INC was the institutional means through which cinema could be harnessed for political mobilisation and mass education. While this ambition led to the privileging of pedagogical, documentary and propaganda films, different modes of revolutionary cinema were created within this frame. This chapter focuses on those projects that attempted to democratise production and address this new cinema audience with film languages that answered to their specific needs and desires; many of the INC's other productions are discussed in Chapter 5.

Radical filmmakers were drawn by this revolutionary promise from around the world, continuing a practice that had begun during the armed struggle when FRELIMO did not have the means to make its own films. A number came directly from other revolutionary situations in Portugal, Guinea-Bissau and elsewhere. The Mozambican Revolution was an opportunity to move beyond the limitations of working as an individual militant filmmaker by contributing to the construction of an anti-Imperialist cinema on a national scale. Filmmakers who made repeated visits, including Ruy Guerra, Med Hondo, Ousmane Sembene and Santiago Alvarez, are figures whose trajectories mark out a map of engaged cinema that connects Mozambique to diverse radical forms through which cinema has embodied Revolution, from Dziga Vertov to Sergei Eisenstein's innovations with montage, through Italian Neorealism to Brazilian *Cinema Novo*. The films that resulted from these sustained collaborations demonstrate a range of different revolutionary modes, some articulating radical desire in ways that did not conform to the demands of the Party, inviting audiences into new realms of cinematic pleasure. Some of these aesthetics of liberation suggest a common culture of struggle and political consciousness traversing time and space that is radically open to future appropriation – whenever a new revolutionary situation makes the demand.

During the Revolution, therefore, Mozambique became a key site for theorising and, for a time, realising the decolonisation of cinema in the region. This had a series of unexpected effects that rupture both Eurocentric assumptions that the West is the site of radical innovations that are belatedly exported to the 'Third World' and a certain scepticism that such projects are yet another manifestation that mirrors the dynamics of Imperialism, in which Europe projects its utopian fantasies onto Africa as if it were a blank slate waiting to be inscribed. Jean Rouch and Jean-Luc Godard carried out experiments in Mozambique into what technologies and modes of production would be appropriate for making cinema and television able to realise the desires of a liberated people. These examples show the entanglements of the postcolonial to be more complicated than has often been assumed, necessitating analysis that looks beyond a narrow definition of material 'results' or a clear chronology of influences and effects.³ In Mozambique, Rouch's *cinema vérité* morphed into something far more radical, in which the very notion of ethnographic film changed in the hands of filmmakers engaged in making a political intervention. Godard was profoundly affected by the possibilities the Revolution seemed to be opening up in 1978, enabling him to take initial steps towards conceiving of what a genuinely liberated television might look like in ways that had become

³ Manthia Diawara, for instance, says that for 'materialists' like himself the lack of conditions for the full realisation of the projects meant that he sees them as a 'failure' even while he recognises that Godard's concern was more 'to provoke thinking about the image and to make people ask themselves, "what do we want when we have television?"'. Manthia Diawara, 'Sonimage in Mozambique', in Gareth James and Florian Zeyfang (eds), *I said I love. That is the promise. The video politics of Jean-Luc Godard*, 2003 (Berlin: B_Books), p.111

unimaginable in Europe. His proposals were rejected by the State, but his ideas about how video might enable a radical democratisation of production find resonances in later projects.

Significantly, the people present at the conception of the INC had contrasting and even contradictory notions of cinema and what it could achieve in the Revolution. For the urban white, mestiço and assimilated elite who frequented the colonial ciné clubs, the screen was a site of artistic and intellectual engagement. In the context of colonial rule, when Mozambique was subject to the double censorship of Portuguese fascism and South African Apartheid, this creation of a social sphere of progressive critical interaction was a political act even when the material was not overt propaganda.⁴ Before Independence, the Carnation Revolution in 1974 meant that film clubs across the Portuguese empire were able to position their activities as revolutionary openly. As censorship ended, they turned their attention from the work of European *auteurs* to the radical filmmaking taking place in Portugal and across the Tricontinental. For instance, an edition of the journal *Objectiva* produced by the Lorenzo Marques film club includes articles on '25 April and the Film Clubs', Sarah Maldoror's *Sambiganza*, the role of cinema in politics, Chilean cinema, excerpts from Aimé Césaire and Mao Tse Tung, a translation of Solanas and Gettino's article 'Towards a Third Cinema' and the poem 'The Guerilla' by Damião Cosme (Plate 23).⁵ Many who had been members of the ciné clubs or students' movements were strongly committed to Revolution, and a number took up positions at the INC where they strove to promote artistic expression and quality in production and acquisition.

By contrast, FRELIMO's interest in cinema was primarily instrumentalist. Early on in the struggle, FRELIMO realised the importance of producing information and propaganda, as it was necessary to convince Mozambicans to support the armed insurrection as well as to garner support abroad. Dispersed peasant communities had to be shown how their difficulties were compounded by colonial exploitation, and persuaded that fighting for Independence could improve their lives.⁶ Rural populations divided by culture and language, with little frame of reference outside their immediate worlds, had no inherent nationalist commitment to an abstract notion of 'Independence'.⁷ By 1975 FRELIMO was convinced that

⁴ See Chapter 2 and interview with Maria Delurdes Tocato, *op.cit.*

⁵ Ciné-Clube de Lorenzo Marques, *Objectiva*, July 1974. I am grateful to Guilherme Alphonso for giving me access to his archive of documents from the Lorenzo Marques and Maputo film clubs.

⁶ As Cabral recognised in Guinea-Bissau, it was crucial to 'Always bear in mind that people are not fighting for ideas, for things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.' Cited in Pablo Luke Ehioze Idahosa, 'Going to the People: Amílcar Cabral's Materialist Theory and Practice of Culture and Identity', in *Lusotopie*, 2, 2002, p.29

⁷ Looking back at this period, the Resolutions to the first FRELIMO Conference of Information and Propaganda in 1975 conclude that during the struggle: '...in zones where it was possible to carry out intense activity in information and propaganda before beginning the armed struggle, [these campaigns] had immediate success. On the contrary, in places where that wasn't possible, our soldiers often came face to face with indifference and even hostility from populations who had for centuries been submitted to intense colonialist propaganda.' '...a experiência ia mostrando o valor deste sector: nas zonas em que foi possível realizar uma actividade intensa de informação e propaganda antes de começar a luta armada – esta conheceu sucessos imediatos. Pelo contrario, onde e quando tal não foi possível, os nossos combatentes vieram muitas vezes de enfrentar a indiferença e mesmo a hostilidade das populações, durante séculos submetidas a uma intensa propaganda colonialista.' 'Mensagem do Departamento de Informação e propaganda da province de Cabo Delgado à Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e

cinema could teach *o povo* the meaning of Independence, what it meant to be Mozambican, and could show how the needs and energies of the peasants and workers would dictate the Revolution.

The 1st Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda da FRELIMO, held in Macomia from 26 to 30 November 1975, set out the Party's objectives for cinema. Although at this stage cinema was viewed as secondary in effectiveness to the radio in its capacity to reach 'the masses', the 'Resolution on cinema, books and records' highlights three fronts through which the filmmaking and distribution would be transformed. First, it condemned 'the projection of films based on themes that negate the realities of Mozambicans, namely the exhibition of films that are pornographic, include gratuitous violence or markedly reactionary ideologies'.⁸ Minutes to a meeting held on 12 November 1975 show FRELIMO's concern about the quantity of films that had unacceptable levels of 'pornography and gratuitous violence' that had flooded into Mozambique from 1974, because of the lifting of censorship during the Carnation Revolution.⁹ FRELIMO announced that it would nationalise all channels of distribution into Mozambique and set up a Comissão de Exame e Classificação de Espectáculos to control exhibition and define 'rigorous criterias' for the classification of films.

Second, it stated the necessity to create 'a truly Mozambican cinema', recommending the production of films about the armed struggle, colonialism and 'the various phases of revolution in our country'.¹⁰ This would involve the construction of systems of distribution that would take cinema to Mozambicans across the country, emphasising the importance of mobile cinemas for education in the collective villages, specifically through documentaries that would be commissioned by the Department of Information. Third, it addressed the need to set up film circuits with other Socialist countries. As well as combating the neocolonisation of the cinema industry, this would give Mozambicans access to 'films that testify to the struggles of other Peoples of the World against oppression and exploitation, on the struggle of the working classes, films of a political, educational and informative nature, recreational but not in ways that mitigate against our cultural values and ideological principles'.¹¹

At Independence in 1975 a Serviço Nacional de Cinema was established to meet immediate needs, primarily because the authorities needed to keep the cinemas in the cities running in the chaos that followed the mass departure of the Portuguese.¹² The first films released by the Serviço were those made to document Independence, such as Fernando da Silva's *Um Ano de Independência* (1975). A number made during the armed struggle, such as Yugoslav Dragustin Popovitch's *Nachingwea* and *Do Romuva ao Maputo*, were also released in 1975.¹³ *Nachingwea* represents the history of FRELIMO from its Second Congress in 1968 up to Independence through the story of the camp at Nachingwea in Tanzania. This piece of land allocated by the Tanzanian government becomes the central metaphor for the film. *Nachingwea* begins as

Propaganda da FRELIMO', in *Documentos da Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda da FRELIMO*, Macomia, 26–30 Novembro 1975, p.10

⁸ 'Resolução Sobre o Cinema, o Livro e o Disco', in *Ibid*

⁹ 'Acta de uma reunião onde se discutiram questões relacionadas com o cinema no período imediatamente posterior à independência', 12 November 1975. Jorge Rebelo kindly provided a copy of this document.

¹⁰ 'Resolução Sobre o Cinema, o Livro e o Disco', *op.cit.*, p.79

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.78–79

¹² See interview with Margaret Dickinson, *op.cit.*

¹³ For discussion of Popovitch's earlier film *Venceremos*, see Chapter 2.

an area that is 'dry, arid and denuded of vegetation' and is transformed by FRELIMO militants into a verdant and productive zone, as make-shift tents become houses, workshops and schools made of bricks and mortar.¹⁴ Cultivation of the fields runs parallel to the awakening of political consciousness through education and military training. FRELIMO is thus the mechanism that brings together militants with 'the people' to fight for Independence against the enemies of the 'exploited classes'. In Nachingwea's transformation into fertile land, the base becomes a zone in which people realise their productive potential, suggesting that FRELIMO was poised to carry out the same task across the whole of Mozambique. *Do Romuva ao Maputo* follows Samora Machel's month-long 'triumphant and symbolic presidential journey' from Romuva to Maputo, beginning in May 1975 and culminating in the proclamation of Independence on 25 June.¹⁵ Recording Machel's reception by the crowds who flocked to catch a glimpse of him, the journey comes to signify FRELIMO's symbiosis with the desires of the people. While these films were particularly favoured by the Party for propaganda purposes, at Independence there was in fact a range of ways in which the recurrent themes, tropes and narratives of Mozambican resistance to colonialism were treated, some more experimental and expressive.

The film '25' (1975) by Brazilians José Celso and Celso Luccas achieves a strange fusion of divergent tendencies, being about Mozambican Independence but also expressing a global political imagination that suggests this specific struggle is part of a culture of Revolution beyond borders that has an almost mystical dimension. The title refers to 25 June 1962, date of the foundation of FRELIMO; 25 September 1964, the 'Day of Resistance' that began the armed struggle; 25 April 1974, when the Carnation Revolution toppled fascism in Portugal, and 25 June 1975, the day Mozambique became Independent. The film begins and ends with images of a blackboard in one of the liberated zones. On this blackboard a woman spells out 're - vo - lu - cãõ'. This alphabet of Revolution is the new language the colonised are learning so as to liberate themselves. The filmmakers claimed that '25' is about 'revolutionary love', just as Hollywood makes romantic movies, but here transformed into something that transcends the individual in the event of liberation through the birth of a new shared political consciousness.¹⁶

But if the thread of this film is 'revolutionary love' it strings together a curious menagerie of sounds and images. '25' combines footage of the liberated zones, work in communal villages, celebration of Independence, grassroots re-enactments of anti-colonial resistance in Ilha de Moçambique, slogans, citations and Brechtian fantasy sequences. The sound track is made from fragments of speeches by Samora Machel, Martin Luther King and others, with music evocative of revolutionary struggle. Other references accumulate: the capture of tribal chief Gungunhana, who fought the Portuguese in the nineteenth century, is included through its depiction in offensive scenes from the fiction film *Chaimite* (1953) by Jorge Brun de Canto, but reappropriated to condemn the very system it was made to exonerate. Allusions to racial conflict in the US are made through footage of civil rights protests, Black Panther demonstrations and Ku Klux Klan lynchings, overlaid with the sound of Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit'. Across a film without narrative structure and lasting, in its longest version, over three hours, these images and sounds suggest a

¹⁴ Instituto Nacional de Cinema, *Retrospectiva do cinema Moçambicana*, June 1982 (Maputo: INC), p.11

¹⁵ The Romuva is the river that runs along the border between Tanzania and Mozambique. Maputo is located at Mozambique's southern tip, near the border with South Africa. *Ibid*, p.12

¹⁶ '25', in *Tempo*, no.365, 2nd Trimester, 1977, p.51

common culture of revolutionary struggle, liberation and political consciousness reaching out across time and space.

Celso and Luccas had left Brazil, then under military dictatorship, and, arriving in Portugal at the time of the Carnation Revolution, made the film *O Parto* (see Chapter 3). Realising that Mozambican Independence was imminent, they went to film the liberation, gathered over eight hours of footage and decided to make one long film instead of the seven shorts originally planned.¹⁷ The Portuguese television company who originally commissioned them rejected this proposal, but instead they got support from the Serviço Nacional de Cinema, who ended up producing it as their first film, made as a celebration of Independence. Significantly, however, it would seem the Party didn't know quite what to make of '25'. While it was screened at Cannes, shown on French television and widely distributed through activist circuits in Europe and South America (where, according to Pedro Pimenta, it had a big impact in Brazil), '25' quickly slipped into obscurity in Mozambique.¹⁸ Instead, *Romuva ao Maputo*, which is far more orthodox, became the film most widely distributed across the country through the mobile cinemas. '25' is excessive in length and style, and this, in its very exuberance, could be understood as an expression of freedom liberated from the demands of both commercialism and propaganda.

Yet there are other aspects that militate against its appropriation to the Party line. In one sequence, '25' switches repeatedly from the State celebration of Independence in Maputo, with flags raised, military salutes and politicians embracing each other, to a scene on the beach where people gather to celebrate Independence in another way. A huge crowd forms a circle around a fire, and, as the sun rises and waves crash on the beach, they dance and sing in a ritual imbued with mysticism. The film thus refuses to represent Mozambican identity as a single entity, or to elide the Party elite with 'the people', here signified as a more mysterious multitude of bodies who, it seems, are somewhere else, with their own signs and modes of expression that cannot be contained or represented by the symbols and rhetoric of official politics.

When the INC was set up on 4 March 1976 it absorbed the films made under colonialism by Portuguese-owned production houses as well as those made with FRELIMO during the struggle. These formed the basis of an archive that was used to construct national identity and collective memory. Newsreels and documentaries made to celebrate the glory of the Portuguese empire and glamorise colonial life were re-appropriated to write new narratives of the birth of a nation. In the process what was unleashed was a new and unintended radical potential that shattered the original ideological purpose those moving images served. The film *Estas são as Armas* (1978), for instance, combines archive material from the struggle with images of the former regime to construct a genealogy for FRELIMO that connects it to the earliest resistances to colonialism by Mozambicans, and ends with Samora Machel's speech delivered at the United Nations. One sequence moves from excerpts of *Actualidades de Moçambique* that show the Portuguese governor chinking champagne glasses with British diplomats over a luxurious banquet, to scenes of

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.52

¹⁸ As discussed by Pedro Pimenta in his introduction to the screening of '25' at 'Encontros – Maputo: Festival de Cinema Documentário', 29 September 2005

Mozambicans protesting and atrocities committed by the colonial army (Plate 24).¹⁹ Just as Walter Benjamin argued that the caption of a photograph could wrench it from 'the ravages of modishness' and grant it 'revolutionary use-value', so with a different voiceover and juxtaposed with images of colonial violence, the propaganda of the former regime was used posthumously to indict its own greed and brutality.²⁰ The film concludes with Machel's famous speech 'These are the arms' delivered in a liberated zone during the struggle, where he brandishes a cache of guns seized from the Portuguese.

Instead of renting films from distributors, the INC devised a strategy to build up an archive of world cinema by negotiating the rights to buy copies of films outright. Cinema ticket receipts were then ploughed back into the INC to fund filmmaking, making the relationship between consumption and production reciprocal. The MPEA, the company that monopolised distribution of American films across the Continent, responded to Mozambique's nationalisation with a boycott. With no films to supply to cinemas across the country, the INC relied heavily on material donated by the USSR in the months that followed. Although much of this was banal Soviet propaganda, which led to an initial slump in cinema-going, the INC was eventually able to programme weekly seasons of high quality films. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, before Mozambique's financial crisis when funds from cinema receipts started to be appropriated by the State for other uses, those in acquisition bought films from across the world to put before the Classification Board. The seasons programmed demonstrate how the INC aligned itself with efforts to decolonise cinema and create new aesthetics of liberation that were then emerging across the Continent and the Socialist world (Plate 25).²¹ They sought to educate audiences through debates at screenings, critical literature and the library known as the Servico de Documentação, which was set up in the INC building.

Cinephilia thus mitigated against filmmaking being understood purely instrumentally.²² Simon Hartog, Maria Delurdes Tocato and Pedro Pimenta frequented international film festivals in the late 1970s and early

¹⁹ *Actualidades de Moçambique* was a newsreel made by the colonial production house owned by Melo de Pereira

²⁰ 'What we must demand from the photographer is the ability to put such a caption beneath his picture as will rescue it from the ravages of modishness and confer upon it a revolutionary use-value.' *Op.cit.* In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility', speaking of the hidden political significance of Atget's photographs, Benjamin wrote: 'They demand a specific kind of reception. Free-floating contemplation is no longer appropriate to them... For the first time, captions become obligatory. And it is clear that they have a character altogether different from the titles of paintings. The directives given by captions to those looking at images in illustrated magazines soon become even more precise and commanding in films, where the way each single image is understood appears prescribed by the sequence of all the preceding images.' Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', 1934, *op.cit.*; 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility' (Third Version), *Selected Writings Volume 4 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott *et al.*, 2002 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), p.258

²¹ In 1976 a Cuban season was programmed with films supplied by ICAIC, with another in 1980; a festival of African cinema took place in 1977, Bulgarian, Romanian, Italian and Soviet films were among those regularly programmed, and in 1987 there was a season of Algerian films.

²² Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Frémaux argue that *cinephilia* lasted from the end of World War II until 1968, when aesthetic pleasure was no longer seen as relevant to cinema being used to make a political intervention among the European avant-garde. At this turning point, the objective of radical filmmaking, harking back to Beckett and *agit prop*, became to change things. The lyricism and poetry of many highly political Cuban films offers a different model of radical filmmaking, which the *cinephiles* of the Mozambican film clubs seem to have identified with. Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Frémaux, 'La Cinéphilie ou L'invention d'une culture', in *Vingtième Siècle*, 46, 1995, pp.133-142

1980s, and their primary aim was to buy the rights to films that appealed intellectually, aesthetically and politically. However, they also tried to source films that had mass appeal by tapping into local tastes for specific genres, catering to demand for the rural romances of Bollywood musicals and the action sequences of Kung Fu movies, which had always been more popular in Mozambique than Westerns.²³ Margaret Dickinson recalls her initial surprise that her trainees at the INC perceived Indian musicals as more 'realistic' than ostensibly 'realist' European films, as the rural melodramas spoke more directly to their own experiences.²⁴ She ran a weekly screening to give some rudimentary schooling in the analysis of film, plundering the eclectic archive of the INC, which included Humphrey Jennings's *Listen to Britain*, the Soviet Realist *Lenin in October*, and documentaries about the Spanish Civil War, alongside films donated by foreign embassies. In the journal *Tempo* and other sections of the print media cinema was analysed in relation to how it functioned as a revolutionary art form, but there was also an awareness that the industry held the possibility of emergences of popular cultures expressing resistance even within capitalist systems of production. An article about Kung Fu movies by Sol de Carvalho, for instance, seeks to understand the huge popularity of the genre to the 'lumpenproletariat', suggesting that Mozambicans identify with the non-Western hero who fights off his enemies with his hands rather than with guns, Kung Fu being a skill that, in theory, anyone can learn.²⁵

Margaret Dickinson and Polly Gaster, who had worked with FRELIMO since the armed struggle, organised the training of a new generation of professional filmmakers, as under colonialism only a few black technicians and cameramen had been able to find work in subordinate positions.²⁶ In 1976 a group of young Mozambicans who were still at school were selected to be trained in different aspects of filmmaking. This offered an 'opportunity' that involved a certain degree of compulsion. Being 'picked out' during the Revolution and the Rhodesian invasion, was initially, according to Gabriel Mondlane, a source of huge anxiety.²⁷ Training was done mainly through learning on the job, and one of the short films made

²³ This is in contrast to the popularity of Westerns amongst audiences in Burkina Faso. See Chapter 6

²⁴ See interview with Margaret Dickinson, *op.cit.*

²⁵ Sol de Carvalho, 'Cinema Kung-Fu: Violência gratuita ou ideologia da violência?', in *Tempo* dossier, 2 November 1980, pp.21–33

²⁶ As the colonial war intensified, some Mozambican cameramen were given greater roles, as they were able to work in areas of the country that were not considered safe for white Portuguese. Interview with Funcho (João Costa), Maputo, 8 August 2005. See Appendix

²⁷ Mondlane recalls that, 'At that time we were all so involved in what was going on that there was this feeling that if there was any kind of situation, political or whatever, they might send us there... So Mozambique was then at war with Rhodesia in 1976 to 1977, and at the same time there was the possibility of some Mozambicans going to study in Cuba and East Germany... This particular day I was at school having my normal lessons with the teacher, then three people came into the class. They asked the teacher to show them the book with our marks, and all the students' reports... They made me and some school mates stand up, they looked at us, but they didn't even ask any questions. Then they say, 'Ok, you can sit down'. We didn't know what was going to happen. In fact that was terrible to think about – we just knew we were going to be sent to the war. If you had been bad, you could be sent to the army. The whole class had had bad marks in an exam recently and had complained about it, so we thought, 'Ok, we are 100% sure we are going to the army!'... The people came back and said to a few of us, 'You're not coming to school from tomorrow, bring your pen and go to the Ministry of Labour.' Just that – no more details... So we went to the Ministry the following day, though one boy didn't come. I think he ran away because he was way too scared... but I was eager to know why we'd been called there. ... We were given puzzles and tests... I passed through various stages of tests... When those of us who were left got to the last stage we were told, 'You're going to work in cinema'. But for me, that wasn't a common language, it was just what I didn't like because I always had problems with being thrown out of the cinema by the ushers, when I went there with my friends when we were young. I always got into fights with them, so I thought I was going to

by trainee filmmakers that Dickinson supervised was *As Eleições* (1977), which demonstrates how this learning process also involved the invention of new kinds of film language for audiences with no prior experience of the cinema screen.

As Eleições is about the first elections ever held in Mozambique to select candidates for the *assembleias populares* (Plate 26). Crucially, the film shows real differences of opinion being voiced, giving the lie to the liberal ideology that Western democracies provide the only valid model of political participation. Dickinson points out that they worked in conditions of severe shortages of equipment and skills, where success was measured by 'if the cameraman could hold the camera still enough to get the shot'.²⁸ In this situation formal or aesthetic questions were not considered because of the sheer complexity of carrying out basic filmmaking. Nevertheless, the film sought ways to meet the specific needs of Mozambican audiences so as to empower them. An article in *Tempo* analyses how each scene is constructed out of a number of long wide-angle shots that allow viewers to take in the entire situation, and only then moves in to pick out and follow certain details. *As Eleições* avoids rapid montage, synchronises sound closely to the image, and makes the 'time of the image' as approximate to real time as possible.²⁹ The film was projected in *bairros*, factories and other locations where the elections had taken place, as well as in sites where elections were yet to happen so as to mobilise participation. While conventionally the rapid fire of Soviet montage is often thought of as the ideologically desirable revolutionary film language, here a new set of criteria based on the needs of people without prior experience of cinema dictated a new kind of documentary for a different radical social demand.

The dual ambition of forming new Mozambican filmmakers and new film languages through which the INC would fulfil its mission to 'deliver to the people and image of the people' came to focus on realising

have to work with those guys I didn't like. But in those days you had to go because there was no way to escape. What could I do? It was the time of revolution, and people had to occupy their allocated space. Finally we were brought to the National Film Institute. We weren't asked what we wanted to do... I don't know how they decided... but I was sent to the sound department... Later on when I saw all the buttons in the sound room I never thought I'd be allowed to touch those things and manage to work them... But very soon I was learning how to use them, and ... my teacher could see I could handle those techniques by myself.' Interview with Gabriel Mondlane, Maputo, 14 September 2005. See Appendix

²⁸ Interview with Margaret Dickinson, London, 13 October 2005

²⁹ The article points out that: 'In the practice of transmission, of communication, in societies such as ours that comes from an 'oral tradition', from oral communication, a practice or experience of communication through the image does not exist... The manner in which this 'first film' about the elections was done clearly demonstrates that the filmmakers understood this perfectly... They went much further, to experiment with new methods in the gathering of images, in the editing, and in making the soundtrack. If in practice the correspondence established between 'image time/reality time' in the duration of these experimental scenes is good, sufficient or should be a bit slower... naturally only experimentation with the projection can now say. Only the people for whom this mode of experimental cinema is made can, after seeing the film, make comment on whether it needs correcting and its effectiveness.' 'Na prática de transmissão, de comunicação, nas sociedades como a nossa desenta na 'tradição oral', na comunicação oral. Não existe uma prática, não existe experiência de comunicação pela imagem. ... A maneira como está feito esta 'primeiro filme' sobre as eleições mostra claramente que os realizadores compreenderam perfeitamente isso. Compreenderam e, não só. Eles foram mais longe, ao experimentar um processo novo na recolha de imagens, na montagem e na sonorização. ... Se na realidade a correspondência 'tempo imagem/tempo realidade' utilizada se a duração das cenas experimentada é boa, é suficiente, se deveriam ser um pouco mais demoradas, ou podiam ser um pouco menos demoradas... naturalmente só a experimentação da projecção o poderá agora dizer. Só as pessoas para quem esta maneira de fazer cinema experimentada poderão depois de ver o filme dizer da sua correcção e da sua eficácia.' 'As Eleições em Cinema', in *Tempo*, no.371, 1977, pp.28-30

the *Kuxa Kanema* newsreel (Plate 27). As well as providing an educative news service for the entire country, which at the time did not have television, *Kuxa Kanema* was intended to weave a cohesive image of national identity that would cut across ethnic and linguistic differences. The name means 'Birth of Cinema', from *kuxa*, the word for 'birth' in Ronga and Changange, and the word *kanema*, which signifies cinema in Chua and Macua. These are indigenous languages spoken in different regions are combined to symbolize the unity of the nation. The logo was a white outline tracing the borders of the territory against a black background, with circles radiating out from a central point in the map that pulsed to the sound of Mozambican drums and xylophones.

Where once newsreels such as *Actualidades de Moçambique* showed the colonial army parading and Portuguese dignitaries watching 'tribal dances', now the *Forças Populares* performed manoeuvres, militants gathered at Party conferences to hear speeches by Samora Machel, and officials watched 'cultural activities'. While the flags had changed, therefore, and the political significance of the images was completely reversed, the forms of the newsreel, its rhetoric and modes of explicating images through slogans from the voiceover, remained essentially the same. Initially produced in 1978 as an occasional 30-minute programme, the newsreel focused on two or three themes per edition. In this format, *Kuxa Kanema* covered current events, with space for one or two reports that would investigate subjects in depth.³⁰ At first, each edition was credited to the '*Kuxa Kanema Collectif*' rather than to individual filmmakers, though this practice was not maintained for long. In the absence of television, *Kuxa Kanema* was distributed across the country and, as the vast majority of the population had no means of access to the movie theatres in the cities, for many it was their first experience of cinema.

The political ambitions for *Kuxa Kanema* were laid out at the second Ideological Conference held in Beira in 1978.³¹ The 'Resolução Sobre Cinema' called on the INC to 'take cinema to rural zones', but 'not any old cinema', warning that unlike urban spectators, those of the rural areas 'haven't yet been deformed by bad cinema, and the INC should not be the instrument of this deformation'.³² This emphasis on maximising the political effectiveness of cinema was a precursor to the radical overhaul of the INC in the early 1980s. In 1980 José Luis Cabaço was appointed Minister of Information, replacing Jorge Rebelo, who had held the post since Independence and favoured radio as the best means to reach the largest proportion of the

³⁰ FRELIMO, *II Conferência Nacional do Trabalho Ideológico: Documentos*, Beira, 5 to 10 June, 1978, p.91

³¹ The newsreel would: 1. Provide incentives for increasing 'production and productivity', by showing the 'national dimension of work' and how each worker and each factory could have a beneficial effect for the country as a whole. 2. Cover the difficulties encountered during the revolutionary process, such as food queues, so as to explain their causes and suggest solutions by 'linking them to the need to increase production'. 3. Show each phase of social-economic development of the country, from State sectors of production, to sanitation and education centres. 4. Mobilise the 'labouring masses' to give them a sense of the importance of 'collective life', in particular the communal villages, collective *machambas* (small plots of land) and cooperatives. 5. Develop in the workers an 'elevated spirit of the cultural heritage of our People'. 6. Explain the establishment of the Solidarity Bank and what it could do in the face of natural disasters and other emergencies. 7. Explain national events and the political development of the country through focusing on the government's campaigns for vaccination, alphabetisation, and so on. 8. Encourage a spirit of militant solidarity with the International Proletariat and the struggles of other peoples, particularly in Southern Africa. *Ibid*, pp.89–91

³² '...não estão ainda deformados pelo mau cinema, e não pode ser o Instituto Nacional de Cinema o instrumento dessa deformação'. *Ibid*, p.92

population.³³ Cabaço believed it was essential to take pre-emptive action to prevent television corroding the collective experience of cinema and alienating Mozambicans from their own cultures, all factors that could serve the interests of imperialism. He lobbied the Italian government to give material and financial support to make broadcasting possible and initiated a radical overhaul of the INC with implications across the entire field of audio-visual production.³⁴ The key objective was to maintain the INC as the central productive force in making films of and for the people of Mozambique.³⁵ On 1 May 1981 *Kuxa Kanema* was re-launched as a weekly newsreel lasting 11 to 15 minutes. Ten copies of each edition were printed by the INC laboratory and distributed to each region of the country. Filmmakers took turns directing the newsreel so as to hone their skills, the logic being that documenting 'reality' should be the basis of all filmmaking.³⁶

While *Kuxa Kanema* was not revolutionary in terms of aesthetic form, other INC productions were more experimental. Ruy Guerra was a pivotal figure in exploring the intersections between cinema as an art of 'the masses', grassroots collective memory and revolutionary practice. Guerra began writing film reviews aged seventeen in Lorenzo Marques, before training as a filmmaker in France. He then made a key contribution to the *Cinema Novo* movement in Brazil, where he worked as a director, editor and cinematographer. Guerra returned to Mozambique for FRELIMO's 3rd Congress in 1977 and acted as an 'advisor' for the INC in the late 1970s and 1980s. Although he held no formal public position, therefore, he had a decisive influence on the vision and policies of the INC. His *Mueda, Memória e Massacre* (1979) was described as the 'first fiction feature film' produced by the INC, though its mode of engagement with indigenous cultural expression defies such categorisation. The team went to record a theatrical re-enactment that had taken place annually in Mueda since 1976 to preserve the memory of over 500 protestors killed in 1960 in the massacre that prompted the armed insurrection to end colonialism. The

³³ As Minister for Information, Rebelo had had responsibility for the INC since Independence. However, his concern was with mass propaganda rather than artistic expression, and he consistently championed radio as the most effective means of communicating with the largest possible number of Mozambicans. Radio was cheap, could reach across vast distances to remote regions, and could be broadcast locally in different languages. Rebelo thus had little enthusiasm for the State flooding its resources into expensive filmmaking projects, let alone television broadcasting, which he believed could only benefit the tiny urban minority who could afford a television set – a luxury good that most Mozambicans could never afford. Interview with Jorge Rebelo, Maputo, 20 September 2005. See Appendix

³⁴ Under the new scheme, production at the INC was to focus, for the time being, on two areas: the *Kuxa Kanema* newsreel and documentaries. While José Cardoso was appointed Production Director shortly after Independence, he had no passion for management and hankered simply to be able to make films. In 1980 Pedro Pimenta performed the role for a year, before taking on another management position with more overall responsibility. When Pimenta went to work in television, he was replaced by Luis Simão, who had been a cameraman during the armed struggle, took on the job of Production Director from 1981. A third arm of this front came into being with the establishment in 1983 of the company Kanemo, set up by Ruy Guerra and others as a commercial enterprise that would function as the State's interface with the capitalist world outside. All production staff were required to follow an intensive training course, based on the handbook *Stages of Production* written for the purpose. Interviews with Sol de Carvalho, Maputo, 12 September 2005, and Luís Simão, Maputo, 17 September 2005. See Appendix

³⁵ Interview with Sol de Carvalho, *ibid*

³⁶ Initially Sol de Carvalho, who Cabaço selected to be amongst those to re-conceptualise *Kuxa Kanema*, was to direct all episodes. These were to be shot on 16mm, while the better quality and more expensive 35mm film equipment and stock was to be reserved for making documentaries. This prioritising of resources led to conflict between Carvalho and the Minister for Information and management of the INC, which finally resulted in him withdrawing from the post, although he later returned to work on the newsreel for a year. Interview with Sol de Carvalho. See Appendix

play involved the entire community in an act of collective historical interpretation, where gesture and improvisation gave form to the performance of a multitude and the line dividing spectator and participant so evident in Western theatrical traditions had no hold.

Intending to make a documentary, such was the power of the enactment that the filmmakers changed tack. In an article in *Tempo*, Guerra has described how they chose to make an 'imperfect cinema' out of an 'imperfect theatre', referring to Cuban Julio García Espinosa's essay 'For an Imperfect Cinema'.³⁷ Espinosa's text is a manifesto that expounds a notion of political cinema not unlike Glauber Rocha's idea that the 'hunger' of the dispossessed should form the basis for a new political cinematic aesthetic and practice.³⁸ Written as technical perfection was within reach of Cuban filmmakers at ICAIC, Espinosa warns against this becoming a primary aim.³⁹ Instead, he makes aesthetics a question of ethical engagement in revolutionary culture, calling for films that address the Revolution and insert themselves into the new social realities with whatever means are available and appropriate.⁴⁰ 'Imperfect' also refers to the idea that the film is incomplete without the active response of the audience, demanding a new poetics for a culture of decolonisation. Guerra and his team followed this imperative by inserting themselves into the unfolding enactment. Footage was shot with very little alteration to the organic process through which the play came into being. Indeed, the filmmakers claimed they felt that there was 'a total understanding between us and the participants' and that 'the presence of the cameras did not produce disturbances or alterations in ... the comportment of the actors'.⁴¹ Alongside this immersion, however, space for a critical distance exists within the film as the drama is inter-cut with testimonies from survivors. The layers of representation and testimony through which the film is constructed suggest a highly complex notion of the cultural construction of identity and historical narrative. It draws on indigenous roots, but also transforms them in act of collective memory and expression of political resistance, with history and identity not pre-given but subject to negotiation and debate.

Guerra sought to realise the conditions to make filmmaking, distribution and exhibition into an effective anti-Imperialist system, stating in an interview made in Portugal during the Carnation Revolution:

I don't deny the necessity to make political cinema, in a certain context, with effective possibilities, nearly a didactic cinema at a certain level; I think that is entirely valid. But within the actual context of cinema, the traditional structures of distribution are obeyed, and it doesn't interest me to make political cinema with these types of limitations. For this

³⁷ 'Memória e Massacre de Mueda', in *Tempo*, no.418, 1978, p.35

³⁸ Julio García Espinosa, 'For an Imperfect Cinema', in Toby Miller and Robert Stam (eds), *Film and Theory: An Anthology*, 2000 (Malden Mass: Blackwell)

³⁹ Espinosa was Director of ICAIC during the 1970s

⁴⁰ As Chanan points out, in this way 'Imperfect Cinema' is less sectarian and dogmatic than many radical film cultures in the metropolis. Espinosa argues 'It can use whatever genre or all genres. It can use cinema as a pluralistic art form, or as a specialised form of expression. These questions are indifferent to it, since they do not represent its real problems or alternatives, still less its real goals.' Michael Chanan, *op.cit.*, p.306

⁴¹ 'Memória e Massacre de Mueda', *op.cit.*

reason, I've looked to open an historic discourse, that effectively opens up to more wide-reaching trajectories.⁴²

The Mozambican Revolution enabled him to extend his influence beyond that of an individual militant to contribute to a more ambitious decolonisation of cinema. Guerra invited Godard and Rouch to Mozambique, who in turn set in motion new lines of flight for cinema in the Revolution, marking out future fields of experimentation that looked to cheaper, more mobile technologies such as Super-8 and video to empower people through filmmaking.

Rouch first visited Maputo in 1976, and came again in September 1977, keen to tap into French government money that was available for cultural projects even though the French State was not prepared to give other forms of financial support to a Marxist African country.⁴³ During this first trip he oversaw one of the earliest projects to teach filmmaking.⁴⁴ Rouch suggested training people to make film 'postcards' in Super-8, because it was much cheaper, lighter and faster to develop than other kinds of film, proposing that studios should be set up in Eduardo Mondlane University for this purpose. With this technology, films could be shot during the day, then edited and projected the same evening so that the people who had filmed and been filmed could comment on the images. Yet the very characteristic that Rouch perceived to be the advantage of Super-8 – its disposability – turned out to be problematic in the context of an emergent nation. With no established means of forming an enduring archive of collective memory through the moving image, people wanted to keep the films they made. The Super-8 reels had to be saved onto other mediums, something that, according to Diawara, Godard was able to assist with by making transfers to video.⁴⁵

Like Rouch, it was in 1976 that Godard made the first of his trips to Mozambique, and this led him to carry out a project in 1978 that involved theorising the possibilities of radically democratising production for television. Godard was asked to carry out training and research into what kinds of film production could best serve the needs of a newly Independent nation, where the majority of the population had not yet had any exposure to cinema or television. By then he was working with Anne-Marie Miéville, with whom he formed the small company 'Sonimage' to carry out experimental research in the field of sound and image through commissions they received for television programmes, though what they produced was a radical critique of the formulas of conventional broadcasting.⁴⁶ According to Godard, Sonimage was

⁴² Interview with Ruy Guerra, 'Cinema Novo, Análise Histórica, o Golpe de Estado do 25 de Abril, Moçambique, Cinema e Independência', in *Cinéfilo*, no.37, 22 June 1974, republished in Maria João Madeira (ed.), *25 de Abril no Cinema: Anthologia de Textos*, *op.cit.*, p.37

⁴³ Manthia Diawara, 'Sonimage in Mozambique', in Gareth Jones and Florian Zeyfang (eds), *op.cit.*, pp.113–115

⁴⁴ This group included Moira Forjaz, who had been working as a photographer on Ruth First's ethnographic research projects and later worked as a director at the INC. Ruth First, wife of Joe Slovo, the leader of the ANC's armed wing, was herself an important figure in the ANC. She lived in exile in Mozambique, working as an anthropologist at the Centro de Estudos Africana at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, where she was assassinated by a letter bomb sent by South African agents on 17 August 1982. Interview with Moira Forjaz, Lisbon, 19 October 2005. See Appendix

⁴⁵ According to Diawara, this was the first time Godard and Rouch met. See Manthia Diawara, *op.cit.*, p.103

⁴⁶ For instance *Six fois deux (sur et sous la communication)* (1976) and *France tour detour deux enfants* (1979) were both made for television audiences and were commissioned by the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, but

involved in a struggle to maintain its independence in the face of the colonisation of visual and sonic registers by capitalist interests and ideologies. The Western world comprised societies in which there were already 'too many images' so that the field of the audio-visual was already occupied and saturated by consumerism.⁴⁷ His perception of Mozambique was that it was a site where there was still some freedom of manoeuvre to create alternative kinds of collective experiences through the cinema screen. Godard saw a parallel with what Sonimage aimed to do on a smaller scale from its base on the Swiss border, away from the commercialism of the Paris film world. The new nation was involved in a struggle to create social relations and conditions of production liberated from exploitation, to define what 'Independence' meant on its own terms, and to take action against the threats of neo-colonialism.

The activity of research, and the activity of filmmaking as research, had profound political underpinnings in Godard's radicalisation during the events of Paris 1968. This saw the beginning of his engagement with Maoism, which insisted on the importance of theoretical knowledge being produced through located practices, and with currents of feminism, which combined critique of phallogentric society with a self-reflective criticality. In an interview for *Tempo* in 1978, Godard cited Mao to argue for the need for research in Mozambique to be carried out simultaneously and coordinated between different fields of print media, radio and cinema, emphasising the criticality and self-reflection necessary to produce new forms and non-exploitative relations.⁴⁸ His own project, entitled 'North Against South or Birth (of the Image) of a Nation', was designed to 'take advantage of the audio-visual situation of this country so as to study television before it exists, before it inundates (even if only in twenty years) the entire social body and terrain of Mozambique.'⁴⁹ The task was thus to think about what might prevent television taking on its conventional role as a commercial medium offering a private, socially isolating experience with a flow of banal

use formal experimentation to deconstruct the dominant tropes of television broadcasting. See Colin MacCabe, *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at 70*, 2003 (London: Bloomsbury), pp.254–260

⁴⁷ Jean-Luc Godard, 'Le Dernier Rêve d'un Producteur' in *Cahiers du cinéma*, 1979, pp.73–77

⁴⁸ 'I think that in the area of Information there needs to be more people dedicated to research, just as in industry. In industry it is perfectly admissible that part of a factory or a large company should have a research department where people can carry out research in whatever direction they like. In the industry of cinema, in Information, in the media, research departments don't exist where new forms, forms that were never used before, can be experimented with. Different ways of interviewing people, of working... I think that all this should be studied. As President Mao says, 'One shouldn't speak without first doing research'. Before going to the peasants it is necessary to do a study of the peasants. Even if sometimes the person who is doing the research is herself of peasant origin. This has to be studied, because knowledge has to be given to other people that Mozambique exists. For this, the different parts of Mozambique have to be shown to other parts of Mozambique. Maybe the first time it is shown it will be done badly, or maybe not... but the most important thing, above all, is to show.' 'Aliás penso que no campo da Informação deveria haver mais pessoas dedicadas à pesquisa, tal e qual como na indústria. Na indústria é perfeitamente admissível que parte de uma fábrica ou de uma grande empresa deva possuir um departamento de pesquisa onde as pessoas podem olhar em que direcção quiserem. Na Indústria do Cinema, na Informação, na Imprensa não existem departamentos de pesquisa onde se experimentem novas formas, formas que ainda não foram utilizadas. Formas diferentes de entrevistar as pessoas, de trabalhar... Penso que tudo isso tem de ser estudado. Como diz o Presidente Mao, "não se pode falar sem se fazerem um inquérito primeiro". Antes de irmos ao camponês é necessário fazer um inquérito sobre o camponês. Mesmo que algumas vezes a pessoa que faz o inquérito seja, ela própria, de origem camponesa. Tem que se estudar, porque se tem de dar a conhecer às outras pessoas que Moçambique está a existir. Por isso, têm-se de mostrar em algumas partes de Moçambique, outras partes de Moçambique. Talvez a primeira vez que se mostre seja mal mostrado, ou talvez não... mas o importante, antes de tudo, é mostrar.' See Jean-Luc Godard, 'Aprender e ensinar a Imagem no Moçambique independente', in *Tempo*, no.408, 1978, p.32–33

⁴⁹ Jean-Luc Godard, 'Nord contre Sud ou Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 300, 1979, p.73–129

reactionary images and sounds. The project explored the technological, aesthetic and social possibilities of video, but with an awareness of the production of knowledge and spaces of critical thought at intersections between different social collectivities and types of textual surface, be it the moving images of film and video, photography, text or assemblages of these.

Godard's title refers to D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). *The Birth of the Nation* is famous as much for being a racist account of national identity forged through the civil war as it is for being one of the first American movies to treat cinema as an art form for the masses. At the time, it was the longest film ever made in Hollywood, and its huge social and aesthetic impact hastened the consolidation of commercial cinema around the production of narrative feature films.⁵⁰ In a crucial gesture Godard inserts '(of the image)' into Griffith's title, refusing the elision of 'the nation', with all the trappings it implies of State politics and the foreclosing of national identity, with the 'birth' of a people. Something is inserted in between – the image. Godard thus signals the constructed nature of the complex social and political relations, identifications and institutions that make up the entity called 'a nation', something that reactionary ideologies seek to naturalise. Above all, he indicates his concern with the image and its production by 'the people', a force, in Hardt and Negri's phrase, 'beyond measure' of representation or containment by the State.⁵¹

In 1979 Godard published an article in *Cahiers du cinéma* about the project, comprising a thought-provoking use of text and image (Plates 28–32).⁵² The article describes meetings at the INC, at Radio Mozambique and in Niassa, where the project was carried out, indicating some of the methods through which 'the image' and 'the desire of images' was studied through training different groups to use filmmaking equipment. Filmmakers, journalists, peasants, children, State functionaries, factory workers and women in collective villages were questioned about their responses to the new images and sounds being transmitted by the Revolution, focusing on what images of themselves they themselves wanted to produce. The article then combines images with shorter aphoristic texts that make provocations about empowerment, the global cinema industry, its technological systems, and about the relationship of these to the politics of producing images, the 'right to look', the 'right to speak', and the new kinds of voices emerging with Independence.⁵³ It explores the collective nature of production and power, pointing out, alongside a

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, 1996 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.30–31

⁵¹ In this respect, the notion of 'the people' bears comparison with Hardt and Negri's theorisation of the potentiality for power created by 'the multitude': 'Beyond measure refers to *the new place in the non-place*, the place defined by the productive activity that is autonomous from any external regime of measure... By the virtual we understand the set of powers to act (being, loving, transforming, creating) that reside in the multitude... the multitude's virtual set of powers is constructed by struggles and consolidated in desire.' Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 2000, (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), p.357

⁵² An initial section describes the series of five films he wanted to make that would complete the project. The first would involve an actor and actress interviewing a filmmaking team with figures that represent different sides of the cinema industry. The other films were planned to be like 'note books' on the journey of each of these through Mozambique; the home movie of a businessman; a film shot on video of interviews with people unaccustomed to seeing images of themselves giving their responses to seeing their own image for the first time; another made up of still photographs, and dedicated to analysis of the photographic image. Jean-Luc Godard, *op.cit.*, p.77

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp.110–111

picture of one man holding a video camera while another looks at the images that it has just shot, that there are 'always 2 to make 1 image'. Other texts accompanying pictures of groups reviewing images on monitors stress the democratic materialist practices of research. They are investigations into how collective engagement and negotiation can unravel micro-emergences of tyranny in the operations of the image, as well as in the interactions between the producers of the image.⁵⁴ Captions to photographs of workers in a factory are arranged across the double-page spread in a manner that suggests not only the different audio visual elements of cinema, but also how images move rhetorically across the screen and collide with sounds to boom and echo with cinematic affect. It reads:

(the sound of that force)

"One single force:

the people."

(the image of that people)⁵⁵

And on the pages that follow:

All the children are actors.

All the women know how to make *mise en scène* (record that which works, and compare it with that which doesn't).⁵⁶

The vision it proposes of filmmaking is of an empowering collective practice open, in theory, to anyone. In the article, desire circulates in the intersection of sounds and images, in their conjunction with the emergent forces that constitute the newly Independent nation. The phrase the 'image and its secret' accompanies a photograph of a radio journalist looking through the viewfinder at an image (perhaps of herself, as Godard has just been in conversation with her about the music she is choosing to broadcast, see Plates 29 and 30).⁵⁷ The gesture of crossing out suggests that the revolutionary process of decolonisation involves demystifying the production of images so that people can grasp its forms and create new audio-visual languages, holding in suspension the complexity of its materiality and signification without erasing its 'secret'. In Godard's formulation, the 'single force' that is 'the people' is not captured or defined by State mechanisms of reproduction, but has the potential to create the forms and modes of their own appearance through the radical democratisation of the means of production and dissemination of moving images. A series of questions and answers concludes the article with photographs of children who get progressively younger. The Althusserian interpellations: 'On whom does it depend that oppression remains? On us.' 'On whom does it depend that oppression disappears? On us.' locate the human potential for collective action at the heart of the matter.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.101 and p.125

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp.112–113

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp.112–113

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp.122–123

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp.127–128

Godard's proposal was that communities should be trained to use video equipment and make their own films. The technology would then be left in their hands so that they could produce whatever material they wanted, with the idea that this would form the basis of television production in Mozambique. The plan was rejected by the Ministry of Information as too costly and impractical, though it also failed to fulfil the government's other criteria: that the State, as sole representative of the people, should control the means of audio-visual production for its own ends. What is striking is that the article expresses hope in the possibilities of cinema as an agent of Revolution that is completely at odds with the pessimism of Godard's other projects for European television during the late 1970s. These are unrelenting deconstructions of tropes such as direct address and the regulation of the image through the explanatory voiceover. It would seem that, for a brief moment, the Mozambican Revolution offered a space to experiment with what a liberated television might look like and to make a last affirmation of the potential of radical cinematic desire.⁵⁹

A cluster of experiments followed that in their very marginality to the State apparatus of the moving image enabled something of this spirit of revolutionary democratisation to survive and find new forms. These included projects with students at Eduardo Mondlane University conducted by the French filmmakers Miguel Alencar, Jacques d'Arthuys, Philippe Constanti and Nadine Wannono, all linked to the Comité du film ethnographique and the Section de Cinéma de l'Université de Paris X, Nanterre. Rouch taught ethnographic filmmaking at the Université de Paris X, Nanterre, and it was a hot spot during the events of Paris 1968. It was here that Godard became involved in student politics and Maoism through Anne Wiazemsky, who acted in a number of films by Alain Renais as well as in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967). This film turned out to be prophetic of the radicality that exploded the following year, when workers and students called a general strike, seized factories and university buildings and took to the streets.

Aware that they would be training students unversed in the language of film, the Nanterre filmmakers began by showing Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin*, because it was thought to be more straightforward to introduce cinema with a silent movie.⁶⁰ They made films in various locations in Maputo with material supplied by the French Embassy.⁶¹ One of the effects of these experiments was that filmmaking came to produce concrete spatial changes and transformations in social relations. For example, students who made a film in the hospital shot scenes of patients gathering on the veranda; the images showed women doing each other's hair as they would in their own homes. Jacques d'Arthuys recounts how the authorities wanted those images cut because it was thought they promoted behaviour that was unhygienic and inappropriate to a hospital.⁶² The filmmakers argued that the patients were addressing social and psychological needs that weren't being met in their treatment, which kept them in an alien environment for long periods. As a result, room was provided in the hospital, making a change in the functioning of the institution.

⁵⁹ Significantly, 1978 was also the year in which Miéville persuaded Godard to return to cinema. Although the films he made afterwards were funded by money from television, they were not made as investigations of that medium. Colin MacCabe, *op.cit.*, p.260

⁶⁰ Jacques d'Arthuys *et al.*, 'Une Expérience de Super 8 au Mozambique', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979, p.54

⁶¹ Sites included the Hospital Central, Chiango School, the Museu de Arte Popular and the Escola de Formação de Quadros de Educação. 'Super 8', in *Tempo*, no.406, 1978, p.13

⁶² 'Une Expérience de Super 8 au Mozambique', *op.cit.*, p.56

In 1980 the Project for Appropriate Technology took this transformative potential of filmmaking further. It used Super-8 initially (later on an early Kodak video processing machine was donated by the French government), and was carried out in areas in and around Maputo, then in Chinavane and finally in Niassa. João Paulo Borges Coelho, Arlindo Mulhovo, João Azevedo and American Russell Parker were among those who ran the project, which involved collaboration between the Instituto de Investigação Científica and the Communication Department at Eduardo Mondlane University, with support from the University of Paris X, Nanterre and UNICEF.⁶³ Azevedo had known Russell Parker in Portugal, where the American had worked with Rui Simões on *Bom Povo Português* and with Thomas Harlan on *Torre Bela*, before the Revolution was abruptly curtailed. Their personal trajectories were thus connected more with political activism than ethnography, Mozambique offering revolutionary possibilities that had been cut short in Portugal.

While the French were interested in capturing everyday life to make ethnographic narratives, this group moved beyond the notion of filmmaking having merely a 'documentary' purpose. Instead, the mobile cinema screen became a means of introducing new methods and techniques of production so they could be shared between groups that were geographically remote. Some films, for instance, showed ways of brick-making so that this knowledge could be transferred to start other cooperatives. Professional cameramen took the footage, but the villagers had a strong say in how the films were edited, and where and when they were screened.⁶⁴ Production and display thus involved in-depth negotiation with local communities over technical and 'artistic' aspects such as camera angle, length of shot and editing, which had different significance for people who read the moving images according to other criteria. Often they demanded that the time of the image be as close as possible to 'real time' and that rapid montage and the cropping of human figures be avoided. These could be confusing or even, when parts of a person's body had been cut out of the frame, offensive.

One of the aims was to build different kinds of relations and alternative processes of production with the communities participating in the projects, rather than using film as an instrument in the unilateral dissemination. This was the role they saw the INC as carrying out with productions such as *Kuxa Kanema*, which they believed merely reinforced authoritarian power structures. Working under the umbrella of the University meant they could maintain a marginal status, preferable to attracting the unwelcome attention of the Ministry for Information and the Department of Ideological Work, as there was always the danger that their operations would be appropriated for propaganda.⁶⁵ Borges Coelho remembers that:

...at times, towards the end, cinema became really popular... we would just put Bob Marley on really loud at the top of a hill from where you could see five villages. People would start to climb to the village on the hill because they knew that after the music there would be

⁶³ Russell Parker was part of an older generation of radicals. He had studied at Berkeley and had been a cameraman in Vietnam before coming to Europe. See Interview with João Paulo Borges Coelho, 16 August 2005, in Maputo, Mozambique. See Appendix.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

cinema. There was a strong feeling of a power you could mobilize. And then the Party approached us ... suggesting that they could have a rally, then project the film, followed by more of the rally, so that they could really get people together. We resisted that because we had other purposes, and things became a bit tense at times.⁶⁶

In the end, the project was undone by its own success.⁶⁷ By achieving their aims of transforming the communities they were working with and empowering them to benefit directly from increasing production, they upset local hierarchies that underpinned Party support. Ultimately, this was seen to undermine the authority of the State, and the project was brought to an abrupt close in 1982.⁶⁸

Concurrently, however, the State was attempting to harness the possibilities of democratising film production through video more directly. The Instituto de Comunicação Social (ICS) first began training ‘*correspondentes populares*’ to run community radio stations and write articles for *Campo*, a newspaper created by the ICS for rural communities.⁶⁹ Felisberto Tinga describes how they sought visual languages that would be effective for people not habituated to a Western regime of signs, working out practical solutions in the field which formed the basis for theorising their activities afterwards.⁷⁰ Thus a film that was made to educate people about the causes of malaria failed because audiences were not able to read and interpret the scale of the images. On seeing the hugely magnified diagrams of mosquitoes people assumed that there was no need to worry, because mosquitoes that big didn’t exist in their village! The emphasis of the ICS was on transmitting practical information through which communities could increase production, access education and combat disease. However, a cartoon in *O Campo* illustrates the strategy whereby, under the auspices of information, government organs of mass communication were made integral to the material and social fabric of collective life, filtering the perceptual field (Plate 33). A village celebrates a marriage at the information centre set up by the ICS. The loud-speakers that usually make announcements and broadcast

⁶⁶ *Ibid*

⁶⁷ The incongruence of pursuing a radical agenda of empowerment from the grassroots within the frame imposed by the vanguard Party is perhaps symbolised by an incident recalled by Borges Coehlo that occurred during the project. Oscar Monteiro, then a government minister, came to visit one of the villages involved in the ‘Project for Appropriate Technology’. Arriving by helicopter, he exited the aircraft smiling and waving, only to find that the gusts of wind from the landing had blown the roof off from the hospital he was coming to visit! *Ibid*

⁶⁸ Borges Coehlo explains that ‘the problem was precisely that we were developing the cooperative and doing really well... the young people... were making some money in the village, but it was the elders who were the representatives for FRELIMO. They had previously made clay pots to sell, and suddenly the young were doing these bricks and making money out of it, and the old guard were accusing us of bringing in capitalism because we were introducing money. ... We always kept a very clean relationship with the government, but one day the Governor called us and said, “Wonderful job you have been doing, but you cannot expect me to go against my men, the old people, so you have to leave... you did a wonderful job, but you have to go.” That is how we left. And the day after we left RENAMO took the village... and it became a provincial base for RENAMO. *Ibid*

⁶⁹ *Campo* was published in simple Portuguese and made substantial use of visual forms of communication such as photo-stories, diagrams and cartoons, which semi-literate people could understand more easily. These illustrated agricultural techniques, health education and news of development projects, often told through stories that made pedagogical use of situations and characters that rural people could relate to. They included narratives ranging from ones about everyday familial relations, including children being kidnapped by RENAMO, to others that taught how to process sunflower oil, with a cast of regular characters that reappeared in different editions.

⁷⁰ Interview with Felisberto Tinga, Maputo, 4 August 2005. See Appendix

community radio play special music for the wedding. However, at other times the speakers had a regulating function, blaring out instructions to villagers about what time to get up and how to work the fields.⁷¹

Television in Mozambique began when the Italian government provided the technological and financial resources to set up *Televisão Experimental (TVE)*. On 3 February 1981 the first emissions of a speech by Samora Machel were broadcast to Maputo. At the outset, the Party presented its policy on television as motivated by the desire to make what was conventionally a private commodity accessible to the people, arguing that they were preventing television from becoming a means by which foreign commercialism could colonise audio-visual registers and kill off collective experiences of the screen. Television sets were installed in the *bairros*, where they were watched by audiences of hundreds. Licínio Azevedo (who had come from Brazil via the Revolutions in Portugal and Guinea-Bissau, see Chapter 2) and Moira Forjaz made a documentary called *Televisão nos bairros* (1981?), filmed in a hall where several hundred people gathered to watch television for the first time. The filmmakers interviewed children, Party *dinamizadores*, nursing mothers and other members of the audience. Although a FRELIMO representative gives the Party version of what the project was intended to achieve, responses from the crowd tell another story. Many of the viewers could hardly even see the screen or, if they could, did not identify with the foreign images they saw, suggesting the action was little more than a gesture. The programme was broadcast once, but was immediately taken out of circulation because of the criticism it gave voice to.⁷²

Although cinema remained the primary means through which the moving image reached rural communities, other projects attempted to democratise television from the side of production. From 1983 the ICS worked with the INC, training *correspondentes populares* to make reports on video, which were then broadcast on 'Canal Zero' and distributed through the mobile cinemas. Among those who made short programmes with *correspondentes populares* were Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol, a French anthropologist who trained as a filmmaker with a radical political group in Italy. By this time attacks by RENAMO sponsored first by the Rhodesians and then by South Africa to destabilise Mozambique were becoming more violent and widespread. According to Bagnol, the short video films they made with villagers during these years were 'stories of hope', transmitting messages of resistance to Apartheid aggression.⁷³ *Escola em Armas* is about schoolchildren taking up guns to defend their school against a RENAMO attack, while *A Coluna* follows one of the armed convoys people had to travel in because of the danger of ambush outside the cities. Other films were more experimental or had a cultural focus. *Melancolia* is inspired by a poem and celebrates women's bravery to make a critique of polygamy. *O Poço* (1986) attempts to explore solutions to the problem of making films in a country where people speak different languages. It teaches how to maintain the cleanliness of a village well, but without recourse to the spoken word.

⁷¹ Interview with João Paulo Borges Coelho, *op.cit.*

⁷² *Televisão nos bairros* has not been screened since, and TVM claims that it no longer holds a copy. I am grateful to Moira Forjaz for finding and giving me access to a copy of the documentary, which, it seems, may be the only one in existence.

⁷³ Television was only broadcast to the Maputo area at first. Interview with Brigitte Bagnol, Maputo, 7 July 2005. See Appendix

Some years later Azevedo and Bagnol made the first Mozambican fiction feature on video, *A Colheita do Diabo* (*The Devil's Harvest*, 1988), drawing on these experiences. It tells of a village menaced by drought and defended by five veterans of the armed struggle from the new threat of 'armed bandits', as RENAMO was widely described during the war of destabilisation. The film opens with the villagers watching an armed struggle film, indicating the importance of cinema to their collective life, an old woman peering inside the mobile cinema van to see where the images have gone. *A Colheita do Diabo* is interspersed with recurrent motifs such as static shots of villagers working the fields to a collective rhythm. A soldier carves a Macondé sculpture while telling a young boy about the fight against colonialism and the current violence, articulating how the villagers' survival is a collective question of culture, ecology and politics. *A Colheita do Diabo* ends with the armed bandits defeated and arrival of the rains. Along the way, however, the young boy is killed by a landmine and the radio announces the death of Samora Machel.

Such films speak of a revolutionary social commitment through cinema that did not remain on the State's agenda. Although the war with RENAMO devastated the economy in the 1980s, cinema remained a privileged sphere, the turning point eventually coming in 1986 when Machel died in a plane crash after his airplane was mysteriously diverted onto South African territory. Joaquim Chissano became President of Mozambique and began negotiations with RENAMO, and as Gorbachev was ushering in the new era of Perestroika in the USSR, Mozambique agreed to the implementation of a structural adjustment programme by the World Bank and the IMF. By 1990, the State had renounced Marxist-Leninism and turned its back on cinema to concentrate its resources on television. The INC faced financial crisis and then in 1991 was almost completely destroyed by fire.

A Colheita do Diabo marked out the most significant direction that would enable Mozambican filmmakers to continue making politically engaged films on video without State support, one that harks back to the mode of production using non-professionals acting out their own experiences first experimented with in Mozambique in Guerra's *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*. Filmmakers such as Licínio Azevedo, Sol de Carvalho, Gabriel Mondlane and Isabel Noronha have made numerous 'docu-dramas', a mode of filmmaking specific to Mozambique in which participants act events and situations very close to their own experience to address issues such as gender discrimination, conflict over resources and the social fall-out of the war, which could be spoken about more openly after the Peace Agreement of Rome, signed by FRELIMO and RENAMO on 4 October 1992. These films are mainly funded with grants from NGOs, and the themes of the films reflect the educational purposes of those organisations. José Luís Cabaço argues that this form of filmmaking has been particularly effective when the films have been projected by mobile cinema units as part of community education projects.⁷⁴ Outside the frame of the State, therefore, the commitment continues to making politically and socially oriented films in forms that connect closely with indigenous cultures, everyday dilemmas and the experience of cinema that is specific to Mozambique.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ José Luís Cabaço, *Utilizar o Cinema como Instrumento Educativo: Cinemarena*, Relatório Operativo, no date. I am grateful to José Luís Cabaço for making this document available to me.

⁷⁵ Since the demise of the INC, most Mozambican films have been shot on video and funded by NGOs, which enables filmmakers to work in a financially transparent way even while corruption became widespread since the FRELIMO government renounced Marxist-Leninism and embraced the free-market.

A contemporary project called 'Postcards from the South' by Tiago Borges Coehlo and Joanot Cortes connects to earlier more marginal experiments with the cinema screen in Mozambique, while at the same time constituting a new emergence. It was carried out in July and August 2005 at the Eschola Primeira Complete de Bairro Triumfo in Maputo, which was the first community school set up in Mozambique after Independence. The project involved giving schoolchildren equipment and doing filmmaking projects with them. Alongside more structured storytelling games, the children were encouraged to try different ways of filming for themselves. They would then watch the footage together and learn what worked through trial and error. Their thesis was that the language of cinema can be acquired by anyone to develop new modes of expression, and the project connects in obvious ways to some of the experiments with screens associated with Rouch and Godard, and the later project by Tiago's father João Paulo Borges Coehlo and others.⁷⁶ Yet it also makes very contemporary use of technology to share and disseminate.⁷⁷ Different kinds of digital camera were used, so a layered effect is created with the edited footage of films within films. Contrasting qualities of the image signify a multitude of gazes, embodying the reciprocal creativity set in motion.

The first extract shows one boy, Balthazar, reciting his own poem, delivered with an energy and seriousness that is electrifying. Older students carried out interviews and made short narratives, including 'Story of a Tyre', in the making of which students were able to try out animation techniques to make a tyre into the protagonist of the film.⁷⁸ One extract demonstrates the process through which a pupil carries out an experiment by putting the camera on the ground and asking the other children to 'perform' handstands and dances in front of it, taking first steps towards creating *mise-en-scène*. Suddenly the sequence is strongly reminiscent of Godard's phrases 'All the children are the actors. All the women know how to make *mise-en-scène* – record that which works, and compare it with that which doesn't.' At the heart of the project is a beautiful vision of filmmaking as an empowering practice that is open to anyone, carried out on a scale and with technologies that make it possible.

Such echoes suggest some kind of conceptual life that continues beyond the Event itself, becoming apparent in the naming of the Event as that which drives principled political action. There is a demand that appears at the moment when the very notion of the African Revolution seems obsolete – a demand to tell certain stories from the beginning again. The focus of this chapter has thus been on the early experiments and aspirations of cinema – ambitions born in the anticipation that attended Independence. It is a partial view that works in counterpoint to the chapter that follows, which sifts the ruins of this collective dream.

⁷⁶ Conversation with Joanot Cortes, Maputo, September 2005

⁷⁷ The entire project, which includes similar projects in Nicaragua and ones planned in Ilha de Moçambique and in Europe, has been put on the Internet so that it can be accessed in any part of the world.

⁷⁸ Tyres are recycled as toy hoops by children across Africa, as in the captivating beginning of Flora Gomes' *Udju azul di Yonta*, discussed in Chapter 2.



Plate 22
Maukew, *Cinema Projection in a Mozambican Village*, woodcut, 1982



Plate 23
Estas são as Armas, 1978



Plate 24

Cover of *Objectiva*, Journal of the Ciné Clube de Lourenço Marques, July 1974

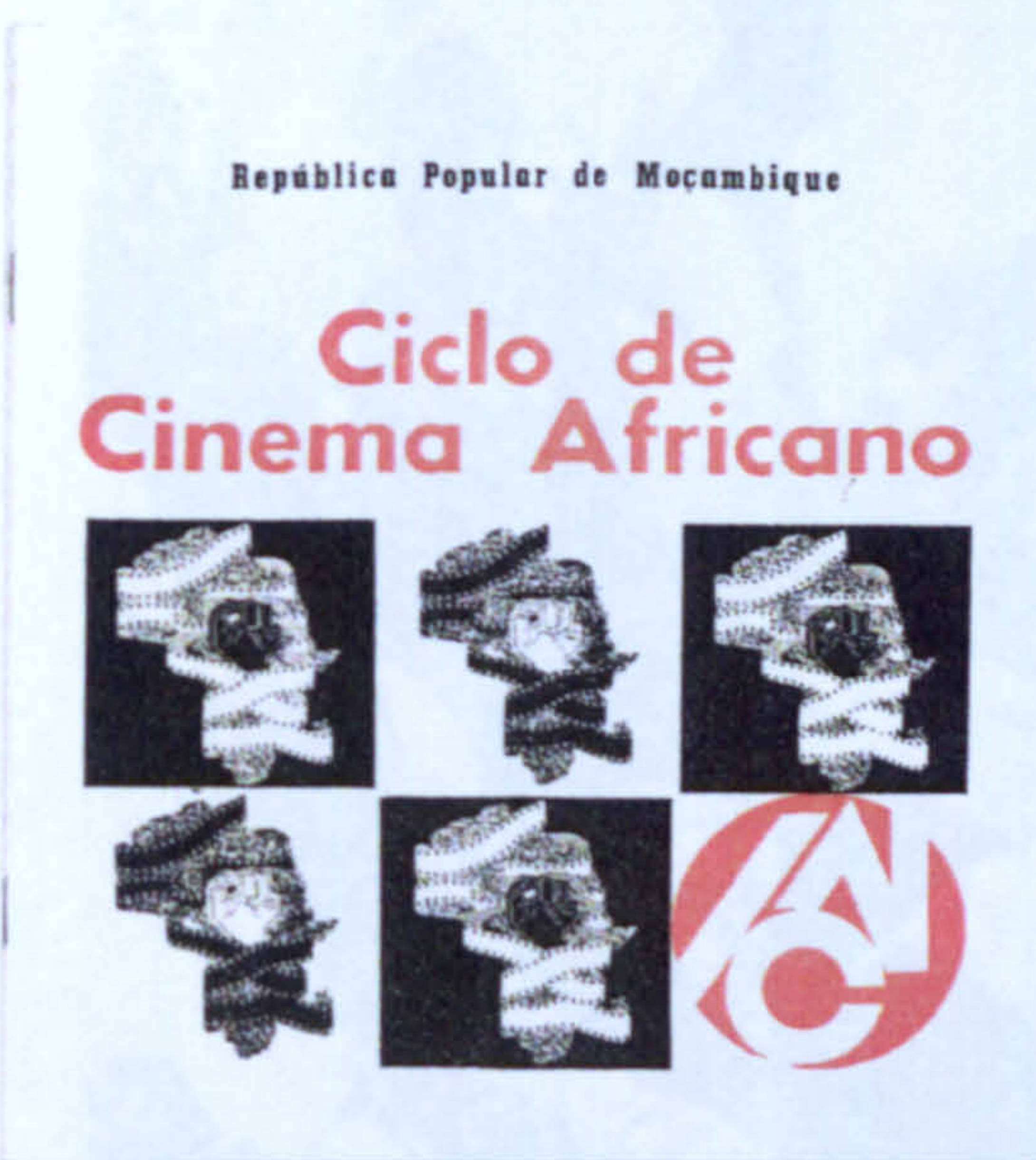
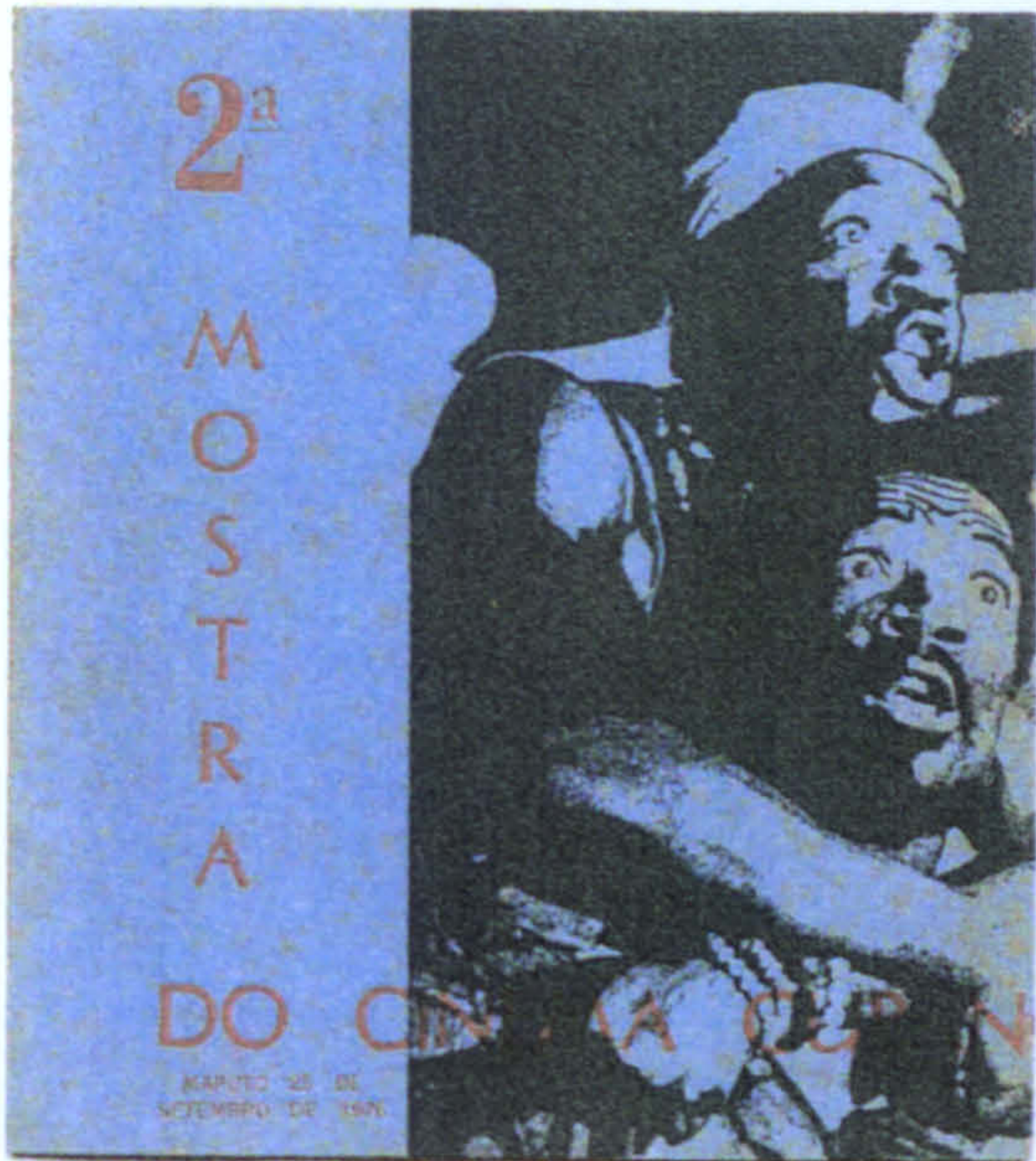


Plate 25
INC film festival programmes, 1970s and 1980s



Plate 26
As Eleições, 1977

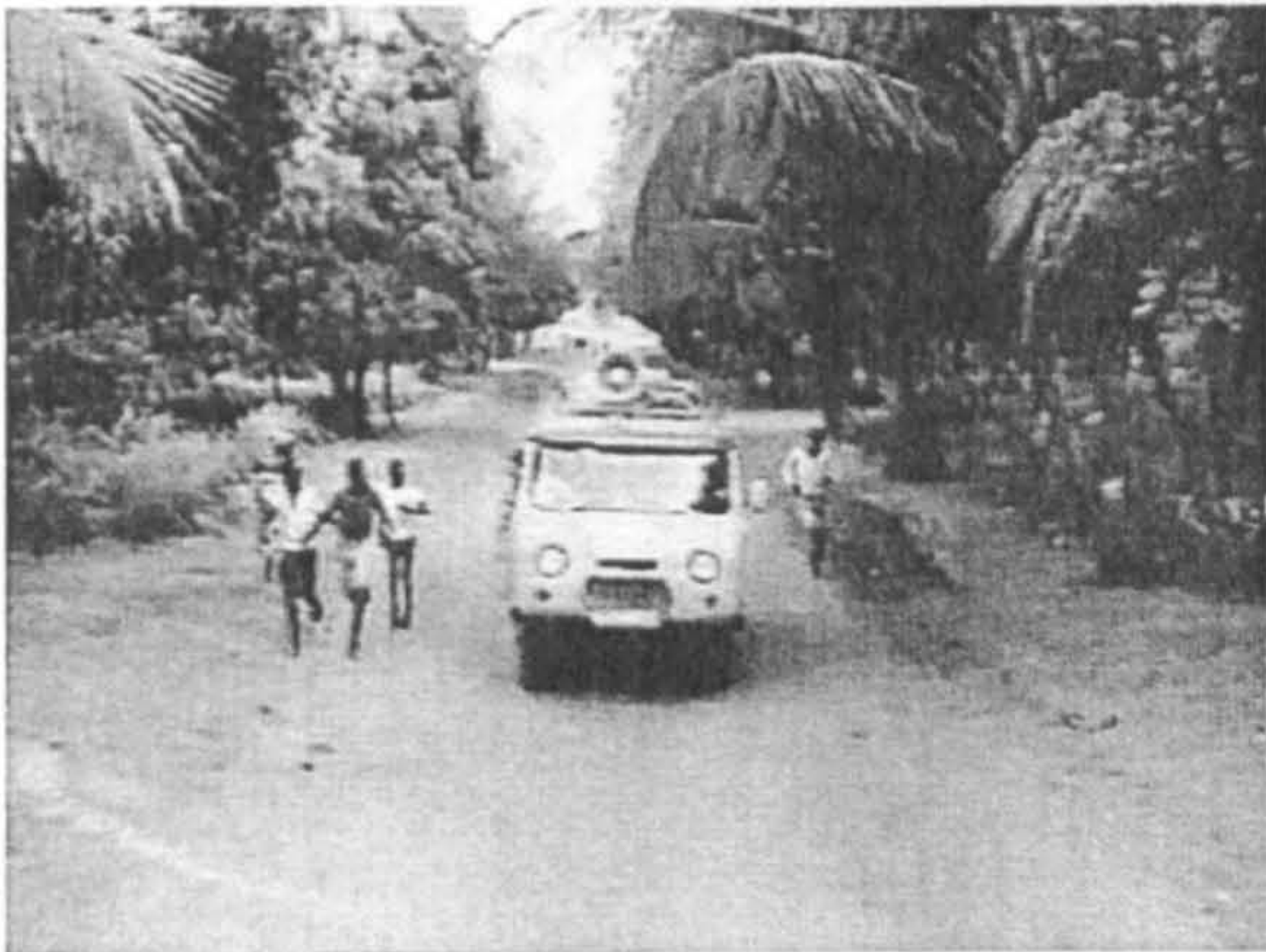


Plate 27
Kuxa Kanema, late 1970s and 1980s



La voix du Mozambique.
De quelle bouche sort cette voix ?
Quel est son visage ?



Plate 28

Jean-Luc Godard, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979

LUNDI 4 SEPTEMBRE 1978

Suite et fin de l'apprentissage de la vidéo légère par Carlos.
L'immeuble de la Radio.
Conversation avec celle qui choisit les disques.
Pourquoi cette musique?
Pourquoi pas ?
Musique révolutionnaire.
Musique pour faire plaisir.
Le plaisir.



Plate 29

Jean-Luc Godard, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979



L'image et son ~~secret~~.

Plate 30

Jean-Luc Godard, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979

Tous les enfants sont des acteurs.



Plate 31

Jean-Luc Godard, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979



Toutes les femmes savent faire de la mise
en scène (enregistrer ce qui va, et le comparer avec ce qui ne va pas).

Plate 32

Jean-Luc Godard, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'un nation', in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no.300, 1979

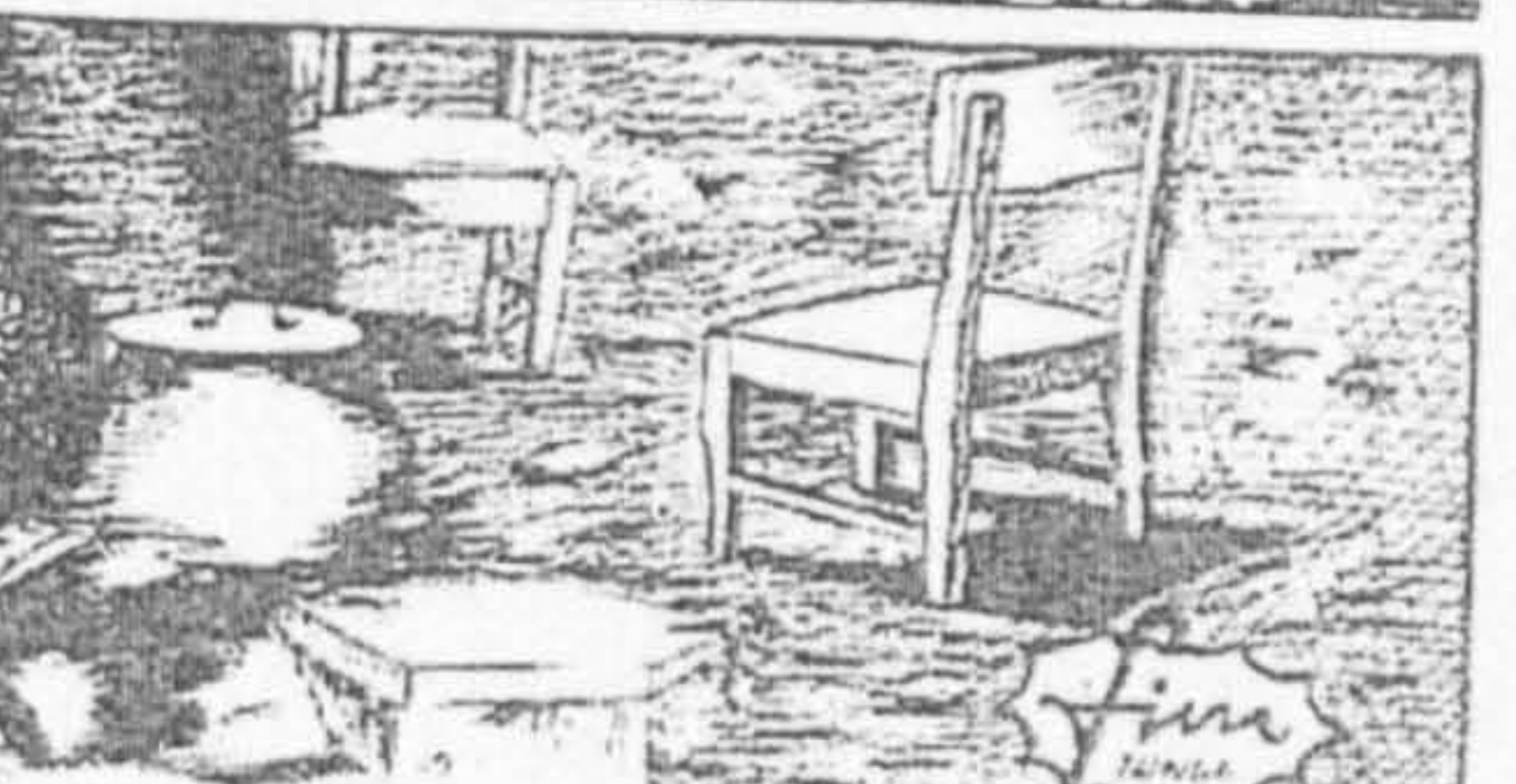
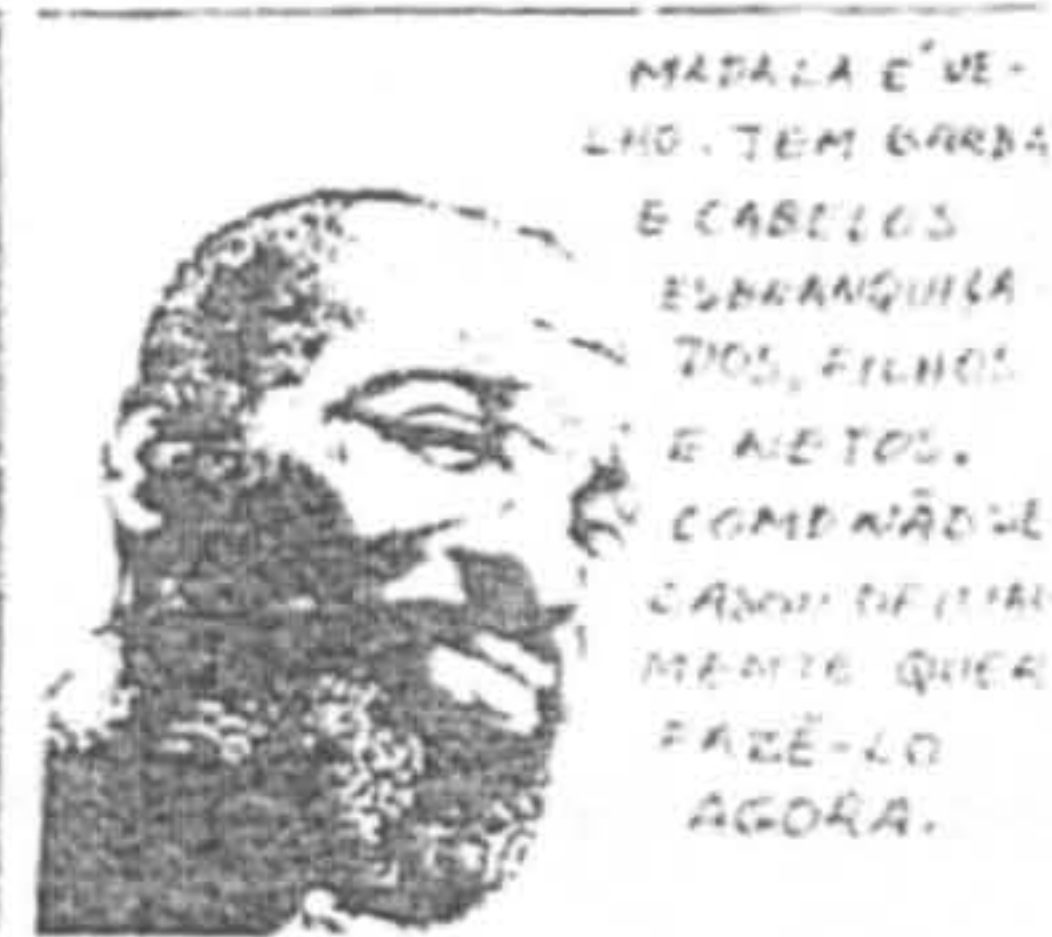


Plate 33
'Madala - O Casamento', in *Campo*, July 1985

Chapter 5

Sifting the Ruins of the INC

The office of the Associação Moçambicana de Cineastas is housed in a building on Avenida Agostinho Neto. Faded letters run above the entrance in the typography of an arcane modernism. They announce the building at one time was the Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Here, Gabriel Mondlane tells me about how he became a sound engineer at the INC. He recounts how he was picked out by FRELIMO while still at school and sent to work in a thing called 'cinema'. A whole world, he discovered, that produced the tantalising screen of cinema – a surface of fantasy so tightly guarded from the curious gaze of small boys, who would scuffle with the ushers to be let in. Bit by bit he learnt to use the mysterious buttons and machines in the sound room. In the years following Independence mobile cinemas trundled across the country showing the new society under construction. Newsreel flickers of collective farms, dances outside factories, grassroots elections, speeches by Samora Machel, and increasingly the cameras bore witness to the escalating violence that seared through Mozambique in the 1980s, its stand against Apartheid coming at a terrible price. The sliding collapse of the Revolution and its dreams for cinema were punctuated by two over-determined moments: Machel killed in a plane crash in 1986, and in 1991 the INC building devastated by fire. Tragic 'accidents' give endless fuel to the conspiracy theories that spiral and weave nebulous smoke screens over the wreckage of lives and archives.

Unlike much of the upstairs, Gabriel's office has a roof. On the ground floor aging Steinbecks warp and rust, and year on year the surviving film reels rot away in the heat and wet that seep through the walls. We wander into the bright sunshine that streams through the remains of what were the editing rooms. He tells me that filmmakers now gather under the stars and show each other work-in-progress projected onto the walls. The ground is scattered with rubble; ghostly silhouettes of equipment and technical fixtures shadow the concrete, which is pocketed with dents and holes. Gabriel raises his arm, gestures towards a charred wall and says: 'This is our screen.'

September 2004, Maputo

If the word 'Revolution' has come to signify the Event that initiates a radical new beginning, it contains within it something of an older Copernican meaning which, if it referred at all to human affairs, could only signify forms of government that 'revolve among the mortals in eternal recurrence'.¹ When Walter Benjamin evokes this double register, these ways of thinking temporality, in which change is either harnessed to a linear teleology or trapped in a cycle of repetition, are overturned in a 'flash of consciousness' that shifts historical perception, undoing the conception of the past as a fixed ground on which the present can fix its gaze.² If the structures that give manifest form to the collective unconscious (architectures of urban space, fashion, advertising) maintain in their day-to-day existence an 'amorphous dream configuration', this new way of doing history 'presents itself as the art of experiencing the present as waking world, a world to which that dream we name the past refers in truth.'³ The Copernican shift in historical perception is the moment when remembrance begins.⁴ Remembering is that 'awakening' when the forms and images dreamed of and produced by collective consciousness appear as an experience of the world today.

In Mozambique, it was cinema that embodied the collective dream of Revolution, a dream that lives again when the Event is re-presented in moments of remembrance. The Event is that through which so many understood themselves, their thoughts and actions, and the world. The cinematic memory of the Mozambican Revolution lies dormant in the ruins of the INC (Plate 34), film reels decaying just as the objects in the Museu da Revolução gather dust. And yet when the projector casts its phantom shapes onto the wall the images mingle with the traces of what happened in its wake (the crevices in the concrete, the charred shadows of equipment), making another kind of screen. Across this palimpsest the wear of time becomes part of the way the surface speaks. It becomes the texture of its voice. Perhaps this suggests how the city beyond its walls might be read anew. For the Revolution is present too at the level of the urban surface. A cinematic understanding of the screen-like surfaces of the city may, therefore, inform ways of reading urban spaces that unleash untold or forgotten stories of Revolution. For, as people like to say as they navigate the streets downtown, *the city still has many stories to tell*.

After Independence, Lorenzo Marques was renamed Maputo and in 1976 the names of streets, squares, public gardens, hospitals, schools and markets were changed. While those of colonialism had worked to consolidate foreign domination, imposing on the Mozambican people the values, history and culture of the Portuguese colonisers, the new names were to 'reflect the values and traditions of the new Mozambican society'.⁵ The city was re-mapped with the dates, ideals and heroes of the armed struggle. The architectures of the city, its streets and edifices, became bookmarks to an alternative archive of global modernity, the urban centre cross-hatched with liberation movements, icons of Socialism and moments of revolutionary

¹ Hannah Arendt comments that 'Nothing could be farther removed from the original meaning of the word 'revolution' than the idea of which all revolutionary actors have been possessed and obsessed, namely, that they are agents in a process which spells the definite end of an old order and brings about the birth of a new world.' Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, *op.cit.*, p.42

² Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, 1999 (Cambridge, Mass. and London), p.388

³ *Ibid*, p.389

⁴ *Ibid*, p.388

⁵ 'Maputo: Alterada a Toponímia', in *Tempo*, no.306, 1976, p.4

victory. Avenida 24 de Julho, Eduardo Mondlane, Salvadore Allende, Amílcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh, Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, the Praça da Independencia – a profusive eponymy that marked the city conceptually as the space of Revolution. Now the street signs are topped with advertisements for mobile phones and Volkswagens (Plate 35). Murals hand-painted in the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm are barely visible as their colours fade and peel. The elegance of the cinemas, built by the Portuguese but nationalised after Independence, either lingers in crumbling neglect or is masked by the signs for nightclubs, Pentecostal churches or the latest Hollywood blockbuster. Fragments of Revolution are thus scattered through the streets of Maputo (Plate 36). At once strange and banal, ever-present and forgotten, they slumber beside gleaming façades of new offices and shops, over-flowing tips of rubbish, huge billboards warning about AIDS. Measuring recent shifts in the geopolitics of trans-national capital, South African bars, fast-food restaurants and supermarkets appear with increasing frequency.

Siegfried Kracauer argues that analysis of ‘inconspicuous surface-level expressions’ can, by virtue of their ‘unconscious nature’, testify to ‘the fundamental state of things’.⁶ Recent analyses of African cities have expanded theoretical understanding of the urban surface. They have explored ways in which the dichotomies of colonialism remain refracted within urban space; how inhabitants negotiate precarious existences through informal networks of signs and the construction of complex social imaginaries; and how the city germinates and reflects upon its own image and postcolonial condition.⁷ Cinema-going and video-watching in Africa has already been much investigated as an urban event that always exceeds in significance the films shown on the screen, embodying anxieties and aspirations that in turn effect the spatial inhabitation and topography of the city.⁸ The attempt here to expand the notion of the screen through analysis of the urban surface seeks to extend this work, making apparent connections between different phenomena, places and times so as to investigate how cinema actualises cartographies of radical desire. Yet today Revolution circulates in a space between the living and the dead. Figures of Revolution haunt the fabric of the city and its urban imaginaries, and though they may seem incongruous in the present, while they linger they are the potentialities of a new remembrance of Revolution conjured out of the debris that slumbers in the present.⁹

⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, 1995 (Cambridge, Mass. and London), p.75

⁷ See particularly the texts by AbdouMalik Simone, Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman in Okwui Enwezor *et al.*, *Cities Under Siege Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*, Documenta11_Platform4, 2002 (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz); Filipe de Boeck with Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City*, *op.cit.* and Allan F. Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts, *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*, 2003 (exh.cat: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles)

⁸ See Brian Larkin, ‘Theatres of the Profane: Cinema and Colonial Urbanism’, in *Visual Anthropology Review*, volume 14, number 2, Fall/Winter 1998, pp.46–62; Onookome Okome, ‘Writing the Anxious City: Images of Lagos in Nigerian Home Video Films’ in Okwui Enwezor *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp.p.315; and Birgit Meyer, ‘Prayers, Guns and Ritual Murder. Popular Cinema and Its New Figures of Power and Success’ at www2.fmg.uva.nl/media-religion/publications/prayers.htm

⁹ In the context of political polarisation and the stultification in bureaucratic violence of the European Communist movements of the 1930s, Benjamin suggested that the Surrealist attempt to precipitate a materialist ‘profane illumination’ involved awakening the revolutionary potential of the outmoded detritus of the everyday, so transforming social and architectonic destitution into something ‘revolutionary’. So while the fragments of Revolution are still there, latent, they wait to be resurrected. Walter Benjamin, ‘On Surrealism’, in *Selected Writings Volume 2 1927–1934*, trans. Edmund Jephcott *et al.*, 2002 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), pp.207–208

Benjamin notes that it is 'one of the tacit suppositions of psychoanalysis that the clear-cut antithesis of sleeping and waking has no value for determining the empirical form of consciousness'. Instead, collective consciousness is 'patterned and chequered by sleep and waking'.¹⁰ Radical innovations and desires of the past can only break through the 'cycle of the eternally selfsame' when the fragments that remain of them are awakened and made to live again.¹¹ This is the moment when 'politics attains primacy over history' to establish certain theoretical ideas as facts existing and circulating in the world – they are things that may be scrutinised and may precipitate new thoughts and actions.¹² There is thus an intimacy between the remembering that enables conceptual understanding and the desire to engage with the world. But here it is also necessary to engage with the problem of constructing a critical position out of conditions of simultaneous intimacy and distance that characterise how subjectivities emerge intersecting with audio-visual phenomena in the contemporary world.¹³ This is perhaps nowhere more apparent to me than in my own generational and cultural distance from those whose stories weave through this text and from events that, while they touch me only vicariously, nevertheless make some kind of demand. What does it mean to attempt to tell certain stories from the beginning again, in the hope of understanding something of the innovations such events gave birth to, when the memory of Revolution crystallizes through such oblique relationships? The place from which to start is surely an engagement that works through rather than obfuscates such tensions, as the 'I' of ethnographic authority has so often served to do. The theoretical drive, then, is to understand cinema as that which actualises a relational geography of revolutionary desire out of the tangles and interweaving of diverse phenomena and trajectories, places and times.

Two contemporary artworks address this question by appropriating fragments of Portuguese presence in Mozambique, the gallery setting that provides the space in which each addresses the subjective memory of colonialism constituting another layering of distance from the cinema that was so central in forming that audio-visual archive.¹⁴ They serve as pertinent examples even though the thicket of motivations and desires that drive them and their positions of enunciation differ from the present thesis. Portuguese artist Ângela Ferreira implements cinematic devices so as to make a critical intervention into how Portugal remembers

¹⁰ Walter Benjamin, *op.cit.*, p.389

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.390

¹² *Ibid*, pp.388–389

¹³ In *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, Frederic Jameson elaborates the 'geopolitical unconscious' as a conceptual instrument for 'grasping our new being-in-the-world'. The films he examines all exhibit ways in which 'narrative today... conflates ontology with geography and endlessly processes images of the unmappable system' of global capitalism. Discussing American conspiracy thrillers of the 1970s and 1980s, which according to Jameson posit the economic and political machinations of global capital as a total system that cannot be apprehended in its entirety, he says that 'What we have here called 'intimacy' is the discovery that we are caught in a collective world network without knowing it, that people are already up much closer than we realised, even in moments of solitude...'. Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*, 1992 (London: BFI), pp.3–4 and p.66. It should be noted that there are problems with Jameson's account, which Ella Shohat and Robert Stam outline. They point out some of the lingering Eurocentricism in Jameson's argument and that he underestimates the radical revisioning of 'Third World' and Diaspora artists. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *op.cit.*, pp.292–293

¹⁴ As noted in Chapter 2, the traumatic memory of Portuguese colonialism and the wars fought in African countries, which ousted fascist colonial rule not only in Africa but also in Portugal, has scarcely been addressed in film since the Revolution of 1974. It is interesting to note that a new generation of female artists and filmmakers, including Maria Cardoso, Ângela Ferreira and Maria Lusitano, have begun to investigate this history through fictional reconstructions of the family dramas and the domestic.

its colonial project in Mozambique. In referencing the cinematic and the cartographical, her work offers intriguing inroads into the complexity of gazes that form the postcolonial screen through the layering of temporality and the intersections across urban space of the political and the affective. In 'Casa – um retrato íntimo da casa em que nasci' (1999) Ferreira builds an immersive visual field in the space of the gallery by projecting a photograph of her family's house in Lorenzo Marques, the house where the artist was born (Plate 37). Four video projections show the image of the house, which was built in 1958 in a modernist style widely adopted in the urban development of the *lusophone* African colonies.¹⁵ The house is set amid an abundance of palm trees and tropical plants. The setting suggests how the imposition of this architectural model was part of colonialism's cultural violence through which European aspirations were realised on African soil that could not be lived out in fascist Portugal.¹⁶ But it also signifies how over the years this exuberant vegetation has reasserted itself, the colonialist fantasy receding as its concrete materialisation disintegrates.

In successive video projections the photograph is worked over digitally to make a moving image that registers the passing of time and embodies a subjective gaze that shifts focus, honing in on certain details to the exclusion of others. The work's autobiographical status assigns the subjectivity of this gaze, yet the image is further altered by the two screens on which it is projected. These are suspended from iron supports based on models 'derived from a pedagogical presentation of cartographic projections', distorting the grid of the map into angular and curved forms that intersect, shadow and disrupt one another.¹⁷ In the contemporary public space of the gallery, the subjective memory of the 'intimate portrait' is only obliquely approached as a lived experience. Remembrance is a critical act. The work, layered through simultaneous distance and closeness of time and place, enunciates a space of personal and collective entanglements that is the condition for constructing a critical engagement with Portugal's colonial past.

In Maputo the sharp division between centre and periphery that characterised Lorenzo Marques is still evident in the material fabric of the city. Although Portuguese trading posts had existed along the coast for over four hundred years, Portugal only decided to turn Mozambique into a settler colony in the 1950s in response to moves towards Independence across Africa, and rapid urban development was the direct result of this change in strategy. The centre of Lorenzo Marques was essentially a modernist European city scattered with older more ornate tiled villas. Most of its sky-scrapers and chic modernist houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s as the city extended out from around the old fort and train station next to the port. Sprawling *suburbios* where the black population lived in houses of mud-brick and corrugated iron grew surrounding it. Yet the status of modernism is more complex than suggested by the way it figures in Ferreira's work as the cultural imposition of a pre-existing model. European modernism not only drew upon the pared down forms of the North African *medinas* but mutated as it was adapted to meet a

¹⁵ João Fernandes, 'Ángela Ferreira: The Portrait of the House or the possible references of an intimacy', in *Ángela Ferreira: Casa. Um retrato íntimo da casa em que nasci*, 1999 (exh. cat., Fundação Serralves, Porto)

¹⁶ See Nnamdi Elleh's analysis of how colonial architecture was often a 'vehicle for bourgeois ambitions and exotic desires that colonists could not fulfil in Europe, but could in Africa'. Nnamdi Elleh, 'Architecture and Nationalism in Africa, 1945–1994', in Owkui Enwezor (ed.), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994*, *op.cit.*, p.335

¹⁷ *Ibid*

particular kind of colonial desire.¹⁸ While modernist architecture was frowned on by the Salazar regime in Portugal (except for a few monumental structures celebrating the grandeur of the State), in the colonies modern cities were built in the 1950s and 1960s on a scale unprecedented in Portugal.¹⁹ Mozambique thus held possibilities for expression and experimentation for the largely European elite that were not possible in the metropole. As settlers flooded in, Lorenzo Marques became a space for a unique architectural vanguard.²⁰ Buildings by Pancho Guedes, who came to Mozambique from Portugal as a child, testify to a baroque tropical modernism – Le Corbusier’s ‘machines for living’ became machines for expressing exuberant feelings.²¹

Maria Lusitano’s video *Nostalgia* (2002) captures something of how Lorenzo Marques figured as a site of relative liberation and exotic fantasy for the Portuguese, through a story that is self-consciously partial in its rendering of the colonial city (Plate 38). Lusitano constructs a fictional family narrative out of home movies of Portuguese parties and barbeques, happy African schoolchildren and trips to watch indigenous ceremonies. The Super-8 footage is inter-cut with picture postcards and postage stamps of people in tribal dress, tropical landscapes and flowers. This is the very stuff of personal and collective nostalgia, through which memory is fixed in an idealised past. At its most pernicious nostalgia continues to serve racist discourses that seek to exonerate colonialism. The teenage protagonist recounts his older sister’s departure to Mozambique with her husband, a soldier who is sent to fight in the colonial war. The brother’s naïve narration is peppered with preconceptions and stereotypes about ‘Africa’ and admissions of how his sister’s letters, though full of vivid descriptions of the sunsets, give little indication of her true state of mind. The soundtrack and inter-titles are highly ironic, and at moments the images themselves contain elements that are unexplained and speak of the wider context of colonial violence of which the family romance is a part. Conditions of distance are structured into the work, undoing the possibility of suturing an idyllic screen across a time and place (Mozambique during the armed struggle) to which some still have a living memory, while others, including the artist, can only access via the fragments that are part of a collective historical unconsciousness. The insertion of these visual and sonic traces into a fictional artistic register further disrupts a consolatory chronological narration of time past so as to make an intervention into the present that is comic yet discomfiting.

The film opens with the song ‘California Dreaming’ as the boy describes how his sister always wanted to emigrate to California, but ended up going to Africa, where much of the time she sits through endless parties held to kill the boredom of soldiers waiting to be sent to the front. The narrative tropes of romantic

¹⁸ Le Corbusier was strongly influenced by the terraced white houses of the *medinas* in Algeria.

¹⁹ The type of architecture favoured for domestic architecture under Salazar was *Português suave*, a nostalgic style that evoked an idealised rural existence by combining decorative features from different vernacular forms. See Raul Lino, *Casas Portuguesas: Alguns Apontamentos Sobre o Arquectar das Casas Simples*, 1992 (Lisbon: Livros Cotovia)

²⁰ Although the Portuguese had been present in Mozambique for four hundred years, their settlements were largely confined to trade routes along the coast, the concerted effort to control the entire territory having only begun systematically following the agreements reached between European colonial powers at the Conference of Berlin in 1885. Lorenzo Marques and Beira both had a geopolitical and economic importance in connecting the Southern African interior to the Indian Ocean.

²¹ Jordane Bertrand quotes Guedes: ‘We have to become technicians of emotion, the makers of smiles, the wipers of tears, the spokesmen of excessive dreams, the deliverers of miraculous messages.’ Pascal Letellier and Jordane Bertrand, *Voyage au Mozambique: Maputo*, 2005 (Paris: Editions Garde-Temps), p.14

love, marriage and childbirth through which the Portuguese settlers live their lives are played out to the tunes of Frank Sinatra and the Beach Boys, the backdrop of a brutal colonial war only entering consciousness when the American pop songs fade out to a sound that at first appears to be the mechanism of the Super-8 projector, but increasingly becomes the menacing whir of a military helicopter. 'In this land', the narrator says, 'my niece was queen of a sad and wearisome party that seemed to have no desire to get over.' When the Portuguese families become confined to Lorenzo Marques, the protagonist and his parents join them. While by the late 1960s the colonial city was 'a prison without walls', it was a gilded cage for the white and assimilated minority.²² Alongside extraordinary footage of crowded street cafés and stylish shoppers in fashion boutiques, the narrator recounts how coming to Lorenzo Marques made life in Portugal seem 'suddenly all black and white'. In Portugal all the girls were called 'Maria', 'Maria of Pains', 'Maria of the Annunciation', but in Lorenzo Marques they are glamorous creatures called 'Pipininha, Xana, Filó, Zálita!'. 'The truth is I had found paradise in Africa and only remembered the war my brother-in-law had come to fight in when a helicopter passed.' At the end of the film the images give way to a black screen, and all that lingers is the sound of helicopter wings beating their terrible path.

Thus if glamour and cosmopolitanism characterise such images of Lorenzo Marques, they mask the violence of the city's structures of segregation and its sites of most violent repression, such as the PIDE headquarters at Vila Algarve, a beautiful tiled building whose ruin still stands boarded up on Avenida Ahmed Sekou Touré. Here, political prisoners were routinely tortured and killed. The topography of the city embodied a racial hierarchy that was cultural, material and psychical, and the colour bar was entrenched psychically in practices of everyday life even if, from the 1960s, this was in the absence of concrete legal discrimination.²³ Both artworks suggest there is a peculiarity to the ongoing entanglement that Portugal has with those countries in Africa that it subjugated as colonies, one that is often overlooked in attempts to define and theorise a more general postcolonial condition. As Lusitano's video makes apparent, political, economic and cultural subjugation of Mozambique by Portugal is mirrored in the present by an emotional subjugation of a generation of Portuguese to 'Africa'. Yet while the traces of colonialism may register in the lingering attachments and desires of the former colonisers, there is another register of collective desire that filters into the present through the urban surface of Maputo. The dynamics

²² Mozambique's proximity to South Africa enabled access to Anglo-Saxon culture and commodities that was not available to the Portuguese in fascist Portugal, where many foreign consumer goods were banned, including all books, films and records offensive to the conservative Catholic values and parochial fascism of the *Estado Novo*.

²³ The *Estatuto dos Indigenas*, according to which people were classed as either *assimilados* or *indigenas*, was abolished in 1961 and all people living in the *lusophone* African colonies were declared Portuguese citizens. This policy was intended to appease international calls for Portugal to decolonise. Mainstream cinema was one of the public spaces where racial segregation was manifest, and before Independence movie-going remained predominantly a luxury for an urban whites and *assimilados*. As Maria Delurdes Tocato recalls, even in the absence of specific laws: '... there was something in the society at large that had the same effect. I remember that during those years in the 1960s I had a friend who was black, originating from San Tomé and Príncipe. She was a State functionary. She had a car, I didn't have a car at the time, and she was a bit older than me. From time to time I would say to her 'Let's go to the cinema this afternoon'. She went with me once or twice, but then she said, 'Don't ask me to come to the cinema anymore. Don't you see that I'm the only Black person there? I don't feel relaxed when I can't see a single black face other than myself.' Maria Delurdes Tocato was a journalist and film critic for the journal *Tempo* and later President of the Board of Classification at the INC after Independence. Interview with Maria Delurdes Tocato, Maputo, 31 August 2005. See Appendix

and circulations of radical desire remain in the traces of the transformations of urban space wrought in the events of Revolution. If urban space constitutes some kind of shifting archive of Revolution, it is one that, like the ruin of the INC, must be approached by way of its faded surfaces, its gaps and omissions. *For the city still has many stories to tell.*

A small number of films made under colonial rule map the clandestine circulation of revolutionary desires as a potentiality for radical social change. Film production in Mozambique was tightly monitored, and the local production houses set up in the 1960s by Portuguese proprietors relied on commissions from the Centro de Informação e Turismo, the State organ responsible for propaganda about the colonies. While most productions were newsreels and documentaries, a few filmmakers of Portuguese origin managed to voice anti-racist sentiments in their films, though those most critical were instantly banned.²⁴ The Beira film club, established in 1958 as the second film club in 'Portugal', provided a space for screening and discussion of José Cardoso's amateur films, through which, during the 1960s, he voiced dissent from the regime. *Annuncio* (1961) tells the story of a *mulatto* boy responding to a job advertisement and experiencing discrimination, while *O Pesadelo* (1969), which means 'nightmare', showed children catapulting stones at animated marching boots. Even though it adopted a more symbolic approach, it was banned for its implied critique of fascist militarism. Manuel Faria de Almeida's *Catembe – 7 dias em Lourenço Marques* (1964) was another film that fell foul of the censor for depicting the realities of racial segregation and discrimination. A black Mozambican man who is interviewed comments evasively: 'Lorenzo Marques is a very beautiful city, which receives lots of tourists from South Africa and, moreover, is a magnificent city. It has its buildings in construction on a grand scale... However, we would like the city to be a very rich city, with developed industry and business. And here I have to finish my interview.' The collective 'we' hangs suspended above images that reveal the injustices of colonial society, signifying all that remains unsaid about the highly visible segregation on the beach that overlooks the skyline of Maputo.²⁵ Years later, when the armed struggle had liberated large parts of northern and central Mozambique, Joaquim Lopes Barbosa made the fiction film *Deixam-me pelo menos subir as palmeiras* (1972), which showed the brutality of forced labour on a cotton plantation. This too was immediately banned.

In the mid-1960s, however, the armed insurrection had only just begun and Independence was unimaginable to most Mozambicans, particularly in the South. Censorship of the press and lack of channels through which information could travel across the vast territory meant that the radical transformations occurring across the Continent in the early 1960s barely registered in public consciousness. Little was known of the Independence of most African nation-states and the experiments with 'African Socialism'.²⁶ It was only after Independence in the final years of the Mozambican Revolution that Cardoso

²⁴ Only a few employees at the film production companies were black, and they were kept in subservient roles. Interviews with Manuel Malo and Funcho, see Appendix

²⁵ *Cinéfilo*, no.33, 25 May 1974

²⁶ Maria Delurdes Tocato wrote the first newspaper article published in a Mozambican newspaper about an African country achieving independence, which appeared in *Notícias* in 1974. Taking advantage of a new South African air route via Mozambique to Madagascar, which was set up by the Apartheid regime for commercial reasons, she was able to research and write about Madagascar's Independence in 1960, which had a big impact in radicalising the political consciousness of an educated urban readership. Interview with Maria Delurdes Tocato, *op.cit.*

was able to make a feature film that mapped how the colonial city was lived through oppression, discrimination and violence. In *O Vento Sobre do Norte* (1987) the liberation struggle appears only as a tremor through a repressed society (Plate 59). Set in Lorenzo Marques, the film shows the climate of fear affecting both the colonisers and the colonised. It seeps into every aspect of daily life, infecting the games European children play as they stalk each other with toy guns through picket fences. The undercurrent of violence culminates in the attempted rape of a young black woman by a drunken Portuguese policeman. The winds of change that 'blow from the North' appear only as the crackled sounds of '*A Voz de Moçambique*', FRELIMO's radio broadcast listened to in secret in the opening scene of the film, or as rumours following an arrest about clandestine militant connections.

In its portrayal of a colonial society on the cusp of Revolution the film builds up a cumulative picture of collective memory with a narrative that connects different social groups and individuals. This tactic is evident at the level of the shot, as little use is made of Shot-Reverse-Shot, which characteristically functions in Hollywood movies to master the screen, filling its cinematic space with shots that dramatise psychological confrontation, the camera inhabiting the viewpoints of opposed individual subjectivities. In *O Vento Sobre do Norte* the camera weaves through space, taking in snatches of conversations and making connections, often by following and lingering with marginalised social figures – the houseboy who silently prunes the hedge while Portuguese children play and their mothers gossip over the garden fence, or the little boy in a café scene who moves from table to table, his begging largely ignored. Sequences move between the different spaces that divided the colonial city: the shacks of wood and corrugated iron in the *suburbios*; the PIDE headquarters at Villa Algarve; villas owned by Portuguese settlers and tended by black servants; and a café scene in the central part of the city, where Europeans fret and bluster about the armed insurrection but continue to treat the rest of the mixed population with contempt. Different temporalities thread into one another so that news of a comrade's arrest discussed by friends in the *suburbios* prompts a flashback to the older man's own imprisonment at Villa Algarve (Plate 40). The film then returns to the scene of conviviality with an anecdote that recounts a racist diatribe overheard in a café, turning it into a source of hilarity. Individual memories from different generations are folded into the narrative, so that they come to signify collective memories as well, to make an indictment of colonial society and signify the desire that lay hidden within it for radical change.

While by the late 1960s liberated zones were in operation across large areas of north and central Mozambique, the South remained cut off from the revolutionary struggle. Due to the intransigence of the fascist regime, only the Carnation Revolution in Portugal on 25 April 1974 opened up the possibility of negotiations, and by then FRELIMO was in a position to insist on full and unconditional Independence.²⁷ The Lusaka Agreement was finally signed on 7 September 1974, a transitional government appointed, and the day of Independence set for 25 June 1975. On the very day the accord was signed, however, a coup was attempted in Lorenzo Marques by a small group of right-wing Portuguese extremists called the *Dragões*

²⁷ The position of the Portuguese delegation was divided: the Socialist Mario Soares was in favour of Mozambique having total Independence, while those allied to General Spinoza wanted to ensure that Portugal set up some kind of neo-colonial structure of control over its former colonies. Oscar Monteiro, 'Testemunho de um jovem nas negociações para a Independência', in *Notícias*, Saturday 25 June 2005, pp. 8 and 33–35

da Morte ('Dragons of Death') or *Moçambique Livre* ('Free Mozambique'). Although they managed to seize and occupy Radio Moçambique for a time, the coup was prevented as people from the *suburbios* rose up, not against FRELIMO, as called for in the radio broadcasts, but against the fascists. Mozambicans streamed into the European centre to claim the city, and with FRELIMO's support, the Portuguese army, which had led the revolt in Lisbon against the fascist government, managed to restore calm. The rising up of the inhabitants of the *suburbios* was an occupation of a city riddled with spaces that had already been deserted. Despite FRELIMO policy that all those who considered themselves Mozambicans were welcome to stay regardless of racial origin, a mass exodus of the Portuguese population began in the last years of the colonial war, gained momentum following the toppling of the fascist regime in Lisbon, and increased dramatically after the failed coup of 7 September. Those who returned to Portugal became known as the '*retornados*' and many, accustomed to a position of privilege, experienced discrimination on their arrival in the metropole. Others settled in South Africa, or in Rhodesia, where a number of Africans conscripted into the Portuguese army also fled. Over a period of eighteen months, nearly ninety per cent of the Portuguese population left Mozambique, only a tiny minority of whom were expelled by the new government because they were considered 'economic saboteurs'.²⁸

In the first months of Independence, radical change was pushed forward through redistribution, nationalisation and drives to encourage new ways of life for city dwellers. The first Conferência Nacional de Departamento de Informação, held in Macomia from 26 to 30 November 1975, attempted to mark out FRELIMO's ideological strategy in relation to its political aims for Independence. The *Documents* state:

At the price of much blood, the liberated zones were taken in the face of colonialist aggression, establishing a new type of relations between men and serving as an experimental laboratory for the society we intend to construct.²⁹

Resolutions laid out the various means through which the revolutionary process was to be communicated to the people so that the new kind of society begun in the liberated zones could be extended across the country and into the cities. The role of information and propaganda in the construction of this radical democratic power was defined at the Conference as empowering 'the people' individually and collectively by building political consciousness about their 'rights and needs, the tasks that have to be realised, pride in their culture and personality, and awareness of their sovereignty'.³⁰

A new subjectivity was theorised in Fanonian terms in the notion of '*O Novo Homem*' ('The New Man'), which defined a specifically 'Mozambican personality' forged in the revolutionary process. New ideals and compartments would form the basis of social relations to replace those imposed by the colonial system, which the revolutionaries saw as being mired in exploitation, corruption, sexism, racism, obscurantism, tribalism and alienation from African roots. According to José Luís Cabaço, the idea of the 'New Man'

²⁸ This group were given the order of '24/20' – 24 hours to leave with 20 kilos of luggage. Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *Carlos Cardoso e a Revolução Moçambicana*, 2003 (Maputo: Ndjia), p.49

²⁹ FRELIMO, *Documentos da Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda da FRELIMO*, Macomia 26 to 30 November, 1975, p.3

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.11–12

took form during the armed struggle when Samora Machel demonstrated in his own comportment the kind of discipline and selflessness that FRELIMO demanded of its guerrillas, some of whom while based near Dar es Salaam risked being diverted by the 'relative comfort of the city'.³¹ The transformation of each individual's consciousness was seen as an essential component of the revolutionary struggle became, as Machel pointed out: 'Even when the systems of exploitation have been destroyed, if we do not fight the mentality underlying them, then sooner or later, slowly or rapidly, the system will spring up from its ashes again, nourished by the negative values preserved within us.'³² However, quickly the desire to change attitudes and social relations came to focus on the need to maximise production, Cabaço commenting that, 'Mechanisms for democratic power and collective management gave way to individual authority: subordination to leaders and to various organizational levels was posed against freedom and the spirit of initiative. Society became organised into a hierarchy.'³³

In the months that followed, therefore, the new sovereignty announced itself in attempts to organise all aspects of urban life, so as to make the city, that which had been the bastion of colonial culture, the 'laboratory' of the Revolution. Political consciousness was seen as being weak even among the working classes in the cities, as the colonial apparatus had 'colonised' the minds of urban dwellers not only, according to *Tempo*, through its 'organs of social communication (the radio, cinema, newspapers, books and records), but also through its market system that imported values from the metropole'.³⁴ Machel declared that urban society was a refuge for those who were still 'tied through the umbilical cord to the colonial metropolis' and that 'The cities are the fortresses of vices, the strongholds of evils. They are where reactionaries are made, where the wrong ideas in the heads of many people are made. They are the centre of rumours.'³⁵ FRELIMO's ideology and power structures were integrated into everyday life through groups of *dinamizadores*, activists working in each residential area and place of work who would act as the conduit between the Party and the people. The Fourth FRELIMO Congress in 1983 introduced as one of the duties of Party members that of 'participating, in an exemplary manner, in production and in social life.'³⁶

Murals appeared in the city from the earliest days of the Revolution, hastily painted to celebrate the victory of the people's army (Plate 41). Albie Sachs, the ANC activist who found sanctuary in Maputo when he was exiled from South Africa, describes how:

³¹ José Luís Cabaço, 'The New Man (Brief Itinerary of a Project)', in António Sopa (ed.), *Samora: Man of the People*, 2001 (Maputo: Maguezo Editores), p.105

³² Samora Machel, 'Fazer da Escola uma Base para o Povo Tomar o Poder', FRELIMO, *Estudos e Orientações*, no.6, July 1979, p.23

³³ José Luís Cabaço, 'The New Man (Brief Itinerary of a Project)', *op.cit.*, p.108

³⁴ 'Centros de Reeducação em Moçambique', *Tempo*, no.286, pp.58-59

³⁵ 'Discursos de Samora Moises Machel, Presidente da Frelimo e da Republica Popular de Moçambique', published in a photocopied edition by CEDIMO, 2nd volume, Doc, Inf. no. 12, Series A, 1980, Maputo, p.27

³⁶ José Luís Cabaço, 'The New Man (Brief Itinerary of a Project)', *op.cit.*

In a wave of enthusiasm to affirm what had seemed possible only in fantasy, thousands of Mozambicans in every part of the country got out their paint pots and emblazoned the walls of their towns and villages with an infinite profusion of political statements and paintings.³⁷

Those still faintly visible on Avenida da Guerra Popular have figures representing guerrillas and the people's army led by FRELIMO. Elsewhere, some feature exhortations to physical exercise, classroom scenes and peasants working in the fields, while others satirise 'counter-revolutionary' tendencies with Xicomoca, a cartoon character who exemplifies all the 'reactionary' traits of alcoholism, corruption and sloth that the Party saw as antithetical to its plan to accelerate production and create a Socialist society. There was thus a disciplinary and instrumentalist function to many of the early spontaneous murals in which radical enthusiasm is directed towards social productiveness, and indeed FRELIMO was most successful in implementing policies on public health and education that relied upon high levels of voluntarism and community mobilisation.³⁸ These fragments in the urban surface demand a more nuanced appreciation of how at the moment of Revolution political organisation intersects and harnesses with grassroots desires for radical change, crystallising in new kinds of collective agency.

This first wave of murals is markedly different from the murals that were officially commissioned at a later stage. These works are larger, more colourful and stylised, and were carried out by artists approved by the government. Malangatana designed murals for the Natural History Museum and the new Presidential Palace, and these are made up of tortured figures that do not suggest the same spirit of revolutionary optimism and confidence that Sachs attributes to the long gestation of the armed struggle in the North.³⁹ Sachs sees this as a testimony to the plurality that the FRELIMO government allowed in the expression of diverse experiences and sentiments towards the armed struggle and Independence.⁴⁰ There are further contrasts between these and the murals designed by Chilean exiles, which speak of how Maputo appeared as a site of radical possibility for political activists to whom it gave sanctuary. A number of Chileans came to Mozambique to escape the Pinochet dictatorship, and Chilean Moira Toha led a group who made the 'Cry of Happiness' mural on the wall of the Ministry of Agriculture (Plate 42). It depicts a pastoral landscape of rolling hills on which happy villagers cultivate the fields, children play and plump pigs and cows frisk through the grass. The only sombre section shows miners labouring in misery, in a style and tone that perhaps reflects Malangatana's later involvement.⁴¹

The culmination of these commissions is the huge 95 metre mural that faces the marble star-shaped monument at the centre of Praça dos Heróis outside the airport. Stylised forms condense different historical events into symbolic images that tell a narrative of the resistance by the Mozambican people to colonialism (Plate 43). Portraits of Mondlane and Machel punctuate the images of the people as exemplary figures of revolutionary commitment and sacrifice (Plates 44 and 45). While the earlier murals seem almost

³⁷ Albie Sachs, *Images of a Revolution*, 1983 (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House)

³⁸ Malyn Netwitt, 'Mozambique', in Patrick Chabal *et al.*, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, *op.cit.*, p.196

³⁹ Malangatana was imprisoned for many years by the Portuguese, and stayed on in the South of Mozambique, only experiencing liberation after Independence.

⁴⁰ Albie Sachs, *op.cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid*

spectral in the faded strokes of their worn-away paint, the colours here are still bright and bold. Careful maintenance of these official commemorations asserts continuity between the past and the present by blocking out the fade of time passing, for despite the embrace of the free market over the last fifteen years it is still the same Party that has been in power for more than three decades. Perhaps, then, there is something in the fade that resists nostalgia or amnesia. The Event continues, but as a more troubling persistence in the present.

While much of the cultural life of the city was viewed by the Party as ideologically suspect because of its association with colonialism and its inaccessibility to the majority of the population, the *jornais de parade* or *jornais do povo* ('wall newspapers' or 'people's newspapers') were an urban phenomenon that was populist and revolutionary. FRELIMO saw the idea of *jornais do povo* as particularly appropriate for mobilisation, and the 1st Conference set out guidelines as to how local *dinamizadores* should work with local people to ensure their upkeep, stipulating how often they should be renewed, their size, location and content, which was to contain items of local, national and international interest expressed in simple, clear and accessible language.⁴² Cartoons, photographs, political tracts and news items were pasted and pinned up for a few days at a time, the walls of the city becoming surfaces of ephemeral bricolage that kept pace with the rapid changes of the Revolution. Images and texts spoke of the new events, aspirations and ways of being together that were opening out as possibilities with the radical re-naming and re-organisation of urban life. Those set up in the *bairros* were particularly concerned with encouraging the cleaning and maintenance of neighbourhoods and combating 'speculation, theft and illiteracy'.⁴³ The *jornais do povo* were open even to those who could not afford a radio or read a newspaper as the articles could be read aloud while the illustrations were readily understood by anyone.⁴⁴ They created spaces of collective engagement with revolutionary events as they took place across the country and the world.

At times in the fragmentary remains of this vibrant culture of liberation there seems to be a double articulation at work in the aesthetics through which official discourses on revolutionary department were expressed in popular forms. For instance, cartoons that appeared in newspapers in the mid-1970s ostensibly promulgate an orthodox line, but this is articulated in the very forms associated with sub-cultures of psychedelia and an individualist libertarianism frowned upon by FRELIMO, which saw drug consumption, bell-bottoms, Afros and platform shoes as foreign to revolutionary nationalism. These styles are integral to a cartoon by 'Max' that attacks bureaucracy as corrosive of the people's enthusiasm for the Revolution and for productive work (Plate 46). In a baroque exuberance of line and chiaroscuro that has a manner reminiscent of Robert Crumb's semi-pornographic psychedelic cartoon strips, liberation as a cultural act takes on a very different set of meanings and references that render the city fantastical.

⁴² FRELIMO, *Documentos da Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda da FRELIMO*, Macomia 26 to 30 November, 1975, p.25

⁴³ 'Jornais do Povo', *Tempo*, no.295, 1976, p.18

⁴⁴ 'Os jornais do povo são baratos, podem ser feitos em qualquer lugar onde haja organização política da FRELIMO, podem ser lidos por muitas pessoas ao mesmo tempo e sem dificuldades, e são preparados pelo povo. Mesmo os que não sabem ler, podem compreender a informação, através das fotografias, desenhos e outras ilustrações.' 'Jornais do Povo', *Tempo*, no.294, 1976, p.39

Yet the city is haunted not only by the fragments of revolutionary enthusiasm but also by hidden memories of when enforcement of the new morality took more draconian forms. One of the areas of Lorenzo Marques whose secrets are mapped into the cinematic archive is the *Baixa*. This oldest district of the city is a narrow grid between the harbour, the railway station and the old fort, lined with elegant low columned buildings built in the nineteenth century. In the years preceding Independence it was where sailors, tourists, workers and affluent shoppers mingled, and some of the scenes in Cardoso's *O Vento Sobre do Norte* were filmed there. The brothels of Rua de Bagamoyo were the lure for a brisk trade in sex tourism, and Ricardo Rangel, one of the founders of *Tempo*, made photo-reportage of the young prostitutes and white South Africans, who came in search of exotic pleasures across the colour bar (Plate 47). In the early 1970s, Mozambique became the production site for porn films, the quantities increasing with the relaxing of Portuguese censorship laws after the Carnation Revolution. During the transition to Independence, Fernando da Silva and Courinha Ramos made the film *O Vendedor* (1974) about a Maputo businessman who sells mattresses, a parody of pornographic films that suggests this side of urban existence and cinema production was prominent in the way in which the city figured in collective imaginaries.

Soon after Independence FRELIMO announced that prostitution, along with theft, alcoholism, corruption and other crimes of decadent 'colonial-capitalism', would no longer take place in Mozambique.⁴⁵ The army stormed through the *Baixa*, sweeping up women of all ages, some of whom were not involved in sex work at all but simply were in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were transported out of the city to remote camps in the North, where they were 're-educated'. Women interviewed in Lucinio Azevedo's film *A Última Prostituta* (1999) claim that many did not survive the ordeal of toiling in the bush. Others were held for years, only released on the whim of the female FRELIMO officer in charge of the camp, who felt herself to be as much a prisoner as the inmates in her charge. *A Última Prostituta* is still considered too controversial to be shown on Mozambican television, but on Rua de Bagamoyo a new generation of punters throng lap dance venues that open their doors through the long nights.

The new guardians of the city called upon in re-naming the streets were heralds of a new regime of power, which sought to shake off the spatial practices that regulated bodies according to the logics of colonialism and the market. In 1976 all rented property was nationalised, and this was the single event that most transformed the racial demographics of urban inhabitation.⁴⁶ Property was restricted to no more than one house or apartment in the city and another in the countryside for every family. All other houses released in this process were handed over to APIE (Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado), which was the organisation set up to re-allocate and manage State buildings so that Mozambicans of all origins could occupy the vacated dwellings. All the businesses abandoned by the Portuguese were similarly seized and nationalised. On 4 March 1976 the Instituto Nacional de Cinema was set up in Maputo in a building that had been a restaurant on the newly re-named Avenida Agostinho Neto, and it was here that the archive material and equipment sequestered from the colonial production companies was brought. At the time of

⁴⁵ 'O Homem Novo', in *Tempo*, no.297, 1976, p.32

⁴⁶ The same process of nationalising urban property and extra houses had occurred one year previously in Addis Ababa as part of the Ethiopian Revolution that began in 1974. Bahru Zewde, 'The City Center: A Shifting Concept in the History of Addis Ababa', in Okwei Enwezor (ed.), *Cities Under Siege*, op.cit., pp.430–448

the transition to Independence, Manuel Malo was working for Melo de Pereira's production house, which under colonialism produced the newsreel *Atualidades de Moçambique*. He recalls that:

In the company where I worked... everything stopped when the coup happened in Portugal on 25 April 1974... During that time the 'nationalisations' happened, in which abandoned businesses were taken. But in the case of Melo Pereira's laboratory, it hadn't been abandoned. He was there, and had only made a trip to Portugal when his laboratory and equipment was seized. I was the only Mozambican working at the company of Melo de Pereira, up until 1976. Before there had been a few others, but they were older than me and had been conscripted into the military. But, anyway, from 25 April, the only Mozambican working there was me. The others were three Portuguese, and these soon went back to Portugal because Melo de Pereira said he didn't have the money to continue paying them whereas I received much less money than the others... So from 1974 to 1976 I kept hold of the key to the studios, and every day I went there, opened the doors, cleaned the equipment, and stayed there waiting. ... Then one Monday morning when I arrived there was a man in a suit standing at the door. I had no idea who he was. I took the keys from my bag, went to open the door, but the man told me to wait, saying, 'Don't open the door'. I was astonished and asked him who he was, to which he replied, 'I have orders not to let anyone enter this building.' Finally he identified himself, saying he was from the Polícia de Investigação Criminal (PIC)... He told me that ... I could enter and collect my personal things, which I'd kept there because of having worked there on my own for the last two years. I took the few personal things I had and he took the key, even though I was scared to hand it over to him... I made my way to the Centro de Informação e Turismo, which paid for all the documentaries Melo de Pereira made, to inform them what happened. ... And so that was how the laboratory of Melo de Pereira was seized ... and ... fell into the hands of the INC. He had known about the setting up of the INC, but I had no idea. After two weeks he packed his bag and he and his wife left for South Africa... he got onto the train with tears in his eyes, crying right in front of me. Shortly afterwards I presented myself at the INC, and was given work there. I continued working at the INC, where the same machines I'd worked on before had been transferred – to this very building.⁴⁷

During the Revolution Malo went from being the loyal under-paid servant of Melo de Perreira to holding the position of Head of the Laboratory at the INC. He and his fellow technicians were anonymous figures who worked day and night to process the *Kuxa Kanema* newsreel, but were never mentioned by name on the credits as the film reels that travelled across the country. A strange combination of deference and consciousness of injustice, of dedication to his work at the INC as part of a wider revolutionary struggle and awareness of the lack of recognition it received colours this testimony with shades of ambiguity. The event of Revolution is scattered as fragments of personal memories, hopes and disappointments. When Gabriel Mondlane, selected while still a schoolboy to train in filmmaking, talks about his fascination with the mysterious buttons in the sound room, he articulates how cinema not only came to express and

⁴⁷ Interview with Manuel Malo, Maputo, 18 May 2005. See Appendix

embody the radical hopes of the emergent nation, but was the means through which, during the Revolution, new revolutionary subjectivities were actualised through technologies that were simultaneously new and already out of date. Conditions of scarcity and the outmoded technology donated by the USSR were as much a part of the assemblage of components that made up the INC as the confluence of aspirations to harness cinema to the project of liberation. The revolutionary situation of decolonisation that produced this machine of radical desire was thus configured out of circumstances and relations that were unrepeatable.

The notion of cinema aspired to by FRELIMO was that it should be a weapon on the 'cultural front' of the Revolution. In the cinematic archive this is manifested in films about the revolutionary struggle at various but often simultaneous scales and sites, as part of a global fight against imperialism in all its guises. In this cinematic archive, the image of the charismatic leader Samora Machel is reiterated constantly as an exemplary figure, his gestures and modes of speech beating the rhythm of a new rhetoric spread across the nation through circulations of the moving image. The logo of the *Kuxa Kanema* newsreel is a map of Mozambique traversed by pulsating circles that expand out from the centre – symbolic of how the newsreel disseminated the image of a cohesive nation (see Chapter 4). Documentaries often followed the screenings of the newsreel, amplifying on the revolutionary themes. Camillo de Sousa's *Ofensiva* (1980), for instance, tracks Samora Machel on a new kind of campaign to the Maputo docks. Here he accosts the 'enemy', but in a different form, rooting out 'economic saboteurs' who have infiltrated the supply system to paralyse the economy. Mountains of goods lie rotting in warehouses as the people queue for hours to buy basic goods at supermarkets and *lojas do povo* ('people's shops') only to find the shelves are empty. The delight of the film lies in Machel's performance as he berates and heckles officials, leaning forward and wagging his finger at them, or standing shoulders back, feet wide apart in the midst of a crowd of dockers, joking, scolding and propounding. His message: 'The enemy's agents have infiltrated the State apparatus. Who are they? They are... those who were being prepared by colonialism to take over, who have remained here as long-range booby-traps.'⁴⁸

That same year delegations from Cuba and North Korea came to the INC at the same time to train INC employees and, in the process, to make a film. Both films celebrated FRELIMO's charismatic leader but were vastly different in tone and approach. 'Everyone wanted to work with the Cubans', Pedro Pimenta, then Director of Production, remembers, as ICAIC then was the hub of a kind of revolutionary filmmaking that was seductive and lyrical as well as effective as propaganda.⁴⁹ The North Korean co-production was called *Moçambique em progresso sob a direcção do Presidente Samora Moisés Machel* (*Mozambique Advances under the Leadership of President Samora Moisés Machel*, 1981), the title of which surely gives an indication of the film's tone. By contrast, the Cuban team made a film called *Nova Sinfonia* (*The New Symphony*, 1981), which took as its starting point Machel's habit of breaking into song at the beginning of

⁴⁸ Speech given in Maputo on 18 March 1980 that launched the internal Offensive. Translated from Samora Machel, 'Deslojemos o Inimigo Interno do Nosso Aparelho de Estado', in *Palavras de Ordem*, 1980, no.19 (Maputo: Edição do Partido FRELIMO) in Barry Munslow (ed.), *Samora Machel, An African Revolutionary*, 1985 (London: Zed Books), pp.86–103

⁴⁹ Interview with Pedro Pimenta, Johannesburg, 30 June 2005. See Appendix

Party meetings!⁵⁰ Santiago Alvarez, who led the Cuban delegation, had developed a unique form of agit-prop using rapid montage imbued with humour that was a new departure in political filmmaking during the 1960s and 1970s. It worked on the revolutionary promise montage for disjunctive synthesis, its juxtapositions of un-reconciled images and sounds breaking the illusion of bourgeois continuity and involving the viewer in the construction of a 'new symphony' in the connecting of its disparate parts.

The INC also opened the possibility of Mozambique becoming a key site for film production in southern Africa, as well as building on links with Socialist countries and networks across a South–South axis, particularly with Cuba and Brazil. Maputo attracted filmmakers involved in decolonising the field of the moving image across the African Continent, including Med Hondo and Ousmane Sembene, both of whom visited the INC during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵¹ What distinguished the politics of the screen emanating from Maputo, however, was the extent of its ambition and that its project of decolonisation was seen as viable because it had the backing of the Mozambican State. The Conferência Africana de Cooperação Cinegráfica, held in Maputo between 21 and 24 February 1977, was a crucial moment in the crystallisation of hopes to create regional infrastructures through which to break dependency and challenge the economic and cultural hegemony of the West. The conference launched the Associação Africana de Cooperação Cinematográfica (AACC), which was the first attempt to re-organise the cinema industry at governmental level between multi-lingual African nation-states.⁵² The speech by Jorge Rebelo that opened the conference laid out a vision of how this constituted a 'new front of combat against imperialism'.⁵³ The battle for the 'cultural liberation of Africa' was not merely a question of aesthetics, as in the 'reactionary ideology' of *Négritude*, but demanded the creation of political and economic spheres autonomous from the circuits of neo-colonialism:

Our objectives are not only, therefore, to combat and neutralise the enemy cinema in our countries. They are also to produce, exhibit and develop truly revolutionary cinema, a cinema that participates and is capable of pushing forward revolutionary transformation. In order to do this, we must establish a gradual rupture with economic and technological dependency in the sectors of production, distribution and cinema exhibition. The combat on this front is even more decisive when the cinema that dominates our countries, as still is the case in most of the world, is that which is directly controlled by a complex network of international monopolies.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ Articles by and about Hondo and Sembene appeared in *Tempo*. See 'Abid Hondo: Fazer com sio um cinema descolonizado "Cinematario de Luta"', in *Tempo*, no.316, 1976, pp.58–59 and Ousmane Sembene, 'Homem e Cultura', in *Tempo*, no.502, 1980, pp.47–51

⁵² Present at the Conference were delegations from Tanzania, Zambia, Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde, S. Tomé and Príncipe.

⁵³ Speech by Jorge Rebelo at the Conferência Africana de Cooperação Cinegráfica, 21 February 1977. Reprinted in *Retrospectiva do Cinema Moçambicana*, Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Maputo, June 1982

⁵⁴ 'Os nossos objectivos não são apenas, portanto, o de combatermos e neutralizarmos o cinema inimigo nos nossos países. São também os de produzirmos, exibirmos e desenvolvermos o cinema verdadeiramente revolucionário. Para isto teremos que estabelecer uma ruptura gradual com a dependência económica e tecnológica nos sectores da produção, distribuição e exibição cinematográficas. O combate nesta frente é tanto mais decisivo quanto o cinema dominante nos nossos países, como ainda na maior parte do mundo, é aquele que se encontra directamente controlado pela complexa rede dos monopolies internacionais'. *Ibid*

The AACC would be open to all African countries and would seek to cooperate with other organisations with the same objectives, calling on all member States to follow Guiné-Conakry in nationalising their cinema industries and aligning itself with the OAU (Organisation of African Unity).⁵⁵ This primary objective of displacing foreign distribution monopolies by regional intra-African circuits of distribution failed, however, due to lack of political commitment by many of the participating countries. Yet some international co-operation across the Continent was achieved.⁵⁶ Where this was successful, it reflected solidarities forged during the struggle for Independence and in the support Mozambique gave to other liberation struggles.⁵⁷ Inter-governmental cooperation on filmmaking became increasingly directed towards exposing South African aggression across the region. South Africa was conducting large-scale military operations across Southern Africa, which the Apartheid government wanted to keep secret from its own population and out of the attention of the international community. Camillo de Sousa, Funcho (João Costa) and Licínio Azevedo thus went to Angola during the South African invasion, where they made *Cinco Tiros de Mauser* (1981). Funcho and Angolan filmmaker Carlos Henriques then worked together to make *Pamberi ne Zimbabwe* (1981), a film about the first elections that resulted in the victory of ZANU-FP and the proclamation of the Republic of Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980. This collaboration between the Instituto Angolano de Cinema and the INC was the first Southern African co-production made entirely without external support.

Increasingly, however, filmmaking at the INC was directed towards exposing South African violence within Mozambique. In 1975 a small terrorist force that initially called itself the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR) was set up by Ken Flowers, head of the Rhodesian Secret Service, with army deserters and former PIDE officers. When Zimbabwe gained Independence South Africa started backing the force, which by then was becoming known as RENAMO and was recruiting fighters in Mozambique, often by kidnapping children and young men. In 1981 the attacks being carried out by the 'armed bandits', as they were referred to by the press and the government in Mozambique, entered into a new phase. On 30

⁵⁵ Specifically, the Conference resolved that the AACC would: (1) Decide on common policies with regard to production, acquisition, importation and distribution of films. (2) Establish a film import and distribution community, embracing all the cinema circuits of member States. (3) Co-ordinate the development of cinema production and contribute to its promotion; build up or develop basic infrastructures, promote the distribution and exhibition of films produced or co-produced by member States within and beyond the Association. (4) Initiate, encourage and support activities involving the development of consciousness about the political function of the culture of the People through cinema, within and between member States, without prejudice towards the initiatives of respective national cinema organisations. (5) Assure the training and employment of technicians. (6) Cooperate with, participate in, or become members of other international organisations with the same or similar objectives. (7) Establish a fund for the realisation of these objectives. Immediate tasks included securing ratification for these plans by each member government, setting up financial and organisational plans and protocols, and establishing regional bases for the Association. The Acting Secretary also declared the AACC's intention to make a study of the possibilities for translating films into different languages; preserve copies of films in a regional archive to ensure accessibility between member States; set up an itinerant film festival that would focus on films by member States, and publish a trimestral bulletin to provide information on the AACC's activities. 'Conferência Africana de Cooperação Cinematográfica', in *Tempo*, no.335, pp.63–64

⁵⁶ Claire Andrade-Watkins, 'Portuguese African Cinema: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives 1969–1993', reprinted in Imruh Bakari and Mbye Cham, *African Experiences of Cinema*, 1996 (London: BFI), p.139

⁵⁷ Thus, for instance, when Julius Nyerere stood down as President of Tanzania, the INC sent a team of cameramen to film his final State tour as Tanzania lacked the facilities and skills to make a record in film. Interview with Luis Simão, Maputo, 17 September 2005. See Appendix

January 1981 South African commandos entered the town of Matola near Maputo and killed 12 exiled members of the ANC and (by mistake) a Portuguese. Journalists and politicians in Maputo responded that with their experience of conducting a successful 'people's war', the Mozambican people would meet the threat posed by South Africa head on.⁵⁸

The escalating conflict featured in a number of films made by the INC in what was to be its most prolific year. Henrique Caldeira's *30 de Janeiro* (1981) is about the South African attack in Matola. Camillo de Sousa's *Operação Leopardo* (1981) told of the return home of a contingent of Mozambican volunteers who had been fighting the racist regime in Rhodesia and how the Mozambican army then had to launch an operation against a counter-revolutionary base in Manica set up with support from South African and remaining Rhodesian forces. José Cardoso's *Que Venham!* (1981) captured a defiant speech by Samora Machel, in which he committed Mozambique to continue supporting the ANC, guaranteeing sanctuary for political exiles. Challenging the South Africa government to declare outright war on Mozambique, he declared '*Que Venham!* (Let them come!), Let all the racists come! Let them come! We will liquidate the war once and for all. That way there will be true peace in the region. Not this artificial peace we're living in. Let the South Africans come, but they should know that the war will end in Pretoria!'⁵⁹ As Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse point out, the 'enemies' were identified, and come they did, but not in the way they were expected.

The horror that followed is tragically apparent in the story of a village featured in Moira Forjaz's *Um Dia Numa Aldeia Comunal* (1981). *Um Dia* is outstanding in terms of the beauty and dignity with which it endows its subject (Plate 48). Using a voice-over in Portuguese and interviews in local languages that were translated with subtitles rather than dubbed over, it describes daily life in Vigilância, a communal village that was then only three years old. We learn that Vigilância is populated by nearly a hundred women and their children, but just four men. The film describes how, because so many of the men had to work in the mines in South Africa or had been conscripted into the army, the burden of hard labour required to build the village and cultivate the *machambas* fell to the women, who also had to raise the children and fetch water – a gruelling task in such an arid area. Even functional shots that track the workings of basic technologies used for conserving water, such as a gutter that runs along a hut into a well, are gracefully composed and paced. *Um Dia* includes an animated sequence to explain the government's policy of collectivisation and depict the construction of this particular village. At the end of the day villagers gather around a fire to sing songs about their collective strength, their joy at being free from forced labour and their hopes for the future. Yet the 'vigilance' of the villagers and armed forces protecting them was not enough. A few years after the film was released RENAMO attacked the village and almost every person who appears in the film was killed. As the atrocities mounted filmmakers risked their lives to document how the country was being ravaged by violence. While *Kuxa Kanema* had once featured rousing slogans to accompany images of collective farms, trade union marches and mass rallies, when the crew found themselves confronted with

⁵⁸ For example, Carlos Cardoso argued that the Apartheid system could not comprehend the nature of 'people's war': 'The combatants of liberty are not uniformed soldiers that can be distinguished from the masses. They *are* the masses and in Mozambique and South Africa there are 35 million soldiers. Who is afraid after all?' Quoted in Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *op.cit.*, p.121

⁵⁹ Cited in Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *op.cit.*, p.122

massacres the voiceover drops away and the camera silently bears witness to the bodies of hundreds of villagers strewn across burnt out wastelands.⁶⁰

Between 1979 and 1980 Cabaço and Guerra began discussing new filmmaking initiatives that would operate under the tight control of government to communicate FRELIMO's ideological position more efficiently.⁶¹ Guerra recruited a number of Brazilian filmmakers who were 'ideologically "recommended"', but while the Brazilians came with a stamp of ideological approval, they were critical of the way in which filmmaking was being organised in Mozambique and saw the State's relationship with the INC as over-centralised and paternalistic, imposing what kinds of films were made with little consideration for the viability of projects or for filmmakers to show initiative.⁶² Guerra proposed setting up a private company that would be run commercially to make films on commission just like 'any other Western production company', so bringing to Socialism the technical competence and quality that the capitalist system could provide.⁶³ In 1982 Machel approved the plan. The company would interface with the open market of trans-national capitalism, thus adapting the modes of the struggle on the 'cultural front' in a world that was becoming increasingly characterised by globalisation.

The following year, in 1983, Kanemo was set up with funds from the Bank of Mozambique and Socimo, the government's commercial company that had been established during the armed struggle.⁶⁴ Socimo was intricately linked with security forces and it became one of the main shareholders of Kanemo, along with Guerra himself and the Brazilian company Tropic, a partner of Socimo. The company's close ties to the secret service were controversial, some seeing Kanemo as a front for the Mozambican intelligence services.⁶⁵ Labi Mendonça was appointed General Director and Carlos Alberto, who was General Director of Socimo, was put in charge of finances. Jacinto Veloso, who was then Minister for State Security and a close friend of Guerra, acted as a 'security shield' for Kanemo to carry out its work and protect the company against internal and external attacks. Between 1983 and 1988 Kanemo produced documentaries and educational fiction films commissioned by the government, the Red Cross and UNICEF. Alongside these activities, it created an archive of black and white photographs and participated in developing the use of video and setting up TVE. Kanemo also took on more ambitious large-scale filmmaking projects, but its

⁶⁰ Luís Carlos Patriaquim was a scriptwriter for *Kuxa Kanema* during the 1980s. He describes how words seemed to them inadequate to accompany the images they gathered of hundreds of peasants murdered and villages destroyed in RENAMO attacks. See Margarida Cardoso's documentary *Kuxa Kanema: The Birth of a Nation* (2003)

⁶¹ Labi Mendonça, 'Text sobre a Kanemo Produção e Comunicação', a report sent by email on 19 September 2005, p.2

⁶² Guerra selected a group of individuals connected with the production company who had made *A Queda* (1976), a film he directed in Brazil about a former soldier who had fired on villagers during the time of government oppression, finding himself a victim of oppression as a worker on a Rio construction site. The team, which comprised Alberto dos Reis Graça, Antonio Luis Mendes Soares, Labi Mendonça and Vera Zaverucha, came to Mozambique in 1981 initially for three months. They established a film production course for the INC, which directors and producers including Samuel Matola, Director of the Institute, all followed. This course later formed the basis for the INC's handbook *Stages of Production*. *Ibid*

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.6

⁶⁴ At the same time a sister company, Austra, was set up in Brazil. *Ibid*

⁶⁵ Mendonça's response is that 'In any case, in a country at war, everything goes through Security! It's obvious that there were personnel from Intelligence infiltrated into everything and on all sides! Including Kanemo. But this was normal for the times.' *Ibid*, p.11

closeness to the security services did not make it immune from the climate of repression and suspicion into which the Revolution was descending as the war of de-stabilisation grew. In 1995 Kanemo began making a series for television called *Actas de um Processo de Decolonização*, a huge project which exhaustively filmed the trials of the *comprimentados*, a name given to those accused of political crimes and collaboration with the enemy. The project continued into 1986, but came to be considered too sensitive an issue and only the first two episodes were broadcast.⁶⁶

But from 1984 Kanemo's energies and resources were increasingly taken up with Mário Borgneth's documentary *Fronteiras de Sangue* (*Borders of Blood*, 1986), which aimed to show the geopolitical impact of Apartheid violence and expose South Africa's strategy of de-stabilising Independent States at its borders. The most important coup came when the Kanemo team managed to interview Ken Flowers, former Head of Security under Ian Smith's white minority government in Rhodesia. Extraordinarily, Flowers describes in detail how he set up RENAMO with former PIDE officers and Mozambican army deserters, and how, with the Independence of Zimbabwe, the South African government became RENAMO's main backers. This interview alone gives the lie to the claim that the organisation had its origins as a Mozambican opposition force born out of local resistance to FRELIMO, which was crucial at a time when the Reagan administration was trying to claim that RENAMO were home-grown anti-Communist freedom fighters. With spiralling costs, production was nearly halted when Samora Machel was killed in 1986, but when it was finally released it played an important role in galvanising support among a growing international body that was outraged by the situation in Mozambique.⁶⁷ Machel had begun negotiations with South Africa to end the conflict in 1983. This culminated in the signing of the Nkomati Accord, in which South Africa promised to stop funding and training RENAMO if Mozambique agreed to end the sanctuary it provided for the ANC, an agreement that compromised Mozambique's ethical foreign policy and that South Africa did not honour. Mozambique applied to join the IMF in 1984, and Machel sought to build on the reputation the country gained diplomatically following the Nkomati Accord by actively seeking support from Britain and the USA.

Following the death of Machel, Joaquim Chissano continued the strategy of attempting to negotiate with RENAMO. Meanwhile Soviet support evaporated with Gorbachev's accession to power, and in 1986 he officially announced that the USSR was no longer interested in political involvement in Southern African countries. Zdravko Velimrovic's *Os Tempos dos Leopardos* (1987), which was a co-production with Yugoslavia, can thus be seen as a last gesture of solidarity between African and European Marxist States. The 'Socialist Friendship' had begun during the armed struggle when Dragustin Popovitch made films with FRELIMO (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 4). *Os Tempos dos Leopardos* is a fictional account of the anti-colonial war told from the perspective of the colonised.⁶⁸ What distinguishes the film thematically, however, is the anti-essentialism of its revolutionary ideal, in which black and white unite to fight for an Independent Mozambique. The narrative revolves around the confrontation and eventual bonding between 'Pedro', a

⁶⁶ Conversation with Chico Carneiro, Maputo, September 2005

⁶⁷ The original budget for the film was 250,000 dollars, but this rose to over 600,000 with the huge number of archive images that had to be purchased from Portugal, UK, Zimbabwe and other countries. Labi Mendonça, *op.cit.*

⁶⁸ In this it resembles Flora Gomes *Mortu Nega* and Sarah Maldoror's *Sambiganga*. See Chapter 2

FRELIMO commander, and Armando, a psychiatrist employed by the Portuguese army to provide a psychological profile of the charismatic revolutionary. Pedro and his lover Ana are exemplary militants prepared to sacrifice their lives to the struggle (Plate 49). Another FRELIMO guerrilla, Januario, is also in love with Ana, but he sees the struggle as a battle of revenge against white people, a motivation revealed as misguided and inadequate to the demands of the struggle when his recklessness leads him to be ambushed by the Portuguese. Under interrogation he betrays Pedro and Ana, which results in their capture and torture. The psychiatrist, of Portuguese origin but born in Mozambique, now has his opportunity to come face to face with the legendary Pedro. He is eventually won over to the nationalist cause, coming to realize that his identifications are as a Mozambican rather than with the colonial regime. FRELIMO guerrillas storm the barracks, showing that the commitment of the struggles lives on in others, but they are too late to save Ana and Pedro. The final gruesome shot shows Pedro's dead body silhouetted against a window as if crucified.

Although the film was a hit in Mozambique, some of the Mozambican filmmakers who were involved in the project have since stated it was not at all the kind of film they wanted to make.⁶⁹ Indeed, the process of making the film revealed the 'Socialist Friendship' between the two countries to be uneven and fraught with ambiguity. The Yugoslav government provided the bulk of the finances, film stock and the colour processing facilities, and their script-writers, directors and technicians oversaw proceedings. Luís Carlos Patriquim and Licínio Azevedo drafted the script, drawing on *Relatos do Povo Armado*, a collection of short stories by Azevedo based on testimonies of the armed struggle gathered from people who participated in the fight.⁷⁰ But the script they submitted to the Yugoslav filmmaking institute was returned to them with changes that made it almost unrecognisable, filled as it was with dramatic helicopter battle scenes that bore no relation to how the struggle had been fought by villagers and guerrillas on the ground. Other accounts suggest the experience of 'socialist friendship' was mired by a paternalism that at times veered into racism, as when Mondlane was sent to Belgrade to work on the sound and found he had to prove his competence before being allowed to work unsupervised.⁷¹

Having demonstrated they were capable of taking on a full-length feature, the INC determined that their next fiction film, *O Vento Sopre do Norte*, should be made entirely as a Mozambican production. Cardoso's film clearly comes out of an *auteur* tradition of filmmaking very different from the modes of militant filmmaking discussed in Chapter 4 and from the heroic narrative of nation-building through collective revolutionary struggle of *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*. When the film appeared in the final years of the Revolution, it offered a glimpse of yet another version of what a Mozambican 'national cinema' might have looked like in different circumstances, one that would give form and voice to the collective desires and memory of 'the people' through the filter of a personal vision. Cardoso has since claimed that in writing a script denouncing colonial society over ten years after its demise he was in part motivated by the fact that

⁶⁹ Azevedo and Patriquim distance themselves from the film and describe how their original script was transformed in Margarida Cardoso's documentary *Kuxa Kanema*. Interviews with Licínio Azevedo and Camillo de Sousa, see Appendix

⁷⁰ *Relatos do Povo Armado* was republished in Portugal under the title *Coração Forte*. Licínio Azevedo, *Coração Forte*, 1995 (Lisbon: Edições Dinossauuro), p.7

⁷¹ Conversation with Gabriel Mondlane, Maputo, September 2004

this would be acceptable to the authorities.⁷² While the use of black and white makes for an effective conjuring of time past, adopting the modes of filmmaking current under colonialism, it was in fact more significantly the only way the INC could make the film entirely as a Mozambican production, colour processing being beyond the capacity of the INC laboratory.⁷³ In some ways it marks the climax of the INC's efforts to create an independent cinema making films with characteristics specific to Mozambique without dependency on foreign technical support. However, when the film was released in 1987 the political and economic situation had worsened to such an extent that *O Vento Sobre do Norte* was the last gasp of a dream that could not be sustained.

By the end of the 1980s, FRELIMO was only able to maintain people's safety in the cities, and RENAMO was forced to develop a political platform so as to survive as an organisation with a purpose beyond the civil war.⁷⁴ When FRELIMO had become a vanguard party in 1977, rules were drawn up stipulating that members should live 'exclusively from the fruits of their work'.⁷⁵ When Machel was killed in 1986 the Mozambican State was suddenly stripped of the model for this kind of exemplary conduct. His death precipitated a mass outpouring of grief captured in the film by Fatima Albuquerque and Ismael Vuvo called *Samora Vive* (1986), which includes extraordinary scenes of crowds mourning at the leader's State funeral (Plate 50). Throughout the mid-1980s the capacity for State intervention was in decline, private enterprise had re-surfaced and with it the prestige accrued to property and profit, and the Party changed its rules so that members could amass property for profit.⁷⁶ This negation of the principles of the 'New Man' and its collective vision opened up the floodgates to unbridled individualism and widespread corruption in the years that followed. In 1988 the Revolutionary Military Tribunal was abolished, and in 1989 the fifth FRELIMO conference formally renounced the Party's Marxist-Leninist position and announced constitutional reform that would pave the way for multi-party democratic elections.

The economic crisis caused by the war and the fading away of the government's collective project, compounded by the withdrawal of support from Soviet bloc countries, meant that during the 1980s the INC's profits were increasingly appropriated for other uses by the State.⁷⁷ Articles in the press expressed

⁷² See interview with José Cardoso in Margarida Cardoso's documentary *Kuxa Kanema* (2002?)

⁷³ Even after the decision to shoot in black and white, the choice not to send the film abroad for processing was controversial. Luis Simão, then Director of Production, insisted they should depend entirely on the professional ability and resources at the INC, rather than send the film to East Germany, which was the other option that had been discussed. While good results were achieved in processing most of the film, a power cut spoilt the final section. This part showed a crowd scene shot on the beach at Costa do Sol, an area on the outskirts of central Maputo, which had been so complicated to set up that it was impossible to re-shoot. Interview with Luis Simão, *op.cit.*

⁷⁴ RENAMO transformed itself into a political party by announcing an anti-communist line that would reinstate respect for traditional beliefs and power structures, building on the support it had managed to win among those unhappy at the government's policy of 'villagisation'. Research carried out as early as 1983 to 1984 in the north of Mozambique by French anthropologist Christian Geffray suggested that RENAMO was tapping into this current of discontent. See Patrick Chabal (ed.), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, 2002 (London: Hurst), p.217

⁷⁵ FRELIMO, 'Programa e Estatutos', Chapter 2, Article 7, p.42

⁷⁶ The decision was taken at the Central Committee meeting in 1986. José Luís Cabaço, 'The New Man (Brief Itinerary of a Project)', *op.cit.*, p.109

⁷⁷ Interview with Polly Gaster, Maputo, 11 June 2005. See Appendix

outrage as cinemas in the cities began falling into disrepair.⁷⁸ In 1990 the financial situation became so bad that two films in mid-production were cancelled.⁷⁹ By this time the Minister for Information was Feodata Hunguane, and the Director of the Institute had changed to former Kanemo director Americo Xavier, who previously worked for State Security. On the night of 12 February 1991, seemingly as a result of an electrical fault which had affected the building for some time, the INC was almost completely destroyed by fire.

⁷⁸ 'Devido à crise financeiro problemas afectam salas de cinema', in *Noticias*, Friday 6 April 1990, p.8

⁷⁹ Suspension of the production of *Severino* and *A Solidão* because of a lack of funds is reported in Bento Balói, 'INC suspende preparação de dois films moçambicanos', in *Domingo*, 7 July 1990, p.3



Plate 34
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Maputo, 2004
Top: interior, below: Gabriel Mondlane outside the entrance



Plate 35
Corner of Avenida Vladimir Lenine and Avenida Ho Chi Min, Maputo, 2004



Plate 36
Remnants of a billboard showing Samora Machel and a revolutionary slogan, Maputo, 1999

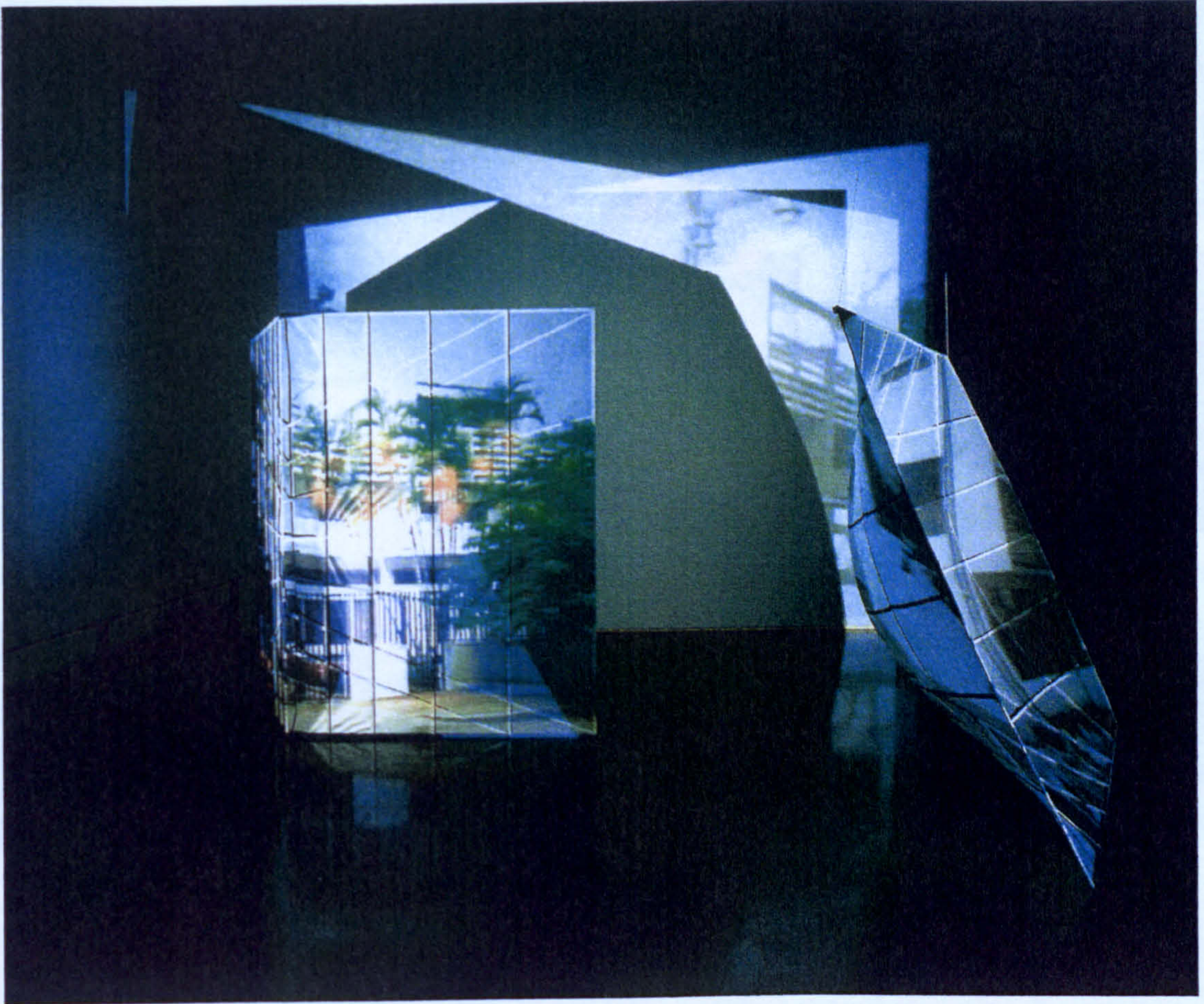


Plate 37
Ângela Ferreira, *Casa – um retrato íntimo da casa em que nasci*, 1999



Plate 38
Marta Lusitano, *Nostalgia*, 2002



Plate 39
Poster for José Cardoso's *O Vento Sopra do Norte*, 1987

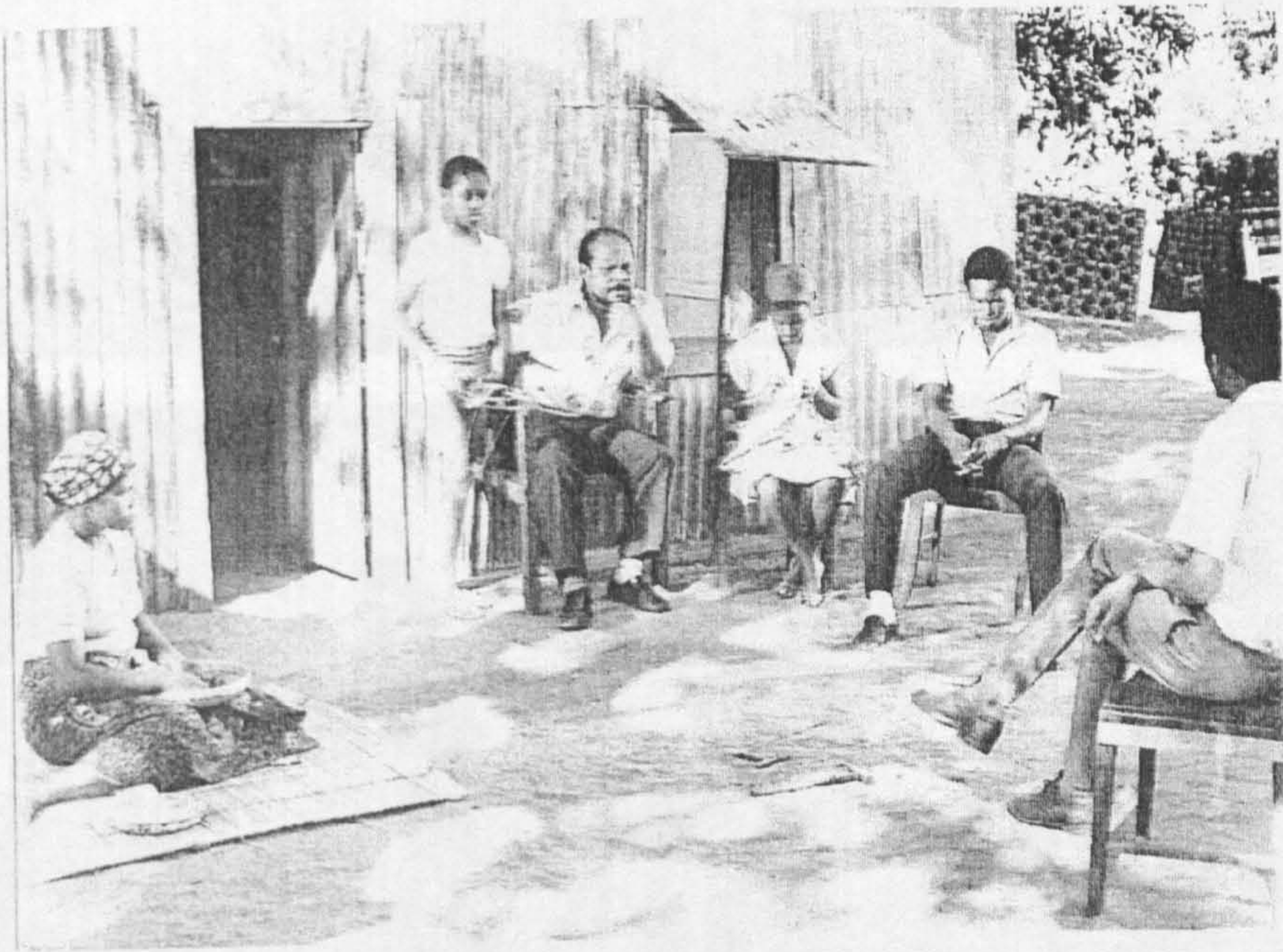
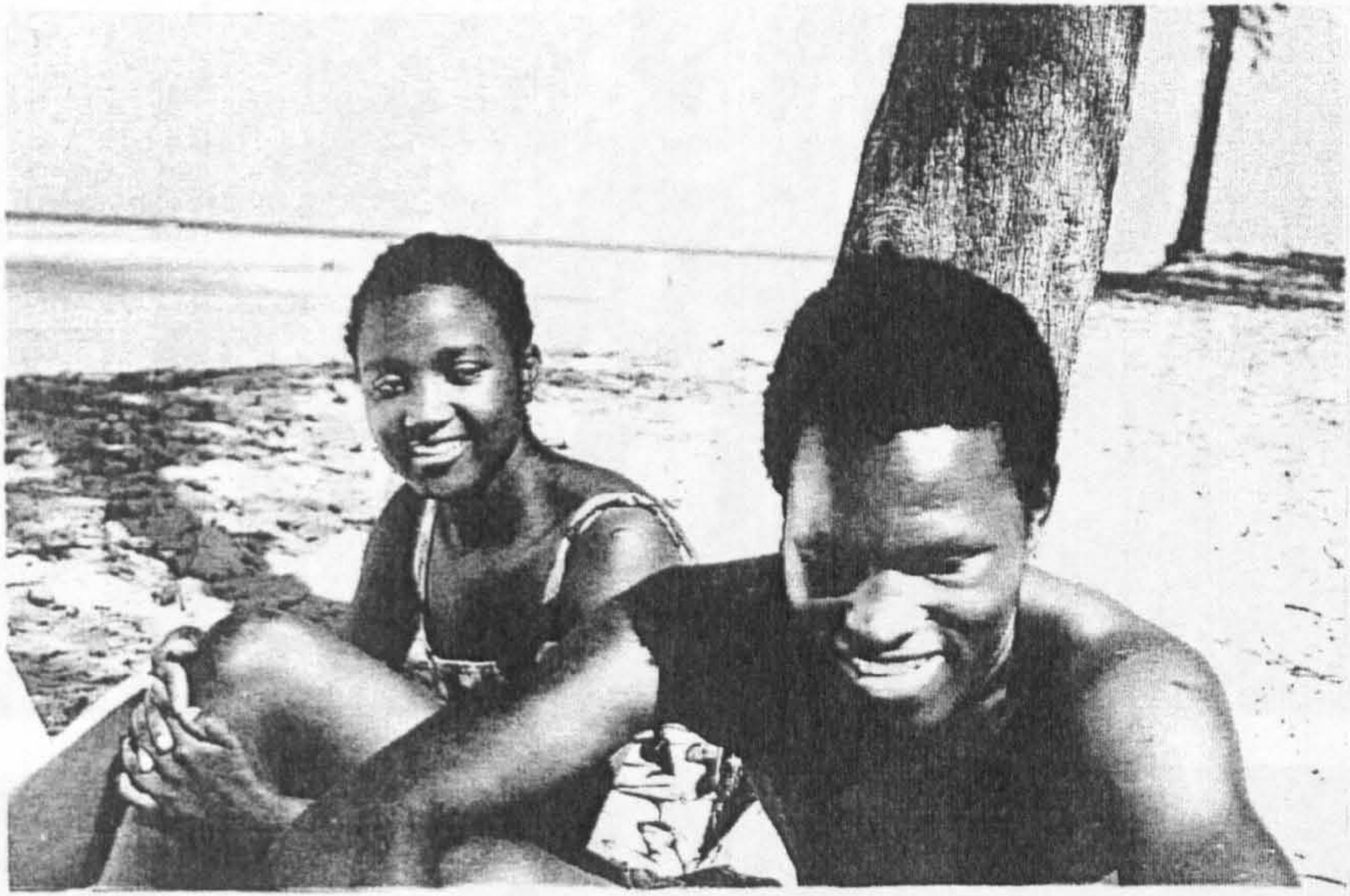


Plate 40
O Vento Sopre do Norte, 1987

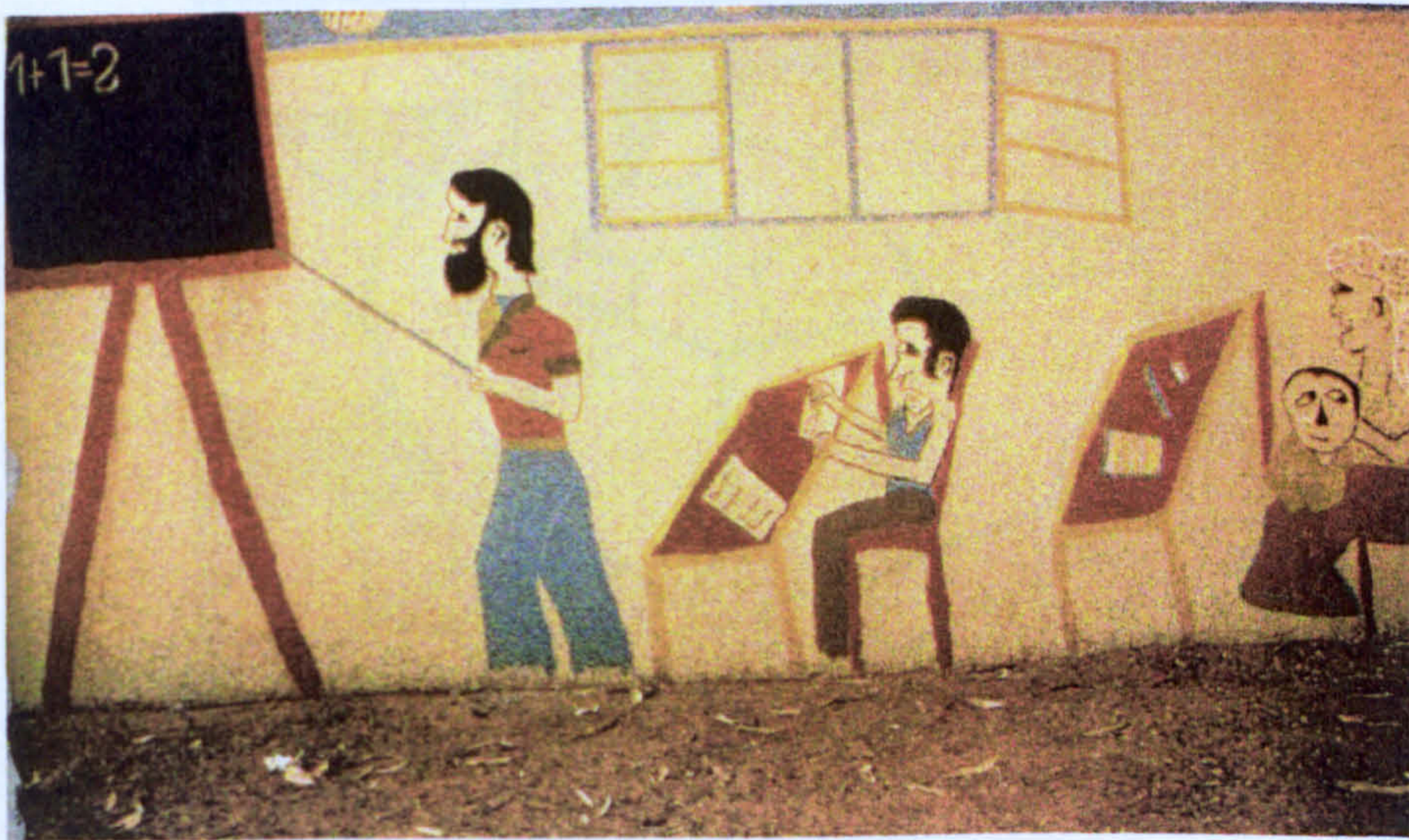


Plate 41
Early revolutionary murals, Maputo

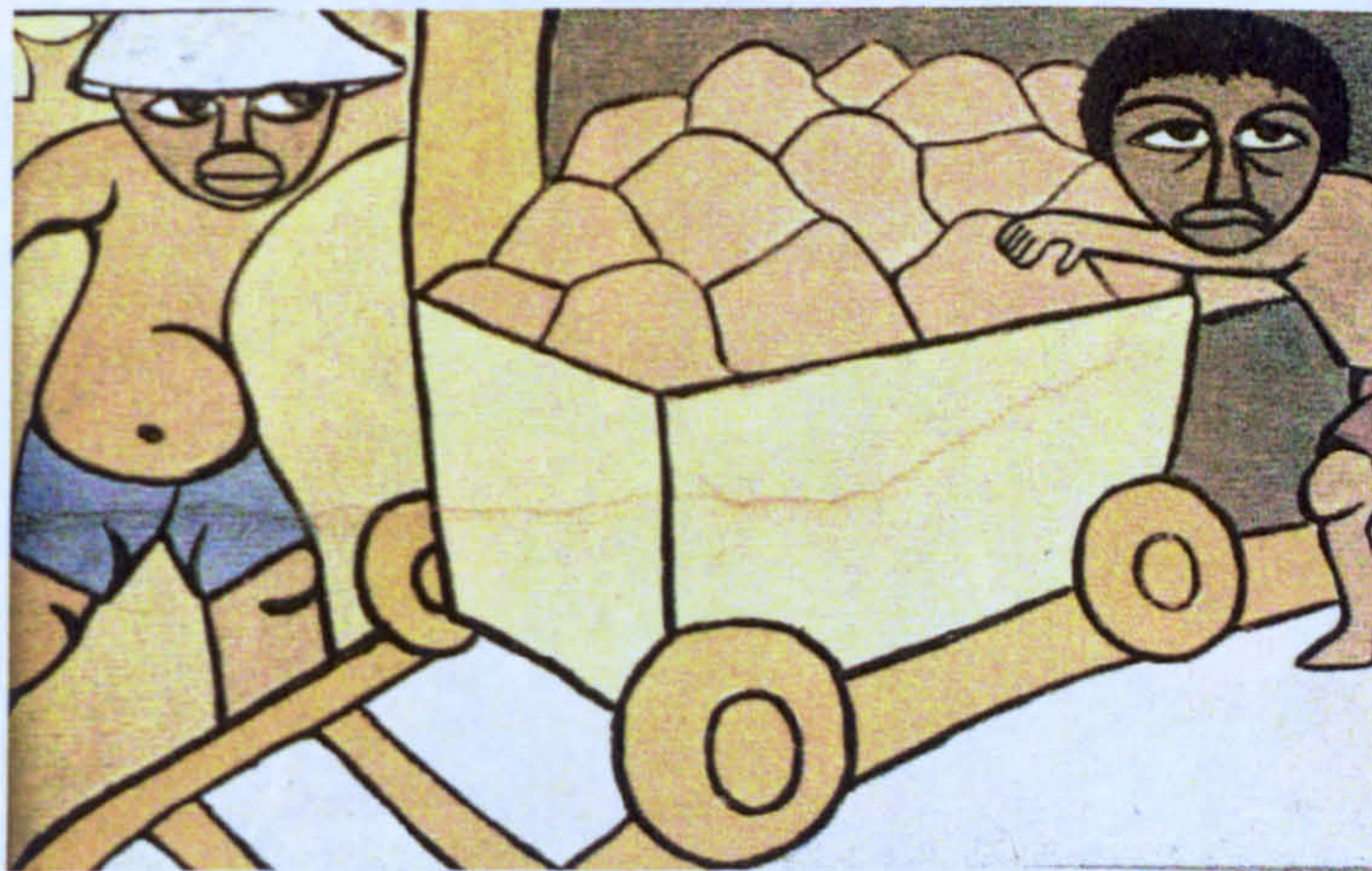


Plate 42

Details from *The Cry of Happiness*, Ministry of Agriculture, Maputo. Photograph: Moira Forjaz



Plate 43
Details from the mural at Praça dos Heróis, Maputo. Photograph: Moira Forjaz



Plate 44
Eduardo Mondlane, detail from the mural at Praça dos Heróis, Maputo. Photograph: Moira Forjaz



Plate 45

Samora Machel, detail from the mural at Praça dos Heróis, Maputo. Photograph: Moira Forjaz

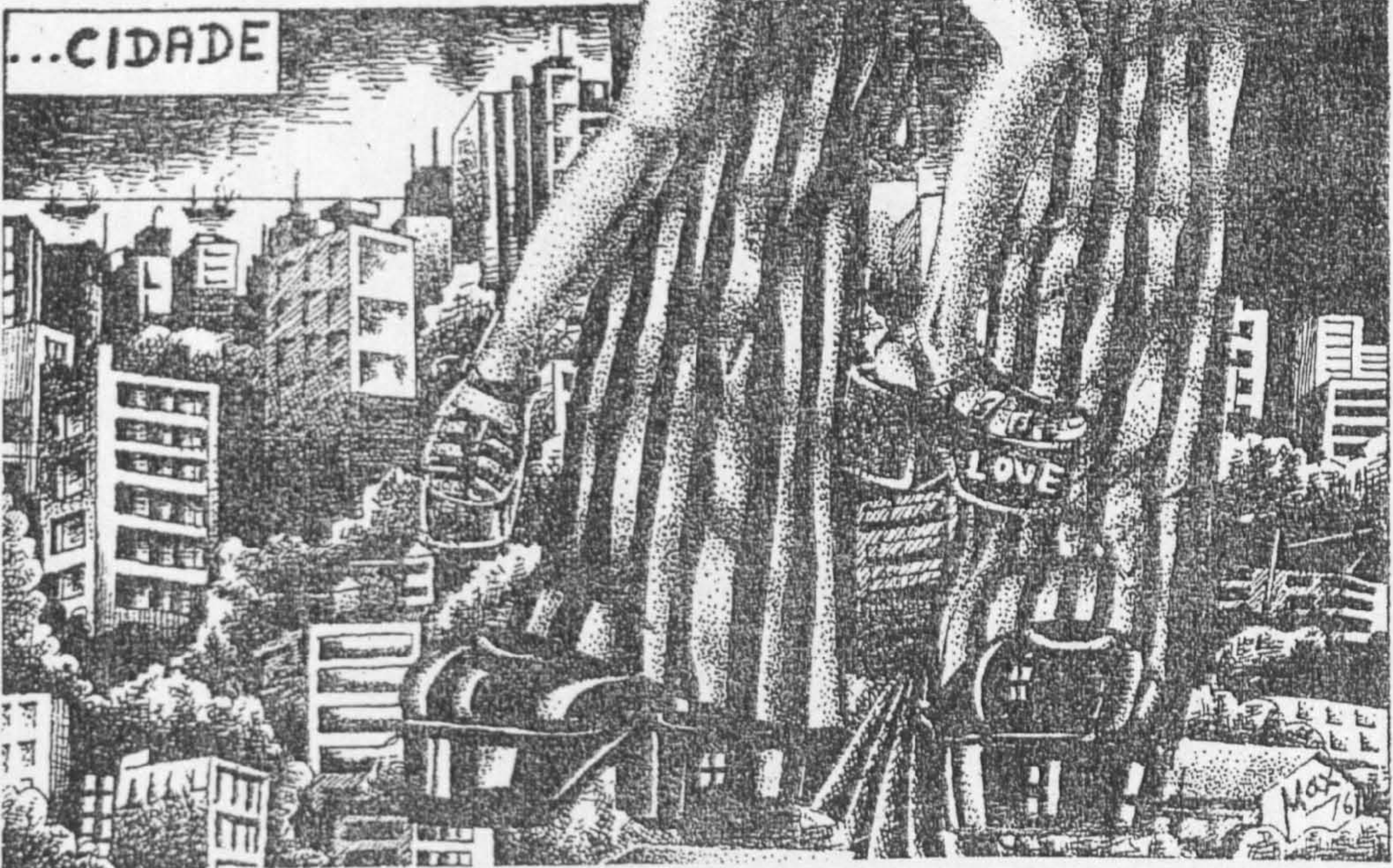


Plate 46
Cartoon by Max, 'Burocracia - Burocratismo', in *Tempo*, no. 323, 1976

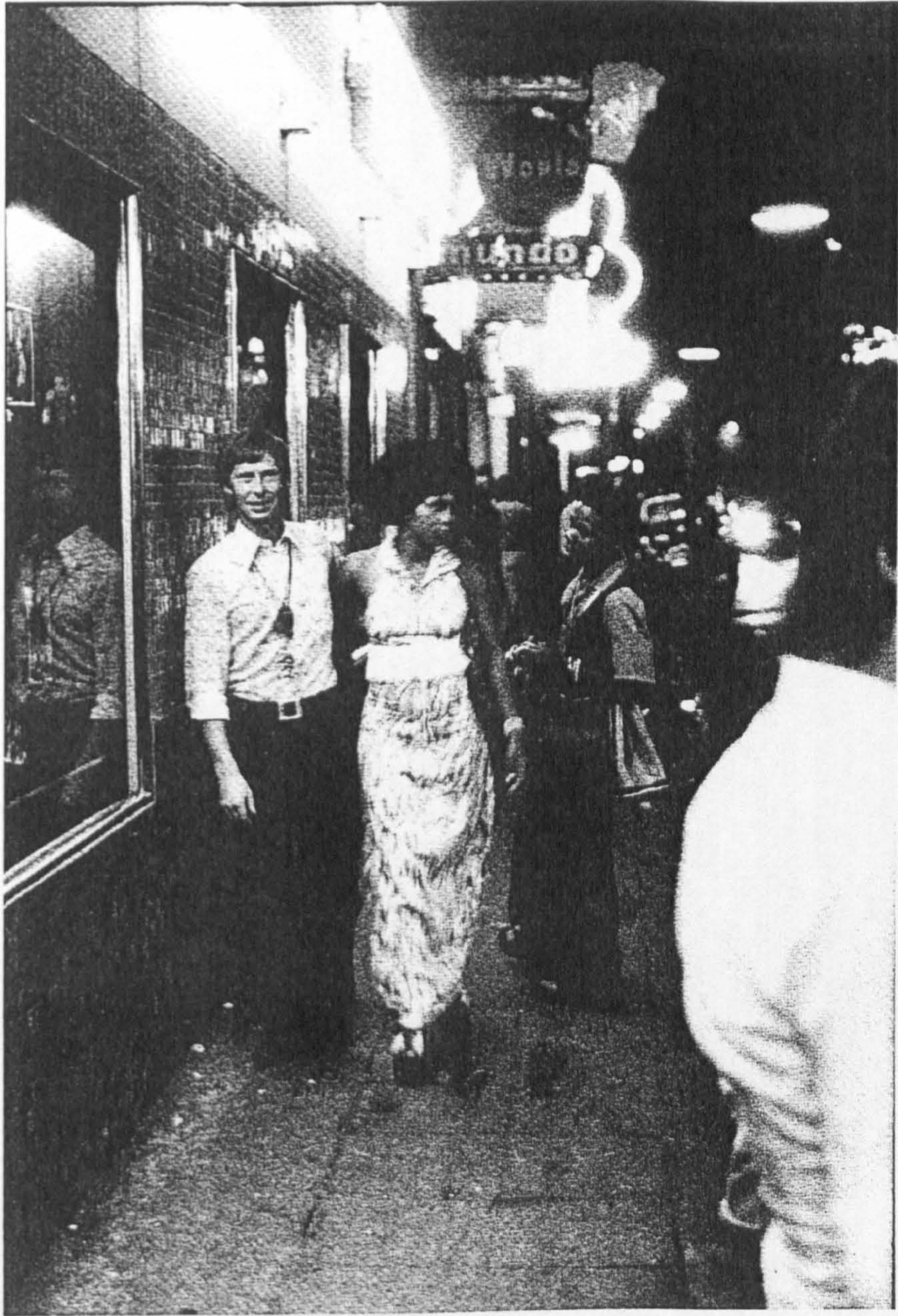


Plate 47
Ricardo Rangel, from the series *Our Nightly Bread*, 1960s and 1970s



Plate 48
Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal, 1981



Plate 49
Os Tempos dos Leopardos, 1987



Plate 50
Samora Vive, 1986

Chapter 6

Ouagadougou, the Meeting Place

'Let me tell you a story', says John Akomfrah, 'to show what Thomas Sankara means for people.' He pauses. A young Chinese man wanders into the Dalston pub and surreptitiously pulls out of his shoulder bag a handful of pirate DVDs to sell. John continues, telling me the story told to him by his friend, Congolese filmmaker Balafu Bakupa Kanyinda about when he took his film Thomas Sankara to Ouagadougou for screening at FESPACO. It was just a short documentary – a lyrical kind of thing only a few minutes long – but when he arrived carrying the film reels the cinema was so packed with people waiting to see the film, he couldn't get in! Eventually word got around that he was the filmmaker, and it was like the parting of the waves!

A year later in Ouagadougou I make my way across the city to the FESPACO headquarters. In the midst of the frenzy preceding the festival, FESPACO staff started the move into new offices – the long-awaited culmination of an ambitious drive that began under Sankara to expand Burkinabè cinema. The building stands on barren land off Avenue Kadiogo, one of three unfinished structures that will eventually all be dedicated to the preservation and promotion of African film. The other two are still only empty shells – massive concave slabs of concrete with wires sticking out atop the rim, jagged black lines that cut into the sky. In the office clouds of dust billow through, leaving an opaque sheen on desks, piles of paper and on the shelves of reel upon reel of films. The archivist is nowhere to be found, while others mill around or dash off frantically to collect films awaiting collection at the airport. I've asked to see Balafu's film, but when the official returns he tells me it isn't there. 'There are others by Balafu – you can see this one.' Thomas Sankara, by accident or design, was missing from the archive. What remained was 3,000 Years of Cinema, a montage of images and voices of filmmakers from across Africa and the diaspora gathered at FESPACO. Amid the remnants of the Revolution and the new urban expansion with which the city is pushed assertively into the future Sankara is an absent presence. But off Avenue Agostinho Neto, in a backstreet storeroom away from the shops and banks with portraits of Blaise Compaoré on every side, was a picture of Sankara, a faded page from a magazine pinned to the wall. And so the city pays homage in secret.

London, 2004 and Ouagadougou, 2005

Two months before he was assassinated, only four years after the Revolution had begun, Thomas Sankara made a speech that took a premonitory turn:

I would like you to remember that the political events that took place in the year now ending have subjected our Revolution to all sorts of contradictory currents. There are certainly contradictions that we have not yet encountered. We have seen other Revolutions born, evolve, and sometimes die. Sometimes we think that this only happened to other Revolutions. Well, this can also happen to ours.¹

If all the African Revolutions of the 1970s and 1980s were short-lived in comparison with the monumental regimes of, say, the USSR or China, that which was led by Sankara in Burkina Faso was perhaps most fleeting (Plate 51). The statues and streets that bear its names remain on the streets of Ouagadougou, as do many of the cinemas and training institutes that are heirs to the ambitious drive pursued under Sankara to develop the country beyond the parameters imposed by capitalist imperialism. Yet the Revolution itself ended on 8 October 1987, Sankara murdered by mercenaries recruited by Blaise Compaoré, formerly Sankara's best friend and comrade-in-arms, who only days afterwards became President of Burkina Faso.

The paradox of Revolution, in Arendt's definition, is that while its ambition is to negate past structures in a new and 'deliberate beginning', the building of lasting institutions is the means through which its 'spirit' may endure.² In Arendt's thought the outcomes of events brought about through human action are radically contingent, but to take lasting structures as sole measure of how Revolution is remembered over-determines the late African Revolutions and ambitions of cinema they bore as failures from the start. What such an emphasis permits is a reading of these events as ill-timed aberrations from the general flow of history, seen from the hegemonic perspective of the West, a West that understands itself as 'the world'. Anthropologist Elliot P. Skinner, for instance, distinguishes 'gifted African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré ... and Patrice Lumumba, who had emerged during the waning days of western colonialism' to receive the widespread approval 'or at least the sympathy ... of a larger "world"' with Sankara, who arrived late onto the world stage when charismatic leadership was already 'out of style'.³ Skinner comments that 'Many people have lost interest in the often confusing and contradictory patterns of African politics' and are now enamoured instead by the possibility of rapprochement between the USSR and the West made possible by *glasnost* and *perestroika*.⁴ He concludes that while 'Sankara and his collaborators knew that he was playing the role of a charismatic figure ... what he, and they, may have paid less attention to, were ... the difficulties of routinising charisma.'⁵ They somehow embarked on a Revolution unaware of 'the changing nature of the "world", and its effect on the ability of contemporary

¹ Thomas Sankara, 'Mon dernier message: la tolerance', in *Jeune Afrique*, 1400, 4 November 1987, p.11

² Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, *op.cit.*, p.206

³ Elliot P. Skinner, 'Sankara and the Burkinabé Revolution: Charisma and Power, Local and External Dimensions', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 26, 3, 1988, pp.439-440

⁴ Skinner gives no indication quite *who* he means by 'many people', but the implied perspective is that of Western observers, at a time when Gorbachov was publicly declaring that the USSR had no further political interest in Africa and the hegemony of Western powers as the major global forces to grant or withhold vital resources and support was being consolidated. *Ibid*, p.440

⁵ *Ibid*, p.454

leaders ... in small societies to deal with the realities of power.⁶ Thus the Revolution is consigned to history and the last words on Sankara are left to Compaoré: 'He played the game. He lost.'⁷

Such are the debilitating effects of a certain knowing perspective, naturalised as 'common sense' and worldly pragmatism, that the fact that extraordinary achievements were actualised through revolutionary zeal in only a few years becomes a footnote. Moreover, the very notion that contemporary subjectivities might still be shaped and formed through these same events is denied. But what would it imply to shift how Revolution is understood through other ways the terms Event and Screen might be thought? How might it enable this story to be told differently? Badiou asserts that death in itself can never be an Event. While everything dies, that which may be known as an Event is irreducibly unique in its intervention into a given situation and the possibility it opens up for new forms of knowledge. The only truly historical Events, according to Badiou, are those moments in which 'the trans-temporal subjectivity of emancipation' makes its appearance in some new form.⁸ It is named as an Event by those who take on its demand as that which defines their actions and understanding of themselves, and in the process are transformed into Subjects. Might Revolution, then, be understood as that which is forever in a state of becoming? Is *becoming Revolution* the ambition that is cinema's radical promise? After the Event, rather than constructing knowledge only through dissection of the infrastructures it sets in place, might Revolution also be known through the fleeting surfaces of the screen?

When Captains Sankara, Compaoré, Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lingani and Henri Zongo seized power in 1983, they initiated a Revolution in a country that politically engaged filmmakers had already made a centre for radical filmmaking in Africa, despite the fact that Upper Volta had since Independence in 1960 been ruled by a succession of corrupt and authoritarian regimes. The Festival Pan-Africain des Cineastes (FESPACO), which began in 1969, institutionalised the radical potential of cinema to gather people in a collective experience around the screen and to see revolutionary films rooted in their own cultures and social realities for the first time. In the same year, the Fédération Pan-Africaine de Cineastes (FEPACI) was established in Algiers by the Senegalese filmmakers Ousmane Sembène, Paulin Soumanou Vierya, Momar Thiam and Ababacar Samb-Makharam, who became its first Secretary General, the Tunisians Tahar Cheriaa, Hassan Daldoul and Hatem Benmiled, Timité Bassori from Côte d'Ivoire, Oumarou Ganda, Mustapha Alassane and Zalika Souley from Niger, the Mauritanian Med Hondo and the Malian Souleymane Cissé, among others. These individuals brought a militant energy to the mobilising of filmmakers to form national associations for which FEPACI would be the umbrella organisation. Their objectives were to lobby national governments to commit to national and Pan-African policies for the development and decolonisation of African cinema.⁹

The trans-national revolutionary drive behind this effort to decolonise cinema is one of the layers of Pan-African visions that form a textile of radical networks spreading from North Africa and Africa south of the

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ The citation is from 'Compaoré se defend d'avoir fait tuer son ami', in *Jeune Afrique*, 1400, 4 November 1987, p.23. Quoted in *ibid*, p.455

⁸ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, *op.cit*, p.98

⁹ Tahar Cheriaa, 'The FEPACI and Us', *Écrans d'Afrique*, nos.17 –18, 3rd to 4th Trimester, 1996, p.100

Sahara across the Atlantic and to Europe, connecting to far earlier struggles for black emancipation and resistance to colonial rule. First conceived by black intellectuals in the Caribbean and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Pan-Africanism found renewed resonance in the late 1950s and 1960s, particularly in Kwame Nkrumah's politics of self-determination and Socialism and in Frantz Fanon's perception of Algeria as the vanguard of a wider African Revolution.¹⁰ At this historic moment when many States became independent, African unity seemed to some a realisable political and military aim. In the late 1960s, when its influence on African governments was waning and the effects of neo-colonialism were apparent, Pan-Africanism came to infuse debates held at a number of organisations and events where filmmakers began to determine tactics for liberating cinema screens still 'colonised' by foreign films.¹¹

The first edition of what would become FESPACO was held in 1969 at the Centre Culturel Franco Voltaïque, which was home to an active ciné club and one of the few sites in Upper Volta where African films were sometimes projected.¹² Through the block-booking system the French companies SECMA and COMACCIO monopolized film distribution across the region and effectively prevented the exhibition of African films in francophone West Africa, while contributing nothing towards local production. FESPACO thus in itself constituted a challenge to neo-colonial distribution networks by bringing African films to an African public. The programme was stridently anti-colonial, with films by African and European filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembène, Jean Rouch, Serge Ricci, Paulin Vierya, Mustapha Alassane, Oumarou Ganda, Désiré Ecaré, Joris Ivens, Alain Renais and Chris Marker.¹³ After the first FESPACO Ousmane Sembène wrote to Hamidou Ouedraogo: 'Finally I'm back at home, but my heart is still "Voltaïque". Because I ... know the great possibilities that we (cineastes) have in fixing on Ouaga as meeting place. I sincerely hope that Ouaga can serve as the central crossroads, where all the paths meet.'¹⁴ The festival had sought to bring African filmmakers and films into a space of encounter with African audiences in an affirmative act of decolonisation. But this was viewed as a provocative and hostile act by the French government. Claude Prieux, then director of the Centre Culturel Franco Voltaïque, was transferred to Togo for having overseen the projection of revolutionary African films, the intention being

¹⁰ According to Robert Young, the notion of Pan-Africanism was first articulated in Africa by Tiyo Soga in the 1860s. It was developed into a political vision and ambition among Marxist Black Caribbean and American thinkers of the Negritude movement and Harlem Renaissance. Pan-Africanism was taken up in different ways that embraced socialism by African leaders of struggles for Independence in Ghana and elsewhere. Its influence on political leaders waned after the Independence of many African States in 1960, but it was an important theme of later liberation struggles such as that led by Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau. See Robert Young, *op.cit.*, pp.236–252

¹¹ Manthia Diawara sketches out the different groups that paved the way for FEPACI. These include the Colloque de Genève in 1965, the Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres de Dakar in 1966 and the Table-Ronde de Paris in 1967. Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, 1992 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), pp.36–38

¹² At the time, African films were only available in Upper Volta from the Coopération Française, not commercial distributors. For an analysis of the role of the Coopération Française in African film production, see Claire Andrade-Watkins, 'France's Bureau of Cinema – Financial and Technical Assistance 1961–1977 Operations and Implications for African Cinema', in Imruh Bakari and Mbye Cham (eds), *op.cit.*, pp.112–127

¹³ Hamidou Ouedraogo, *Naissance et Evolution du FESPACO de 1969 à 1973*, 1995 (Ouagadougou: Imprimerie Nationale du Burkina), pp.112–113

¹⁴ Hamidou Ouedraogo, *op.cit.*, p.111

to discourage the organisation of a second Festival. However, the Voltaïque government intervened and increased its financial support to ensure the next FESPACO could take place.

In 1970 President Sangoulé Lamizana, facing an economic crisis resulting from years of corruption and misappropriation of funds under former President Yaméogo, decided to raise the price of cinema tickets so as to increase revenue for the government.¹⁵ All five cinemas in the country (two in Ouagadougou and three in Bobo-Dioulasso) were all managed by COMACICO and SECMA, who demanded the same increase for themselves. The government refused, and the companies responded by closing all the cinemas in Upper Volta the very next day. FESPACO had made the government aware that the importance of cinema was geopolitical as well as cultural, and at their next meeting they determined to nationalise distribution.¹⁶ COMACICO and SECMA then blocked all existing circuits of distribution. With no film stock coming into the country, the government sent out emergency missions across Africa and Europe to acquire films. Those sent to Paris returned empty-handed, and the gestures of solidarity from Mali, Guinée and Algeria, who gave their films for free, only provided enough film stock to fill the cinema screens for a couple of weeks.¹⁷ Finally, the government were forced to seek a settlement with the foreign distributors. COMACICO was willing to negotiate, and they reached an agreement whereby the company and the government were the only bodies that could determine what was seen on commercial cinema screens across Upper Volta.¹⁸

Later that year the Société Nationale Voltaïque de Cinema (SONAVOCI, later SONACIB) was established to organise the importation, distribution and production of films, and to manage the country's cinemas. A tax of 15% on takings from foreign films enabled the financing of Voltaïque film production and construction began on two new cinemas in Ouagadougou, including the luxurious Ciné Burkina. This provided good projection facilities for FESPACO, which was increasingly drawing an international crowd.¹⁹ Tahar Cheriaa, one of the founders of FEPACI, recounts the triumphant reception of Djim Mamadou's *Le Sang des Parias* (1972), the first commercially made Voltaïque film produced by SONAVOCI.²⁰ When it was shown at the 2nd FESPACO, the response from the audience 'staggered'

¹⁵ General Lamizana seized power in 1965 from Pierre Yaméogo, a civilian politician who had held power since Independence in 1960, and whose regime had become increasingly corrupt and repressive. Daniel Miles MacFarland states that Yaméogo 'almost eliminated his opposition' and came 'close to bankrupting the nation with his presidential perquisites'. Lamizana initially claimed his objective in imposing military rule was only to ensure stability until a civilian government could be formed. A series of governments were formed but each proved highly fractious, and repeatedly Lamizana and the military stepped in to suspend the constitution. He remained in power until 1980, when he was overthrown by soldiers acting under the command of Colonel Saye Zerbo. Daniel Miles MacFarland, *Historical Dictionary of Upper Volta*, 1978 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press), p.157

¹⁶ *Op.cit.*, p.119

¹⁷ Tahar Cheriaa, *Ecrans d'Abondance... Ou Cinemas de Liberation en Afrique*, 1974 (Tunis: Editions Sinbad), p.45

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ Emmanuel Sama, 'Burkina Faso: The State Monopoly Challenged', in *Ecrans d'Afrique*, no.23, 1st Trimester, 1998, p.127

²⁰ Voltaïque filmmaking began at the moment of Independence, with the making on 1 August 1960 of *A minuit... L'indépendance*. This 30-minute film was funded and produced by the Ministry for Information to document the ceremonies that marked Independence. In 1961 the government set up a Centre National de Production Cinématographique as part of the Information Service to regularly produce short films, and

foreign journalists, who were bewildered as to why it should have such a significance: 'They couldn't suspect... the extent to which this projection was an historic event of utmost importance for this African public, bombarded until then by a cinema that only ever showed other men and never their own brothers, that spoke every language except their own!'²¹ As well as producing a number of Voltaique features, SONAVOCI bought in highly political African films. These included Ousmane Sembène's *Ceddo* (1976), a fictional historical film about Ceddo resistance to Muslim expansion in Senegal and the unwelcome influences from Europe of Catholicism and the trade in guns and alcohol. Another was Souleymane Cissé's *Baara* (1977), about the politically motivated murder of a progressive manager in a factory in Bamako who encourages his workers to set up a union (Plate 52).

Upper Volta was thus at the forefront of moves across *francophone* Africa that chimed with the objectives for the decolonisation of cinema set out by FEPACI, in which nationalisation of film industries was key. FEPACI provided 'ideological and strategic directives' that informed the collective action of filmmakers and, for a time, the policies of governments. Mali nationalised its cinemas and film industry in 1970. In 1974 the Office Beninois de Cinéma (OBEI) was created in Benin, while that same year the Société Nationale Sénégalaise de Distribution and the Société National de Cinéma had a huge impact on local film production and exhibition in Senegal. That same year the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) made an official commitment to take FEPACI resolutions into consideration, stipulating on their behalf that:

African governments must ensure the total decolonisation of the information media and increase the production of films for cinema reflecting the political, economic, social and cultural realities of the peoples of Africa, in order to allow the masses to have greater access to and greater participation in the Continent's cultural wealth. The governments must establish inter-African cooperation in order to break the monopolies in the field of cinema controlled by structures from non-African countries.²²

Having wooed the OAU, FEPACI began lobbying the Common African and Malagasy Organisation (OCAM), and with an agreement signed on 12 August 1974 member states committed themselves to the setting up of two structures advocated by FEPACI: The Interafrican Consortium for Cinematic Distribution (CIDC) and the Interafrican Consortium for Film Production (CIPROFILMS), both based in Ouagadougou. The 'Charter of Algiers', formalised at the 2nd Conference of FEPACI held on 18 January 1975 (see Chapter 1), thus encapsulated a set of objectives in which Upper Volta would play a central role. According to FEPACI's vision, each State would cooperate to champion African filmmaking through intervening in global capitalist structures to create a sphere of autonomy for revolutionary Pan-African films to be made and circulate commercially.²³ In partnership with UNESCO, the Voltaique government

that year a small studio was set up for the editing and sound production of 16mm films. After 1962 short educational films were made every year. Hamidou Ouedraogo, *op.cit.*, p.16

²¹ Tahar Cheriaa, *Ecrans d'Abondance... Ou Cinemas de Liberation en Afrique*, *op.cit.*, p.48

²² See Article 22 of the 'OAU Cultural Charter' adopted at the 18th Summit Meeting of member states held in Mauritius in 1974.

²³ The Cooperation Française demanded non-commercial distribution rights in return for assistance to African filmmakers in post-production, which risked undermining the commercial potential of their films. Claire Andrade-Watkins, *op.cit.*, p.115

set up the first film training school, the African Institute for Cinematographic Education (INAFEC). With government support, private entrepreneurs began building a complex of laboratories that would also house editing rooms and film shooting equipment, which became known as the Interafrican Consortium of Cinema (CINAFRIC).

While these developments gave increasing weight to Ouagadougou's reputation as the 'capital of African cinema', Upper Volta lurched from one political crisis to the next. Lamizana repeatedly dissolved the national assembly, asserting authoritarian rule in the face of factional conflict between civilian politicians. Meanwhile popular unrest mounted.²⁴ In 1980 Lamizana was overthrown when soldiers from the Régiment Inter-Armes d'Appui (RIA) acting under orders from Colonel Saye Zerbo invaded Ouagadougou. Zerbo called a state of emergency, suspended the constitution and banned all political parties, moves that were at first largely 'welcomed' by the population despite the curtailment of their rights, revealing a high level of dissatisfaction in their experience of parliamentary democracy, which was the model of government Upper Volta had adopted from France following Independence.²⁵ Zerbo set up the Comité Militaire pour le Redressement et le Progrès National (CMRPN), which was made up of members of the armed forces and civilians, none of whom had any previous ministerial experience.²⁶ (Sankara was appointed Minister of Information, and came to his own swearing-in ceremony on a bicycle. He resigned after only a few months, cursing 'those who gag their people'.²⁷) The CMRPN introduced austerity measures, prosecuted embezzlers of the former regime and established an organization to censor the press. As political action by unions hostile to these measures had been suppressed, resistance broke out from within the military itself. Conservative and radical wings of the military eventually joined forces, and Saye Zerbo was overthrown on 7 November 1982.

Although led by the conservative Commandant Gabriel Somé Yorian, this coup rode the crest of heterogeneous political ambitions including those most radical. Yorian aimed to return the disgraced Yaméogo to the political arena, but he had received help from the army's other main political bloc – a revolutionary wing allied to the Confédération Syndicale Voltaïque (CSV) and the Ligue Patriotique pour le Développement (LIPAD) and led by Captains Thomas Sankara and Blaise Compaoré. These two were childhood friends who served together in the elite military regiment based in Pô. Here Sankara played guitar in an army band, the Pô Missiles, and won the affection of local peasants by sending his troops to help in the fields. Yorian set up a ruling body called the Conseil de Salut du Peuple (CSP) with Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo as President as he was the only candidate 'low profile' enough for all sides to agreed

²⁴ Elections were held in 1970 to elect a national assembly, but rivalries among the politicians selected, strikes and popular protest led to Lamizana dissolving parliament. He then set up a new military party, the Mouvement National pour le Renouveau (MNR), which would channel all political, economic, cultural and social activities. With political parties banned, the trades unions were the only organisations able to voice dissent. The regime was dissolved only a year later due to lack of support, and a new government made up of civilians and military officials was appointed. This turned out to be no more effective than its predecessors. Pierre Englebert, *Burkina Faso: Unsteady Statehood in West Africa*, 1998 (Boulder, Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press), pp.49–50

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.51

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.52–53

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.56

on.²⁸ However, Sankara and Compaoré's revolutionary wing was in the ascendance and they managed to get Sankara appointed prime minister. Within weeks he had reversed the country's foreign policy, which until then conformed with Western neo-colonial interests, and began forging alliances with Algeria, Ghana, Benin, Cuba, Libya and North Korea, even making an official visit to Colonel Gaddafi without informing the President. Gaddafi received Sankara with a military parade in his honour to demonstrate Libya's military force and the power of his revolutionary 'popular committees'.²⁹ Through the late 1970s and early 1980s, Gaddafi had launched a campaign to rid Africa of Imperialism, focusing initially on Chad, where French forces had been deployed against Libyan troops. The Libyan secret services also established an institute known as the 'World Revolutionary Headquarters', with the aim of training volunteers from different parts of the world in revolutionary warfare. Youths from across West Africa disappointed with the promises of Independence and alienated by the economic crisis of the 1980s made their way there.³⁰ In *The Green Book*, in which Gaddafi laid out his revolutionary vision as Mao had in his *Little Red Book*, the Libyan leader asserted that elections only serve the purpose of maintaining the same elite class of professional politicians in power. Back in Upper Volta, Sankara began making speeches denouncing 'bourgeois' politicians and claiming the army would remain in power and be the vanguard of a Revolution.

On 17 May the conservative wing of the military government arrested Sankara. Students and unionists took to the streets of Ouagadougou in violent protest, while Compaoré, who had managed to escape to his Pô barracks, began an insurrection that momentarily united the Left. The government eventually bowed to pressure to release Sankara, and though still under house arrest he was able to negotiate a revolutionary government-in-waiting with radical civilian organisations. On 4 August 1983 troops led by Compaoré marched on Ouagadougou. Within hours Sankara was freed. A radio broadcast announced that the Conseil National de la Révolution (CNR) was now in power and urged people to form their own neighbourhood Comités de Défense de la Révolution (CDRs). Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo surrendered and Yorian was among those executed in Upper Volta's first bloody coup. While the CNR was led by the four Captains Sankara, Compaoré, Zongo and Lingani it also had the support of LIPAD and the Union des Luttes Communistes (ULC).³¹ On 2 August 1983 Sankara read out the *Discours d'orientation politique* on the radio, which was the new revolutionary government's main ideological statement. Adopting the Cuban revolutionary slogan '*Patria ou Muerte, venceremos*', the national motto became 'Fatherland or death, we will triumph!' Even though it took place over twenty years after Independence, the Revolution in Upper Volta of 1983 was thus identified with earlier liberation struggles such as those of Algeria and Guinea-Bissau and heralded the birth of a new nation. On 4 August 1984, the first anniversary of the Revolution, this radical

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.54

²⁹ Sankara was suspected of having been inspired by Gaddafi. Sennen Andriamirado, however, asserts that while Gaddafi proposed that his guest should launch a Revolution in Upper Volta on the model of popular committees of the Islamic Revolution in Libya, Sankara refused. That said, the 'popular committees' bear some resemblance to the Comités de Défense de la Révolution (CDRs), which Sankara called for immediately on seizing power. Sennen Andriamirado, *Sankara le rebelle*, 1987 (Paris: Jeune Afrique), pp.56–58

³⁰ Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*, 1999 (New York University Press), pp.158–159

³¹ LIPAD is a branch of the Parti Africain pour l'Indépendance (PAI), a trans-national West African communist party that defines itself as an urban Marxist-Leninist vanguard. Sankara's former history teacher Adama Touré was a LIPAD activist who became information minister in the first CNR government. Pierre Englebert, *op.cit*, p.56

break with the past was signalled when Upper Volta was renamed Burkina Faso, meaning 'country of honest men'.

As President, Sankara continued to realign Burkina Faso with other Socialist and revolutionary States and to make vocal attacks on French and American imperialism. He also made public comments suggesting that other African States were ripe for Revolutions like Burkina Faso's, irritating the leaders of more conservative neighbouring States, particularly the patriarch of Francophone West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire's President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who, having first served as a deputy in the French national assembly when his country was under colonial rule, had since Independence cultivated dynastic alliances throughout the region.³² Yet with these stances Sankara quickly became an icon of hope and resistance for young people across the Continent. He impressed with outspoken and imaginative speeches, and by insisting civil servants should take pay cuts and work in their ministry's 'collective fields'. Gandhi's ethic of self-sufficiency was evoked with gestures such as the CNR insistence that officials wear the national costume, the *faso dan fani*, made from locally produced cloth.³³ Sankara cut a charismatic revolutionary figure by jamming at public meetings with Ghana's president Jerry Rawlings and with Bob Geldof, while rejecting all ostentatious trappings of presidential power and even hitching lifts to international meetings abroad on other leaders' private jets.³⁴

The *Discours d'orientation politique* gave a re-reading of Voltaïque history that freely appropriated a Marxist analytical framework, stratifying local ethnic and social groups according to categories invented for another time and place. Dividing the population into 'the people' and the 'enemies of the people', it justified the negation of social hierarchies that had arisen through colonialism and neo-colonial corruption after Independence.³⁵ The *Discours* declared that the CDRs would be means by which a radical 'democratisation of power' would be achieved. On 6 August the first CDRs were hastily set up by cells of militants, many of whom were young people recruited from the dispossessed fringes of urban existence.³⁶ While officially the CDRs were responsible for the management of everyday life in the cities and villages, in the absence of a mass political party, they constituted the only structured force of the Revolution. As the central means through which the CNR's ideological line was promulgated among the wider population, they became an indispensable instrument of mobilization, but also ripe for corruption.³⁷ One of the key aims of the policies

³² Stephen Ellis, *op.cit.*, pp.68–67. See also Franz Fanon's attack on Félix Houphouët-Boigny for obstructing the struggle for full independence from French colonial rule. Franz Fanon, 'Letter to the Youth of Africa', *Toward the African Revolution*, *op.cit.*, pp.124–129

³³ Pierre Englebert, *op.cit.*, p.60

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.56. See also Sennen Andriamirado's account of how Sankara 'borrowed' one of Gadaffi's fleet of Boeing 727 when he stopped off in Libyan on his return from a State visit to Moscow in 1986 because 'We don't have a plane, while Gadaffi has plenty!' On arriving in Ouagadougou the plane was held there for some days until it became apparent that no-one in Burkina Faso had the qualifications to pilot it, whereupon the Libyan crew were finally allowed to fly home. Sennen Andriamirado, *op.cit.*, pp.13–15

³⁵ The people were the working classes, the petit bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the 'lumpenproletariat', while the enemies were the bourgeoisie (civil servants and the political elite, businessmen and traders and a group only described as the 'middle bourgeoisie') and the 'reactionary feudal forces' (ethnic elites and chiefdoms). *Ibid*, p.57–58

³⁶ Sylvie Jaglin, 'De la défense révolutionnaire à la gestion urbaine: "le cercle des CR disparus" (Ouagadougou: 1983–1991)', in René Otayek, Filiga Michel Sawadogo and Jean-Pierre Guingané (eds), *Le Burkina entre révolution et démocratie* (1983–1993), 1996 (Paris Éditions Karthala), p.247

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.251

enforced by the CDRs was to break the power of the Mossi chiefs, whose traditional responsibilities involved dealing with petty thieves and resolving quarrels between families and neighbours. On 4 August 1985 the *Tribunaux Populaires de conciliation* (TPCs) were set up to assist the CDRs by taking over the legislative role of the Mossi chiefs, though many subverted the new systems of social control, maintaining their influence by having younger family members take up key posts in the CDRs.

The Revolution's attempt to transform Burkinabè social relations was pursued through policies to radically change the city in a massive programme of modernisation and redistribution of resources. The Marxist theory that circulated in the radical students associations and military barracks in the 1970s and 1980s became the ideological force behind a drive for a modern African citadel created by the Revolution.³⁸ Ouagadougou was recognised as the economic base of the 'bourgeois State and the comprador bourgeoisie', and from 1983 the CNR committed itself to destroying this base with a radical overhaul of housing and rents.³⁹ This was a challenge to the property speculation that had become rampant during the 1970s as rural exodus to the cities put increasing pressure on inadequate urban resources and led to a growth in informal housing with newcomers forced to find what shelter they could on vacant plots or on the peripheries.⁴⁰ With the key revolutionary objective of 'self-sufficiency and housing for everyone', Paulin Bamouni stated that the urban bourgeoisie 'hadn't yet paid its dues to the people that it had previously ransomed'.⁴¹ On 1 January 1985 the government announced, to the delight of the urban underclass, that rents would henceforth be 'free'.⁴²

The desire to create a *tabula rasa* upon which a new kind of revolutionary Burkinabè society would be built was manifested in various projects to 'clean up' Ouagadougou, played out on the surfaces of the city as well as in interventions into how and where people could live. In the revolutionary project, the physical reconstruction of the city was intertwined with the re-education and transformation of the population into active militants.⁴³ Since Independence Ouagadougou had grown on top of the ruins of a colonial provincial outpost, becoming a densely populated conglomeration of low-lying high-walled mud-brick enclosures in which private life was hidden from view, while domestic activities and industries flooded over into the street. According to Sylvie Jaglin, 'the city of the 1970s did not reveal itself immediately to the gaze, it was disorientating in the apparent disproportion of the urban fabric and the rarity of monumental buildings'.⁴⁴

³⁸ The building of a modern State infrastructure that during the Ethiopian Revolution that began in 1975 similarly followed the emergence of a critique of the society ruled by Haile Selassie developed by Ethiopian intellectuals influenced by Marxism in the 1960s even though no communist party existed in the country at the time. Donald L. Donham, *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*, 1999 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p.15

³⁹ Sylvie Jaglin, *Gestion urbaine partagée à Ouagadougou: Pouvoir et périphéries (1983-1991)*, 1995 (Paris: Éditions Karthala), p.412

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.410

⁴¹ Paulin Bamouni was one of the chief ideologues of the regime and was killed in the aftermath of the assassination of Sankara on 15 October 1987. Cited by Sylvie Jaglin, *op.cit.*, p.408

⁴² This in fact meant that residential tenants would no longer pay their rent to the property owners, and that the higher rents paid for commercial or ex-patriot use would go directly to the State. According to Jaglin, this led to a huge black market for rented property and a degradation in the quality of dwellings, as landlords were stripped of all incentives to maintain their properties. Sylvie Jaglin, *ibid*, pp.412-413

⁴³ An article in *Carrefour africain* stated that 'au plan psychologique, ce nouveau architectural devra s'accompagner d'un changement de mentalité Burkinabè. *Carrefour africain*, no.866, 18 January 1985

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.415

One of the key features of the urban transformations pushed forward under Sankara was a Haussmann-like clearing of the city centre so as to make Ouagadougou into a hygienic and more tightly controlled space. Across the city centre vast areas were cleared to make way for new buildings and monuments constructed in a spectacular vernacular modernism that rearticulated Burkinabè culture by asserting a radical new urban subjectivity.

The CNR had particular difficulty infiltrating people's lives in the old '*quartiers populaires*', and many of these were destroyed in 'Project ZACA' (Zone administrative et commerciale), an ambitious project to transform the centre of the city that began under Sankara but was pursued after his demise with a more commercial orientation. One of the most controversial areas up for renovation was the central district of Bilbambili, which was razed to the ground despite protests from inhabitants because it had for years housed a large number of prostitutes. Whole new areas, known as *Cités*, were built to take their place, shifting poorer communities to new residential zones on the edges of the city. As well as aiming to provide better housing for the most impoverished, this scheme also gave a more prestigious appearance to central locations such as that situated next to Avenue Kwamé Nkrumah, along which foreign dignitaries would get their first glimpse of Ouagadougou as they drove into the city from the airport. In place of low houses built around courtyards in which large numbers of people lived together, extended families were broken up and allocated a sum of money and an individual *parcelle* (plot of land) on the periphery on which to build new homes. High-rise units designed for nuclear families were favoured as the architectural form to which people were expected to adapt in order to 'modernise'.

Alongside these attempts to radically recompose the social relations and material fabric of the city, dramatic aesthetic statements were made at the level of the urban surface. In 1985, the regime's concern for health, cleanliness and propriety was translated into an urban aesthetic completely at odds with conventional architectural styles that stretched across the surface of the city. In a mass project known as *Opération ville blanche*, paint was distributed to the population and whole neighbourhoods were mobilised to make the mud-brick walls of buildings and enclosures of Ouagadougou a brilliant white. The surface of the city flowed with the promise of a blank canvas. Upon it sculptures and monuments were raised to pay tribute the 'creative genius of the liberated people', endowing the city with a new set of revolutionary symbols and meanings.⁴⁵ On Place de la Révolution, North Korea bequeathed Burkina Faso a white marble monument surmounted with an eternal flame and adorned with a social realist mural that paid tribute to the revolutionary masses in soft gold, orange, rust and brown. On Place de 2 October a bizarre red metal structure was built that extended upwards, topped with a red book splayed open to read *Discours d'orientation politique* (Plate 53). And at Place des Cinéastes mopeds now circled a sculpture made of huge forms of painted concrete shaped like film reels and piled together to look like a megalithic movie camera (Plate 54).

⁴⁵ Sennen Andriamirado, *op.cit.*, p.202

The *Discours d'orientation politique* also laid out the Revolution's cultural ambitions for the arts, expressing the desire that artists of all kinds should have the space to 'advance firmly into the future'.⁴⁶ It declared that conditions should be created for the 'blooming of a new culture' that would have a triple character: national, revolutionary and popular.⁴⁷ Cinema, literature, art and music would celebrate dignity, courage, nationalism and 'human virtues', building on what was positive in past vernacular traditions and drawing on progressive foreign cultures so as to give new dynamism to Burkinabè modes of expression.⁴⁸ According to Emmanuel Sama, the Revolution permitted 'the great leap forward in new cinema infrastructures', benefiting the development not only of the Burkinabè film industry but also the revival of the Pan-African ambitions for cinema that had circulated in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁹ Investment increased, and between 1983 and 1987 the number of cinemas SONACIB had under its management doubled from twelve to twenty-four.

According to Sankara, cinema should be a weapon for development and a tool for consciousness-raising and for building solidarity with other peoples across the world. His political and financial support led to a renaissance for FESPACO, the next edition of which took place in Ouagadougou in 1985 (Plate 55). That year the festival opened its doors to filmmakers of the African Diaspora for the first time. The CNR also provided the means for FEPACI to hold its 3rd Conference in February 1985 in Ouagadougou. Following the climax of Algiers, FEPACI had fallen into a period of stagnation. The dynamism of the late 1960s and early 1970s that had driven the campaign to nationalise film industries across Africa had waned as African States became compromised politically and financially by the changing geopolitical situation and widespread economic crisis. A meeting of filmmakers in 1982 in Niger led to the Manifeste de Niamey, which reversed many of FEPACI's strategies and for the first time looked to '*opérateurs économique*' rather than governments to bring private investment to film production.⁵⁰ Some younger filmmakers had organised themselves into a group called Le Collectif l'Oeil Vert as they had become frustrated by the bureaucracy and hierarchy of FEPACI and its failure to address the question of how filmmakers might use

⁴⁶ 'Quant à la culture dans la société démocratique et populaire, elle devra revêtir un triple caractère: national révolutionnaire et populaire. Tout ce qui est anti-national, anti-révolutionnaire et populaire. Au contraire sera magnifiée notre culture qui a célébré la dignité, le courage, le nationalisme et les grandes vertus humaines. La Révolution démocratique et populaire créera les conditions propres à l'éclosion d'une culture nouvelle. Nos artistes auront les coudées franches pour aller hardiment de l'avant. Ils devront saisir l'occasion qui se présente à eux pour hausser notre culture au niveau mondial. Que les écrivains mettent leur plume au service de la Révolution. Que les musiciens chantent non seulement le passé glorieux de notre peuple, mais aussi son avenir radieux et prometteur... Il faut savoir puiser ce qu'il y a de bon dans le passé c'est-à-dire dans nos traditions, ce qu'il y a de positif dans les cultures étrangères pour donner une dimension nouvelle à notre culture. La source inépuisable, pour l'inspiration créatrice des masses se trouve dans les masses populaires. Savoir vivre avec les masses, s'engager dans le mouvement populaire, partager les joies et les souffrances du Peuple, travailler et lutter avec lui, devrait constituer les préoccupations majeures de nos artistes. Avant de produire, se poser la question: à qui destinons-nous notre création? Si nous avons la conviction que c'est pour le Peuple que nous créons, alors nous devons savoir clairement ce qu'est le Peuple, quelles sont ses composantes, quelles sont ses aspirations profondes.' Cited in Jean-Pierre Guingané, 'Les politiques culturelles. Une esquisse de bilan (1960-1993)', in René Otayek, Filiga Michel Sawadogo and Jean-Pierre Guingané (eds), *op.cit.*, p.82

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Sama, *op.cit.*, p.127

⁵⁰ Férid Boughedir, 'Le Nouveau credo des cineastes Africains: Le Manifeste de Niamey', *CinémAction*, no.26, 1982, p.168

technologies cheaper than 35mm film to make their productions more viable.⁵¹ It was in this context that the 3rd Conference was 'held in a climate of tension marked by the misappropriation of funds perpetrated by former members of the bureau'.⁵² The meeting in Ouagadougou enabled a much-needed overhaul of FEPACI's structures and modes of operation. Gaston Kaboré was appointed General Secretary to take the organisation into a new phase of transparency and productiveness that would make FEPACI an attractive partner to organisations making new offers of funding during the 1980s such as the EEC.⁵³

Burkina Faso also provided financial and material support for other major African film productions, such as Med Hondo's *Sarraounia* (1986) and Souleymane Cissé's *Yeelen* (1987). Cissé's film marked a departure from the filmmaker's earlier realist works such as *Baara* and *Finye* (1982, *The Wind*, about disaffected youths and student activism in Bamako). Threatened with no longer being able to make films in Mali for political reasons, Cissé adopted an allegorical mode in *Yeelen* to tell a mythical story whose implied critique of the corrupt and violent regime of President Moussa Traoré was far more oblique.⁵⁴ By contrast, Hondo's *Sarraounia* is a historical film that exposes the brutality with which European colonialism ravaged the African Continent (Plate 52). *Sarraounia* is an adaptation of a novel by Abdoulaye Mamani of Niger that reconstructs a series of events that took place in the region during the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Hondo's film recounts the successful resistance of Queen Sarraounia and her people the Aznas to the military column commanded by Captains Paul Voulet and Charles Chanoine that the French government sent in 1898 from French Sudan (now Mali) across Niger to conquer Chad. The campaign was carried out with utter brutality. Whole villages were scorched to the ground, and the film depicts how even those people who welcomed the troops with gifts in the hope of being spared were slaughtered. The film also shows how a number of religious leaders and kings collaborated with the French in the hope of subduing the fiercely independent Aznas. Queen Sarraounia outwits the French by making a tactical withdrawal from her fortress at Lougou, only to launch a counter-attack using guerrilla tactics that draw on all her people's magical and military resources to drive the invaders away. Ignoring commands from the French authorities and murdering their emissary, Captain Voulet is only prevented from carrying on his bloody campaign when his own African soldiers revolt.

⁵¹ Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, *op.cit.*, p.43

⁵² Clément Tapsoba, 'The FEPACI at the Crossroads', *Écrans d'Afrique*, nos.17–18, 3rd to 4th Trimester, 1996, p.104

⁵³ The EEC began giving financial support to FESPACO in 1985, and increased its contribution in 1987. Thereafter, each edition of FESPACO received substantial support from the EEC, which also provided the means for FEPACI to build new headquarters, draw up an up-to-date report on cinema and the audiovisual sector in Africa and undertake a feasibility study into creating a film and television school. See Gaston Kaboré interviewed by Cheick Kolla Maïga and Clément Tapsoba in 'The EEC and African Cinema', *Écrans d'Afrique*, no.4, 2nd Trimester, 1993, pp.84–87

⁵⁴ Manthia Diawara claims that Cissé adopted a less confrontational style because of the tension caused by his earlier works, while Suzanne H. MacRae argues that far from turning away from contemporary social crises, Cissé intended a 'specific, immediate political point' with *Yeelen*. Traoré came to power in 1968 in a coup that ousted the first president of Independent Mali, Modibo Keita, who had pursued socialist policies. Traoré was only overthrown in 1991 after student protests and strikes were violently suppressed. Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema*, *op.cit.*, p.160; Suzanne H. MacRae, 'Yeelen: A Political Fable of the Komo Blacksmiths/Socokers', in Kenneth W. Harrow (ed.), *African Cinema: Postcolonial and Feminist Readings*, 1999 (Trenton, NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press), pp.137–139

⁵⁵ Mybe Cham, 'Film and History in Africa: A Critical Survey of Current Trends and Tendencies', in Françoise Pfaff (ed.), *Focus on African Film*, *op.cit.*, p.65

Ousmane Sembène has pointed out that: 'Our culture and our past have been denied for a long time... We have to recover the everyday dimension, the relations we had with our colonisers.'⁵⁶ *Sarraounia* fulfils this challenge with an attention to historical accuracy that has not always been matched in other films purporting to be based on factual evidence.⁵⁷ The government of Niger denied Hondo permission to film on their territory and refused to provide any financial assistance, so with support from Sankara's government *Sarraounia* was shot in Burkina Faso. Although it won the Etalon d'Yennega at the 1985 edition of FESPACO, the film was almost completely ignored in France, where its depiction of such a shameful episode should have had great impact.

Among Burkinabè filmmakers, a number responded directly to the Revolution by documenting the radical changes that were unfolding or using fiction to contribute rallying social critiques. Gaston Kaboré and Rasmané Ouedraogo's *Peuple debout* (1983), for instance, is a documentary about the wave of popular support with which the Revolution was greeted. By contrast, Emmanuel Kalifa Sanon's *Désébagato* (1987, *The Last Salary*) is a fictional feature film that denounces the exploitation of a worker by his bosses.⁵⁸ The protagonist Adama realises the bosses of the construction company where he works pay him so little that he will never be able to fulfil his life's ambition save enough money to get married. This leads to his own political awakening and mobilisation of his companions to protest against his employers. Idrissa Ouédraogo's early films show similar political commitments, Clément Tapsoba noting that 'This engaged cinema of political content had its roots in the vigorous political discourse of the period, notably in the students' and scholars' associations and unions in which Idrissa took part at the end of the 1970s and 1980s.'⁵⁹ His film *Yam Daabo* (1987, *The Choice*), for instance, tells the story of Salam, a peasant from the Sahel, who when faced with drought refuses to become dependent on international aid and instead migrates with his family to another more fertile region so as to keep his dignity.

However, alongside this current of filmmaking in which cinema functions as a mode of political engagement and intervention, another tendency was emerging that would come to hold a more enduring hold on Burkinabè filmmakers as the political climate changed following the death of Sankara. Only a year before the Revolution, Gaston Kaboré made *Wend Kúuni* (1982). This film came to define an indigenous cinema aesthetic, whose themes, pace and affirmation of the culture of Burkinabè rural life would be a continuing point of reference for filmmakers in Burkina Faso. *Wend Kúuni* was shot in the Burkinabè language of Moré and was the first film 'entirely produced by the State of Burkina Faso', with crew from

⁵⁶ 'Sembène Ousmane parle du Camp de Thiaroye', *Jeune Cinéma*, 191, 1988, pp.24–25

⁵⁷ Josef Gugler argues that Sembène himself failed in this regard with *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988), a film about the 1944 massacre of African soldiers who had served in the French army during World War II that even well informed critics have treated as if it gives a fully accurate account. Gugler demonstrates how *Camp de Thiaroye* distorts the historical record, glossing over the contradictions within the African troops conscripted into the French army and misrepresenting the events leading up to the massacre and how it was carried out, so that the film elaborates 'a ready-made truth that relied on binarism, eliding the complexity of history.' Gugler concludes, 'There are plenty of colonial abuses that remain unexposed, but distortion of the historical record served little purpose a generation after Independence.' Josef Gugler, 'Fiction, Fact, and the Critic's Responsibility: *Camp de Thiaroye*, *Yaaba*, and *The Gods Must Be Crazy*', in Françoise Pffaf (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.72–73

⁵⁸ Clément Tapsoba, '1980–2000: Les très riches années du cinema burkinabès', *CinémaAction*, Special issue: *Cinemas africains, une oasis dans le desert?*, no.106, 1st Trimester, 2003, pp.125–126

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.127

the Centre National du Cinéma and finances from the Fonds de Promotion et d'Extension de l'Activité Cinématographique.⁶⁰ Set in a time undefined by colonialism, it tells the story of a boy found in the desert by villagers. The boy appears to be mute and is adopted by one of the families of the village, who give him the name *Wend Kúuni*, meaning 'God's gift'.

Incidents in *Wend Kúuni*'s past are hinted at in flashbacks that begin to tell another story-within-the-story. However, only when the shock of seeing the body of a neighbour hanging from a tree leads the boy to regain his speech is he able to give his own account of how he came to be wandering alone in the desert after his mother was murdered. Alongside the metaphorical significance of the boy's coming into speech, Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike has suggested that the form and structure of the film produce the 'cinematic equivalents of a griot's tale', even while 'the physicality of the storyteller is effaced', constructing 'a rhythm that creates an atmosphere of accountability, dwelling on the audience-text-artist (griot) relationship so characteristic of Africa's oral literature'.⁶¹ This is particularly apparent in *Wend Kúuni*'s suggestive use of flashback and digression to incorporate the narratives of others in the village into the diagesis and to begin unravelling the mystery of the boy's origins, which is only finally revealed when he can tell his own story. *Wend Kúuni* thus has a metaphorical significance relating to the capacity of cinema to tell the stories of a people and the importance of indigenous local production to enable this form of collective speech.

Kaboré's later *Zan Boko* (1988) demonstrates the potential of affirming a threatened cultural specificity as part of a social and political critique. The film depicts the struggle of Tinga Yerbanga, who is forced to abandon his ancestral land when it becomes the object of property speculation. At the beginning of the film, Tinga's village is far from the Ouagadougou. Slow camera shots allow an almost ethnographic attention to collective labour in the fields, to the oral culture of the village and to people's reliance on each other and on traditional medicine in the event of childbirth. Gradually, however, as the city grows the roots and identity of an entire community are destroyed by urban expansion. The first sign of change comes when government surveyors arrive and start measuring the land and numbering the houses. When they leave, Tinga's son tries to rub off the number scrawled on the wall, but a residue of white chalk remains (Plate 56). While his old neighbours submit, Tinga refuses to sell up even when he finds his house crushed between luxury villas inhabited by arrogant wealthy families who do everything in their power to make his way of life impossible. The cultural difference is highlighted when the son of the wealthy family asks Tinga's son to sell him a toy he has made. Tinga's son offers it to him as a gift, but the other boy replies that if he can't buy it with money he doesn't want it after all. Eventually the bourgeois couple resort to corrupt means to have the family evicted so that they can build a swimming pool.

In the meantime, however, a radical journalist Yabre Tounsida has taken an interest in Tinga's case and makes secret plans to highlight it on a live public debate to be broadcast on television. The televised discussion begins with officials from the major's office, a sociologist and other representatives seated pompously. As they exchange opinions in French, Tinga suddenly makes his appearance, standing mesmerized for a moment by the painted backdrop of skyscrapers and smoke. Tinga's awe and

⁶⁰ Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *Black African Cinema*, 1994 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p.206

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.209

awkwardness in these surroundings (his inability to understand French, his attempt to shake hands the other guests, to take off his shoes and sit on the floor) only highlight how disconnected the commentators are from the people their corrupt practices of land misappropriation hit most brutally. Just as Tinga is about to speak, the Ministry of Information orders the programme to be cut. Yet despite this, and the indication that the journalist is likely to be severely punished, Tinga's incongruous presence on the screen makes a damning indictment. As well as critiquing a greedy and unscrupulous bourgeoisie, the film lampoons the corrupt structures of government that maintain the status quo.⁶²

Idrissa Ouédraogo's *Yaaba* (1987, *Grandmother*) corresponds with *Wend Kūuni* in many respects, and marked a departure from the filmmaker's earlier social realist depictions of the economic and class dilemmas of Burkinabè agrarian communities. In *Yaaba*, as in the slightly later *Tilai* (1990, *The Law*), Ouedraogo addresses universal themes such as identity and tolerance through the inscription of individual characters not only within their village communities, but also within the expansive landscapes of the Sahel, which take on a symbolic and aesthetic significance. The cinematic treatment of the space of the village embodies the complex and shifting inter-relationships between children and their parents, between husbands, wives and their lovers, and between the entire village and the old woman who lives on the outskirts, ostracised because she is suspected of being a witch. *Yaaba* centres on the friendship that builds up between the old woman and two children, Bila and Nopoko, who come to call her 'Grandmother'. However, it also deals with adultery, suspicions of witchcraft, social responsibility and the values of traditional wisdom through touching and often comical vignettes. As Ukadike points out, while many of these subjects are denigrated in colonialist discourse, in the film they are 'not used tendentiously to either valorize African Tradition or dismiss it as irrational.'⁶³ Instead they form part of the texture of everyday life, its moments of crisis and decision, through which the children are initiated into the adult world.

Ouedraogo has said that '*Yaaba* is based on tales of my childhood and on that kind of bedtime storytelling we hear just before falling asleep.'⁶⁴ The film portrays a village outside of history, with no references to indicate a pre-colonial setting, to government structures or institutions, to trade beyond a big tree where people gather to barter, or to any of the trappings of contemporary existence in a country where a large proportion of the population are migrant workers with access to consumer goods. For some critics, this isolation of the film from social, political and economic realities opens the director up to accusations of pandering to the desire of Western audiences for images of different cultures without unpleasant reminders of Europe's colonial past or of the continuing negative impact of neo-colonialism.⁶⁵ While it is true that *Yaaba* lacks the satirical bit of Sembène's *Xala* (1974) or the fluid rage of Hondo's *Soleil Ó*, such arguments overlook the extent to which the affirmation of the dignity of African cultures, and the invention of indigenous cinematic aesthetics adequate to their expression, are deeply political acts. R.J. Rayfield quotes Sankara as saying that in African films:

⁶² The fact that *Zan Boko* was in part financed by the Ministry of Information is not as paradoxical as it might seem, as Kaboré has made clear that work on the film began before Sankara's government came into power and began its programme to redistribute wealth and take action against property speculation. *Ibid*, p.263

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.283

⁶⁴ Cited in Josef Gugler, *op.cit.*, p.74

⁶⁵ See Josef Gugler, *ibid*, pp.75–76 and Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, *op.cit.*, p.162

Dignity has not been presented enough. The cry from the heart, justice, too, the nobility and the necessity for struggle in Africa, has not been shown enough. Sometimes one has the impression that Africans are striving in vain in a world of evil men. What we have experienced, what we have suffered, what we are now experiencing, what we are still suffering – this has not been publicized enough and we also know that the media elsewhere in the world are efficacious in preventing people in other countries from understanding the struggle we are waging here.⁶⁶

In the archive in Ouagadougou there is a short film that links *Yaaba* to other inventive modes of radical African filmmaking that eschew the conflation of political filmmaking with more didactic forms of social realism. The archive holds a copy of Senegalese Djibril Diop Mambety's *Parlons Grandmere* (1989), a poetic documentary that is the sole break in the long hiatus between Mambety's two extraordinary features, *Touki Bouki* (1973, *The Journey of the Hyena*) and *Hyènas* (1992).⁶⁷ Mambety has described how *Touki Bouki* was born at a moment of violent crisis, when he began to be haunted by a nocturnal animal, the hyena:

Perhaps I could no longer stand the physiognomy of African cinema, which exasperated me, it was too superficial. Not on the ideological level, but on the level of form. It is never pushed any further, nothing is ever shaken. This rage in a minor key gave life to *Touki Bouki*. I think that the language of African cinema has a revolution to make, and this is the moment to begin. We have to take part in the world-wide reinvention of cinema and we will succeed only in proposing new forms.⁶⁸

The 'journey of the hyena' is 'the flight of those who feel foreigners in their own country', a story told through the adventures of two teenagers – Mory, shown as a shepherd boy in the first images of the film, and Anta, an androgynous student. Both are fascinated with the accoutrements of Western lifestyle and determined to fulfil their dream of travelling to France.⁶⁹ Linear narrative is continually inter-cut with metaphorical shots that build a surreal avant-garde aesthetic through which the filmmaker makes reference to subjects such as sexual intercourse and homosexual desire that are still rarely depicted in West African films. Thus when Mory and Anta make love, a shot of Anta lying naked is interrupted by images of a sheep being slaughtered and a close-up of foaming waves. While iconic images, such as Mory astride his motorbike with a cow's skull attached to the handlebar, symbolise a hybrid youth culture and its conflicting aspirations, the dream to leave for Europe is revealed as another aspect of Senegal's ongoing subjugation. Thus in another sequence images of French ex-patriots sitting on a luxury yacht as they pour scorn on Africans as 'big children' are inter-cut with violent shots of livestock being butchered, a juxtaposition as

⁶⁶ Cited from J.R. Rayfield, 'FESPACO 1987: African Cinema and Cultural Identity', paper presented at meetings of the Canadian Association for African Studies, Edmonton, May 1987, p.11, cited in Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *op.cit.*, p.252

⁶⁷ His short fiction films *Contras City* (1968), *Badou Boy* (1969), *Le Franc* (1994) and *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil* (1999) are also exceptional in their use of inventive form to engage in social critique.

⁶⁸ Djibril Diop Mambety quoted in Alessandro Speciale, 'Djibril, the Prince and the Poet of African Cinema', in *Écrans d'Afrique*, no.24, 2nd Semester, 1998, p.8

⁶⁹ *Touki Bouki* was apparently based on the filmmaker's personal experience of a clandestine journey to Marseilles, where on arrival he immediately re-embarked for Senegal. *Ibid*

damning and effective in its critique of neo-colonialism as any in Solanas and Getino's *Hour of the Furnaces*.⁷⁰

Mambety's notion of a Revolution in the form of African film is thus a call for avant-garde pluralism and a liberated filmmaking practice that contributes to the world. *Parlons Grandmere* was shot on the set of *Yaaba*, and makes a beautiful tribute through lyrical voiceover and self-reflexive camerawork to the practice of filmmaking, the passage of time and the mystical qualities of the African landscape. Mambety's camera observes Ouédraogo directing his crew, absorbs the making of iconic shots from *Yaaba* of the children and the old woman moving through the desert scrub, shows the children playing between takes, and lingers to compose and frame relationships between water, trees and sky. *Parlons Grandmere* constitutes a suggestive link between two very different cinematic modes of liberation that circulated through the festival in Ouagadougou, connecting Burkina Faso's cinema culture to a wider trans-national network of radical desire.

On 8 October 1987, after months of acrimonious ideological struggles in the CNR that split the Left, a meeting between Sankara, Compaoré, Zongo and Lingani was held to discuss the President's proposals for a 'code of revolutionary conduct' for those organisations of the CNR over which he held direct control. After 1984 LIPAD, which had been infiltrating its members into all organs of power, was ousted from the government, leaving the ULC more influential.⁷¹ Most of the parties participating in the CNR, including the ULC, defined themselves as vanguard movements and saw little ideological problem with having very few members.⁷² With LIPAD members ejected from positions of power, the CNR was stripped of many of its grassroots activists, and increasingly it had to rely on authoritarian violence to stay in power as its other instruments of Revolution were sabotaged.⁷³ Finding himself the only leading figure in government with no direct military command, Sankara proposed the creation of a paramilitary force, the Force d'Intervention du Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Sécurité (FIMATS), which he wanted to have headed by Vincent Sigué, reputed to be responsible for incidents in which opponents of the CNR had been tortured.⁷⁴ According to Skinner, the debate was over whether or not to create a 'unitary party' along Soviet lines, or a 'pluralist avant-garde organisation', though quite which of these different positions Sankara stood for in Compaoré's account of events is uncertain.⁷⁵ What is known is that the meeting ended with Sankara storming out and shortly afterwards he was murdered.

⁷⁰ Ukadike makes this comparison and points out that apart from Med Hondo's films, all African feature films prior to *Touki-Bouki* had adopted static or languid camera movements, whereas Mambety's shots chase every object 'with electrifying speed'. Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, *op.cit.*, p.176

⁷¹ Pierre Englebert, *op.cit.*, p.60

⁷² Valère Somé claims the UCB only had twenty-four actual members. Valère Somé, *Thomas Sankara: L'Espoir assassiné*, 1990 (Paris: L'Harmattan), p.145

⁷³ For instance, the widespread practice of sons of village chiefs being elected to CDRs subverted the main structure through which revolutionary policies were supposed to be put into action. Although the TPR sessions, in which most politicians from the previous regimes were made to stand trial, were televised, seven people accused of plotting a coup were executed without trial in 1984 and allegations of prisoners being tortured emerged after Ouagadougou was hit by bomb explosions the following year. Pierre Englebert, *op.cit.*, p.60

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.61

⁷⁵ Elliot P. Skinner, *op.cit.*, p.453–454

Stephen Ellis explains that Compaoré had in fact formed an alliance with the President of Côte d'Ivoire Houphouët-Boigny, whose protégée he had married, while other relations joined his entourage.⁷⁶ Through these connections, Compaoré had become interested in Liberia and the Liberian exiles who were roaming West Africa in search of support, among them Charles Taylor, who came to live in Ouagadougou in 1987. With the knowledge of Houphouët-Boigny, Compaoré approached Liberian army deserters to get help in deposing Sankara. After the assassination, twelve of Sankara's aides were killed and later others were tortured, imprisoned or exiled in a coup that was more violent than any that had taken place previously.⁷⁷ Compaoré made no statement for some days, then emerged to disclaim involvement in the murder, but at the same time denounced Sankara and claimed that he and others had uncovered a plot to have them assassinated. A plan of 'Rectification' renounced socialism, and Burkina Faso returned to a familiar cycle in which the government used its proclaimed objective of gradual movement towards full democratic participation to justify widespread repression.⁷⁸ Although Sankara's popularity was not at its peak, the news of his death was met by widespread outcry. Student protests meant that schools were closed for a week, delegations had to be sent to the countryside to explain events, and mourners kept a constant vigil by his makeshift grave.

While filmmakers had 'lost a friend', what followed the death of Sankara was a surge in film production on the back of State investment and the emergence of new specifically Burkinabè cinematic modes.⁷⁹ During the 1980s, increasing numbers of Burkinabè filmmakers took up the themes and tropes of *Wend Kúuni* to make films often situated in an unspecified past or taking the perspective of the child so as to valorise and express Burkinabè rural existence. Yet by the end of that decade Idrissa Ouédraogo expressed a certain frustration with both the introspective direction Burkinabè filmmaking had begun to take during the 1980s and with (particularly Western) expectations of African films to provide images of exotic beauty. Speaking about his film *Samba Traoré* (1992), which depicts a gangster who holds up a petrol station in Ouagadougou and then tries to set up a new life with his ill-gotten wealth, he stated that his ambition was to move beyond the confines of cultural particularity: '*Samba Traoré* corresponds to an act of rebellion against the ghetto into which we are putting ourselves. My ambition is that my films should be seen in Africa and elsewhere in the world, that the public chose them as films and not because my films are 'African'.⁸⁰

Ouédraogo and other filmmakers have thus extended the range of Burkinabè cinema, some films indicating a renewed concern for urban existence or exploring spaces of cultural experience beyond national

⁷⁶ Including Désirée Delafosse, the widow of Houphouët-Boigny's relative in Liberia Adolphus Tobert, who was murdered by the President of Liberia Jackson F. Doe in 1980. Stephen Ellis, *op.cit.*, pp.66–67

⁷⁷ Shortly after the coup a pro-Sankara military unit in Koudougou led by Lieutenant Doukary Kaboré began an insurrection that was brutally put down, with many taken as political prisoners and some executed. Two years later Henri Zongo and Jean-Baptiste Boukary Lingani, 'guardians of the integrity of the revolution as defined in 1983' and Compaoré's last obstacles to complete renunciation of its aims, were executed after they confessed to plotting against the President. Englebert reports that taped confessions had the paradoxical effect of convincing more people that the two had in fact been framed. Pierre Englebert, *op.cit.*, p.64

⁷⁸ Compaoré's affinity with the former conservative regime was confirmed when a congress held on 24 and 25 May 1991 restored to Maurice Yaméogo his political rights. *Ibid*, p.66

⁷⁹ Sandra Sharp, 'Filmmakers Lose a Friend: Thomas Sankara, 1949–1987', *Black Film Review*, Summer 1987, pp.12–13

⁸⁰ Quoted in Clément Tapsoba, '1980–2000: Les très riches années du cinéma burkinabès', *op.cit.*, p.128

borders.⁸¹ Yet the 'culturalist' tendency remains a predominant mode, though often stripped of radical or even progressive significance. There are many films that fall within this 'culturalist' tendency that are affirmative of Burkinabè culture while at the same time criticise negative aspects of traditional customs.⁸² Yet Apolline Traoré's recent *Sou la clarté de la lune* (2004) demonstrates the potential dead end of an uncritical assertion of one culture over another, even in the context of redressing the balance of a brutal and exploitative colonial relation. Here the valorisation of traditional village life in the present verges into racism, banishing from sight the internal contradictions of rural existence and relying on bald stereotypes of treacherous and selfish Europeans to propel an unlikely plot. Despite its obvious technical flaws, *Sou la clarté de la lune* won an award at the 2005 edition of FESPACO. At the same time, rumours circulated about the censorship of at least two films, one of which addressed radical political activism while the other made a critique of the powers of tribal chiefs, whose favour the current regime courts.

However, the notion of cinema as a force of liberation still circulates through films across Africa and the Diaspora. And while images of Sankara are not shown in public spaces in Ouagadougou, in Balufu Bakupa Kanyinda's *Thomas Sankara* (1991) and Mahamet Saleh Haroun's *Bye Bye Africa* (1999) his figure becomes a symbol of resistance inextricably linked with cinema's revolutionary promise. *Thomas Sankara* is in many respects a straightforward documentary that pays homage to the memory of the revolutionary leader with archive footage, photographs and interviews with Sankara's family, his wife (who was harassed after his death and now lives in Paris) and others of his contemporaries. The film is inter-cut with images of a baobab tree, which in Balufu's cinematic language has a particular symbolism, relating the cinema screen to another site and technology for the creation of collective memory. The significance of the baobab is apparent in Balufu's film *Ten Thousand Years of Cinema* (1991), shot at the biannual meeting of African filmmakers at FESPACO in Ouagadougou, which suggests a different revolutionary centre and temporality for the cinema screen. Not longer is the cinema screen an alien Western technology of domination used in the gathering and imposition of racist ethnographic stereotypes. Instead it is a site of creative collective remembering. The time of the film is that of the festival, but what is also glimpsed is the *long durée* – not so easily apparent but constituting an autochthonous tradition of making human connections and meaning across space and time through the telling of tales. The montage of still images is recognisably *avant-garde* but, according to Balufu, emerges from and embodies the oral forms of Congolese *kasalas*, which are formed out of intertwined patterns.⁸³ Still photographs and interviews with filmmakers, who talk about the significance of FESPACO and the possibilities of cinema as a liberationist mode of African expression, are woven together and circulate around the recurrent the image of the baobab tree, a site of story-telling and of collective and spiritual significance that figures as the precursor of the cinema screen as *locus* of social gathering.

⁸¹ For example, Pierre Yaméogo's *Laafi* (1991, *Tout va bien*) is about a young Ouagalese man's struggle to get the money to study medicine, for which he has to resort to dubious means, while his thriller *Moi et mon blanc* (2005) about an African petty thief and his French friend whose adventures take them from France to Burkina Faso. Idrissa Ouédraogo's *Kini et Adams* (1997) is set in Zimbabwe and *Le Cri du cœur* (1994) is about a young Burkinabè boy's immigrant experience in Lyon. Other filmmakers such as Fanta Regina Nacro have explored comedy to broach taboo subjects such as gender relations and sexual health.

⁸² Dani Kouyaté's *Sia, le rêve du python* (2000), for instance, explores reasons for social conflict in foundational myths of the Continent.

⁸³ Balufu Bakupa Kanyinda interviewed by Olivier Barlet, www.africultures.com

Bye Bye Africa (1999), by contrast, is a more complex film that mingles documentary with autobiography and fiction. Haroun plays himself as a filmmaker returning to N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, after an absence of ten years following the death of his mother. There he encounters a city ravaged by civil war and poverty, and this becomes the occasion for a self-critical examination of the state of cinema in Chad and the responsibilities of the filmmaker in a country shattered by conflict. In so doing, he weaves together a film about the making of the film itself, layered 'like a Russian doll'. Haroun finds himself an exile who is in many respects a stranger in his own country. At one point he is attacked by someone he has inadvertently filmed who grabs his camera shouting 'He's stealing our image' and 'He's a foreigner here'. The filmmaker also has tragic encounters with Isabelle, a young woman who claims her life has been destroyed since she played the lead role in an earlier film he made about AIDS, as everyone now believes she carries the disease. What is more, she and Haroun had an affair that he saw as a casual fling, but that she experienced differently, feeling she was abandoned when the production finished. Haroun's father tells him he didn't understand the film his son sent him a copy of: 'That man it was about, Freud, is he your mate?', adding, 'Your films are not made for us. They are made for whites. What is the use of cinema?'

Haroun explains why he makes films with a quote from Godard about how cinema creates memory. It is an apt and beautiful quotation, but the figure of Godard here also stands metonymically for European avant-garde cinema and a certain mode of *auteur* filmmaking that the French government has promoted in Africa since Independence, and that Haroun himself works within.⁸⁴ After colonialism and years of civil war, Chad is a country 'that flees its memories', where people are suspicious of the power of the moving image and its relation to reality. Shots of the ruined collective spaces of the cinemas in the city are interspersed with Haroun's own attempts to get production of *Bye Bye Africa* off the ground, his difficulties compounded by his refusal to compromise on using expensive high-quality 35mm film-stock or to limit his ambitions to make his project more viable for a local producer. He has conversations with other filmmakers, cinema owners and his friend Garba, who used to be a projectionist but no longer believes cinema has a future in Chad. Haroun's brother writes to him from Congo-Brazzaville, saying that the situation with cinema is the same all over Africa; he quotes Amílcar Cabral speaking at the Sorbonne in 1956:

This is the core of our cultural crisis: the culture with the best technology threatens to crush all the others. In a world where distance is no obstacle, technically weaker cultures cannot protect themselves. All cultures have an economic, social and political basis and no culture can survive unless it guides its political fate.

⁸⁴ As noted above, after Independence the French government gave financial and technical assistance to African filmmakers in exchange for the non-commercial rights to their films. Claire Andrade-Watkins argues that in giving such support, individual filmmakers were selected according to the extent to which their projects fulfilled certain notions of artistic expression as the articulation of cultural specificity. She suggests that the French government rearticulated the colonial practice of assimilation, and that this reappears 'under the guise of cultural expression'. Claire Andrade-Watkins, 'France's Bureau of Cinema – Financial and Technical Assistance 1961–1977 Operations and Implications for African Cinema', in Imruh Bakari and Mbye Cham (eds), *op.cit.*, p.126

Folded into these layers, the ghostly voice of Thomas Sankara appears on a radio programme paying tribute on the tenth anniversary of his assassination. Speaking about the need for Africa to produce more and for cultural production to be decolonised, his voice resonates with a sense of determined hope personified in Haroun's young nephew Ali. The boy hounds the director to teach him how to make films, tries to steal his camera, and eventually makes his own out of scrap metal (Plate 57). Eventually, Haroun takes him to watch the shooting of a film directed by his friend Issa Serge Coehlo, one of a small number of filmmakers beginning to make films again in Chad. When Haroun finally starts casting for his own movie, hundreds of people gather for a chance to appear in the film. *Bye Bye Africa* includes a long sequence of screen-tests in which young Chadians express how cinema signifies hope and the possibility of fantasising about a better future.⁸⁵ And before leaving for France, Haroun gives his camera to Ali, telling him: 'Be very careful what you film.' If the filmmaker's sojourn in Chad has made him committed to return to make *Bye Bye Africa*, it is with a more complicated understanding of the ambiguities of his own position of privilege and its attendant responsibilities.

Haroun has recounted how, at the premiere of *Bye Bye Africa* in N'Djemena, people from his old neighbourhood turned up for the screening 'dressed to the nines':

They were just waiting at the door. The film started, and I went up to them and said 'What are you doing?' They said, "We want to see the movie, but we don't have the money." I had to pay for them to get in. That's what it's like.⁸⁶

What is at stake in this confluence of desire, one manifested viscerally, materially and psychically in the event of the screen? It would seem that there is something in the collective experience of cinema that still embodies collective aspirations and dreams. As Haroun points out, Chad is a country that has been colonised and occupied, where people have 'become used to seeing themselves as consumers of images' rather than producers of their own image.⁸⁷ In this context, adherence to some kind of 'utopian' notion of cinema still has the potential to liberate and technology the capacity to empower. Production of the moving image becomes an act of affirmation and resistance.

A particular kind of territory is written through cinema that stretches from North Africa across Africa south of the Sahara. On this Pan-African palimpsest, struggles from different historical moments fold and touch in ways that refuse sequential consignment to the past. Yet this map extends beyond the Continent, as cinema and its technologies embody the diasporic and migratory flow of radical and avant-garde experience, desire, trauma and memory. Isaac Julien, a British artist born in Saint Lucia, taps into this current, taking as his point of departure for the video installation *Fantôme Afrique* (2005) a quotation from

⁸⁵ Mark Nash sees this as one of the film's strongest moments, indicating how 'This fantasy of cinema is both a legacy of modernity and an important tool in resisting the despair and melancholy of life in a culture devastated by war.' Mark Nash, 'The Modernity of African Cinema', in Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *The Short Century*, *op.cit.*, p.345

⁸⁶ Mahamat Saleh Haroun quoted in Stuart Jeffries, 'Out of Africa', *The Guardian*, Friday 15 November 2002

⁸⁷ Mahamat Saleh Haroun interviewed by Marcy Goldberg, 'The Importance of Creating Our Own Images', *Dox: Documentary Film Magazine*, no.33, February 2001, p.22

Fanon.⁸⁸ In 'West Indians and Africans', an article of 1955, Fanon tracks the shifts in 'affective complexes' that have arisen through the way in which racism lumps together all Black peoples, so depriving them 'of any possibility of individual expression'.⁸⁹ The text culminates with the West Indian, finally confronting his own blackness, facing the Continent of Africa as a site of ancestry but also of identification, transformation and potentiality for the future:

Then, with his eyes on Africa, the West Indian was to hail it. He discovered himself to be a transplanted son of slaves; he felt the vibration of Africa in the very depth of his body and aspired only to one thing: to plunge into the great 'black hole'. It thus seems that the West Indian, after the great white error, is now living in the great black mirage.⁹⁰

In *Fantôme Afrique* (2005), parts of which were shot in Ouagadougou, the city of cinema appears alongside desert landscapes, ancient mosques and the Gurunsi village of Tiébélé (Plate 58). Through these places two ghostly Creole figures move in stylized movements as the work expands across three screens in loops, repetitions and variations. The female seer or witness and the dancing trickster, familiar from others of Julien's works, create a continuum in which different spaces and times are presented through the prism of a trans-continental subjectivity.⁹¹ *Fantôme Afrique* accumulates sequences that revolve around journeys, structures and locations that are the starting points for new (self-) narrations, some empowering, others troubled. The Creole woman moves past the walls of Tiébélé, which are covered with patterns of symbolic shapes painted only by the older women of the village as an aid to story-telling, through which knowledge is passed on to new generations.⁹² The trickster dances in erratic movements through an ancient mosque and through the dusty unfinished buildings that will eventually house national museums and archives.

The style of architecture is the bombastic vernacular modernism that draws on traditional forms of Burkinabè houses, but adapts them to signify a confident futuristic African urbanity (Plate 59). At the same time the presence on the roads of cyclists and donkey-carts indicate how capitalist investment is uneven. At one point the woman walks down the aisle of Ouagadougou's iconic open-air movie theatre Ciné Oubri. On the screen ethnographic films made during colonial expeditions recall how Africa was narrated by Europeans as a site of exoticism and Otherness.⁹³ Other archive footage shows the arrest of Patrice

⁸⁸ Conversation with Isaac Julien, London, January 2005

⁸⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, *op.cit.*, p.27

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.37

⁹¹ The figure of the woman appears in the companion piece to *Fantôme Afrique*, *True North* (2004). These will eventually form a trilogy with a future work called *Islands*. The trickster figure dances through *Vagabondia*, which was shot in the Sir John Sloane Museum, London. Françoise Vergès in conversation with Julien about the adaptation of this work *Fantôme Creole* speaks of the notion of a 'Creole phantom': 'a space – sounds, images, representations, creations – that belies claims for purity, authenticity, wholeness, a space born out of the matrix of violence, exile and slavery and of the processes and practices of creolisation. A space of uneasy hybridity, contamination and cultural difference...' *Isaac Julien*, exh. cat. Espace 315, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, 25 May–15 August 2005 (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou), p.38

⁹² See Kati Lena Ndiaye's *Traces empreintes de femmes* (2003), a documentary about a young woman's interactions with three older women who paint the walls of Tiébélé.

⁹³ Mark Nash makes the point that Allégret's film *Voyage au Congo* (1927) was one of a number of ethnographic texts informed by Surrealism that were politically progressive for their times and led to criticism of French colonialism. He cites the examples of André Gide's expedition to Congo of 1925–

Lumumba, helicopters and an African barrister hurrying to court in a wig, images that suggest the brutality with which, even after Independence, African liberation was curtailed, and the conflicting responses of African people to the impositions of colonialism. Contemporary cultural and economic imperialism is made visible with the canisters of Hollywood films piled up on the shelves of a projection room.

In a variation on this sequence an audience at Ciné Oubri watches Gaston Kaboré's *Wend Kúnni*, the film that, perhaps more than any other, set the tone for over a decade of filmmaking in Burkina Faso as a specifically Burkinabè mode of cinema was defined. At another point, the scene is the courtyard outside another cinema. A young boy rides his bicycle past film posters that adorn the walls. With this citation of Victorio de Sica's *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948), Julien references the influence of Italian Neorealist film on generations of politically engaged filmmakers across the Tricontinental concerned with exposing social realities and harnessing the intensity of non-professional actors. Posters for a Denzel Washington thriller, Euzahan Palcy's *Rue Cases Nègres* (1983) and Franco Mierelles' *Cidade de Deus* (2002) combine to speak of a global black cinematic imaginary that appears on the surfaces of the city. In certain loops the camera team taking the shot of the boy on the bicycle appear in the frame in a self-reflection on the processes of filmmaking. The soundtrack of the film running mingles with the sounds of the production team, forming an audioscape that, as Mark Nash suggests, is also part of the cinephile imaginary.⁹⁴ The soundscape thus mirrors the images in the inter-textual self-reflection on how the art work is situated amid this trans-Atlantic audio-visual flow.

The image *Papillon* (2005) from Julien's accompanying series of photographs shows a sewing machine mounted into a wooden table with the painted walls of Tiébélé visible in the background (Plate 60). As well as referencing domestic industry, the sewing machine has a metaphoric status relating to the filmic surface and its capacity for story-telling through the notion of 'suture' in film theory.⁹⁵ The rich and seductive aesthetic of *Fantôme Afrique* is produced with a high level of digital reworking – processes of rendering images, which reference older technologies of cinema, into a smoothly sutured continuum across which Julien's figures move. In the suturing stitch through which narratives are formed, local vernaculars, modern technologies and global flows coalesce for a moment to suggest new hybrid forms, in which the traumas of the past make uneasy appearances.

Ciné Oubri has something of the status of myth in Ouagadougou. Despite several new licks of paint, with the screen re-plastered smooth and plans to build a roof, the *harmattan* still blows dust from the Sahara that drifts across the beams of light from the projectors, while hungry mosquitoes lurk in the aisles (Plate 61). Before the Revolution, the Oubri would fill up nightly with rowdy audiences from the nearby *quartiers populaires* who thronged to see Westerns playing on the big screen at the only central cinema where they could afford the tickets. Gangsters and petty thieves who had loitered in the streets and at the market all

1926, which led to his book *Voyage au Congo* (1927) and to Allégret's film. The Dakar–Djibouti ethnographic mission of 1932–1933, led by Marcel Griault and accompanied by Michel Leiris, who published his diaries of the trip as *L'Afrique Fantôme* (1934), which inspired the naming of Julien's work. Mark Nash, 'Expeditions: True North and Fantôme Afrique', in Isaac Julien, *True North/Fantôme Afrique*, exh. cat. Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, 23 June–20 August 2006 (Ostfildern: Hatje Cante Verlag), p.55

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.57

⁹⁵ See the special issue on 'suture' in *Screen*, volume 18, number 4, 1977

day would congregate, fights would break out, and when the projector broke down the crowd would hurl objects at the screen and shout obscenities at the projectionist cowering in his projection box.⁹⁶ The demographic of the cinema began to change with the Revolution. The local *quartiers populaires* leading down to the airport were razed in Project ZACA, a community broken up and displaced to the periphery to build new homes on their individually allotted *parcelles*.

By the 1990s film production began to change in Ouagadougou. Although profitable until 1989, the State distributor SONACIB began to fall into financial difficulties. In 1979 the inter-African consortium of distribution based in Burkina Faso collapsed, and SONACIB was forced to seek other more costly suppliers.⁹⁷ Eventually in 1994, after years of private cinema owners not honouring their debts, the company was privatised, opening up the market to competition but leaving Burkinabè filmmakers fearful about the future fate of their films, having already seen the detrimental effects of similar privatisation schemes on local film production in Senegal, Mali and elsewhere.⁹⁸ With the economic climate and continued investment uncertain, the number of feature-length films produced in Burkina Faso dropped after 1995 to its early 1980s level.⁹⁹ This has been off-set in part by the film industry adapting to new technologies, with filmmakers making increasing numbers of short films and series for television on video. Younger filmmakers such as Abdoulaye Dao led the way with the television series *Vis-à-vis*, a social satire about people's daily struggles, corruption, family squabbles, conflicts of class and between generations, and scandals of sexual propriety. A FESPACO newsletter in 2000 reports on the shooting of Idrissa Ouédraogo's television series *Kady Jolie*. Giving a 'wink at younger filmmakers', Ouédraogo explains: 'I try to talk about daily life in a city like Ouagadougou, through various themes, such as AIDs, criminality, love, bewitchment, unemployment and so on, with a touch of humour.'¹⁰⁰

On a Wednesday night during FESPACO the streets are lined with banners welcoming festivaliers. Heaving crowds of *cinéphiles* stream into Ciné Burkina, Ciné Neerwaya and the now more up-market Ciné Oubri. Away from the centre on a dusty road that links scattered houses, a trickle of people begin to gather in front of an old television set outside the café *La Causette*, a name that means 'the chatting place' (Plate 62). They've come like they do every week to watch their favourite programme *Vis-à-vis*. In the darkness, their faces are reflected with the white glare from the television screen and with the green light that streams out from the bar inside. Behind the small screen a mural decorates the wall. It shows a café with a waitress serving punters, like a reflection of the carryings on beneath, yet perhaps in the tain of the mirror there is also something of another place and time, a Parisian café scene perhaps? And floating above this is a

⁹⁶ These scenes, described by staff at Ciné Oubri, continue to be retold as an important part of the city's imaginary. They appear, transposed into the present, in Dani Kouyaté's *Ouaga Saga* (2004), a comedy about a group of youngsters struggling to survive life in the city.

⁹⁷ Emmanuel Sama, 'Burkina Faso: The State Monopoly Challenged', in *Écrans d'Afrique*, no.23, 1st Semester, 1998, p.129

⁹⁸ Sama explains that SONACIB supplied cinemas with a packet of films monthly for 'a ridiculously small amount of money', which led the company into debt because private exhibitors 'practically never honoured their undertaking to ... paying rental taxes to SONACIB.' While the private exhibitors are 'accused by many of having dug the grave of SONACIB', the private exhibitors wanted to open up the monopoly the company held on importing films. *Ibid*, p.131

⁹⁹ Clément Tapsoba, '1980–2000: Les très riches années du cinéma burkinabès', *op.cit.*, p.134

¹⁰⁰ '“Kady Jolie” Idrissa Ouédraogo's wink at young filmmakers', *FESPACO Newsletter*, no.21 July–August–September 2000, p.8

strangely incongruous graffito – that irreverent cartoon of Freud with a nude draped across his forehead. Week by week *Vis-à-vis* tells stories of the dilemmas of the everyday that face those scattered in the wake of Revolution. As the theme tune blares out, the fragments of those communities gather in the street around a thousand television sets, tiny specs of light across the dark city mirroring the night sky.



Plate 51
Thomas Sankara, Ouagadougou, 2005

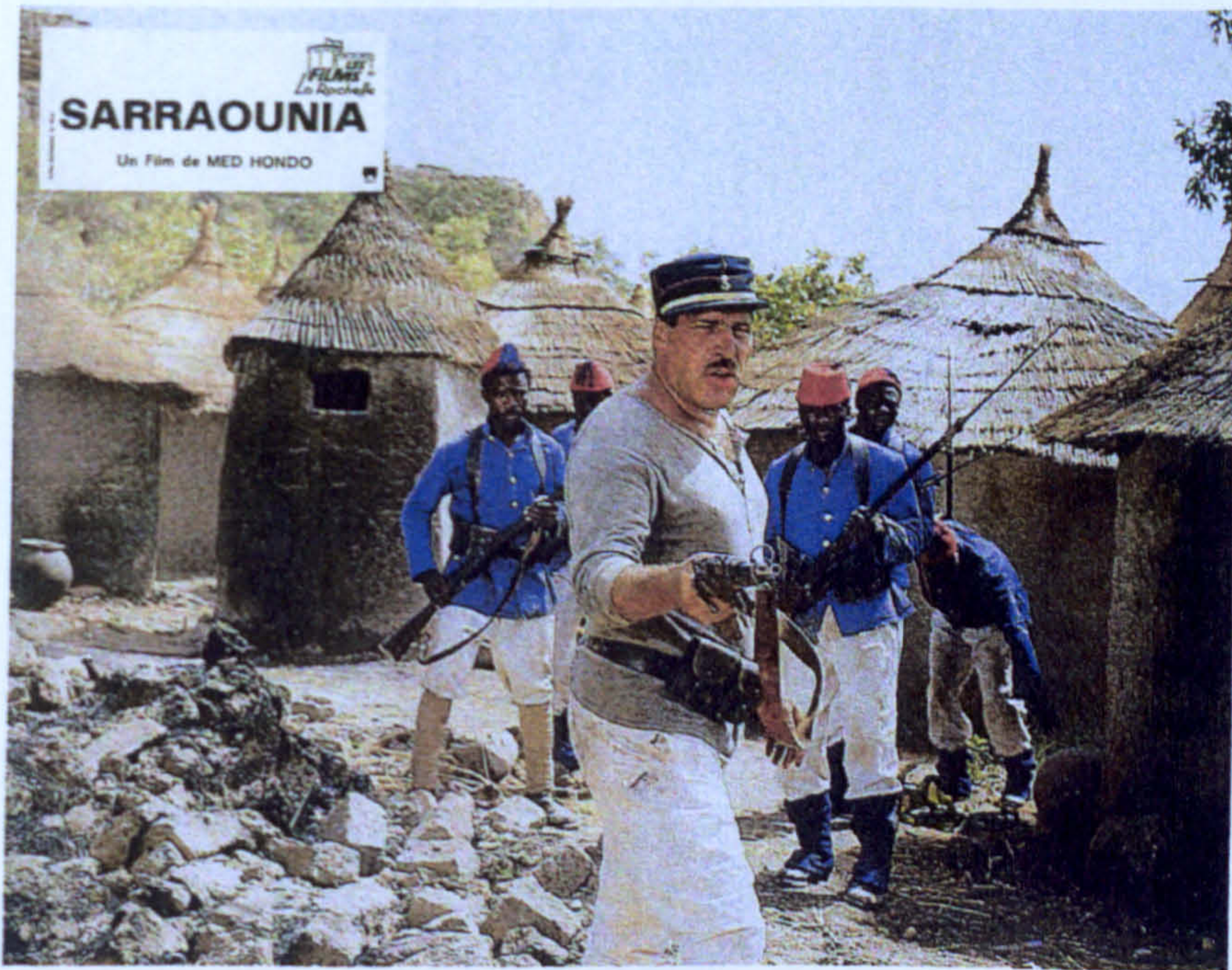


Plate 52
Baara, 1978
Poster for Med Hondo's *Sarraounia*, 1986

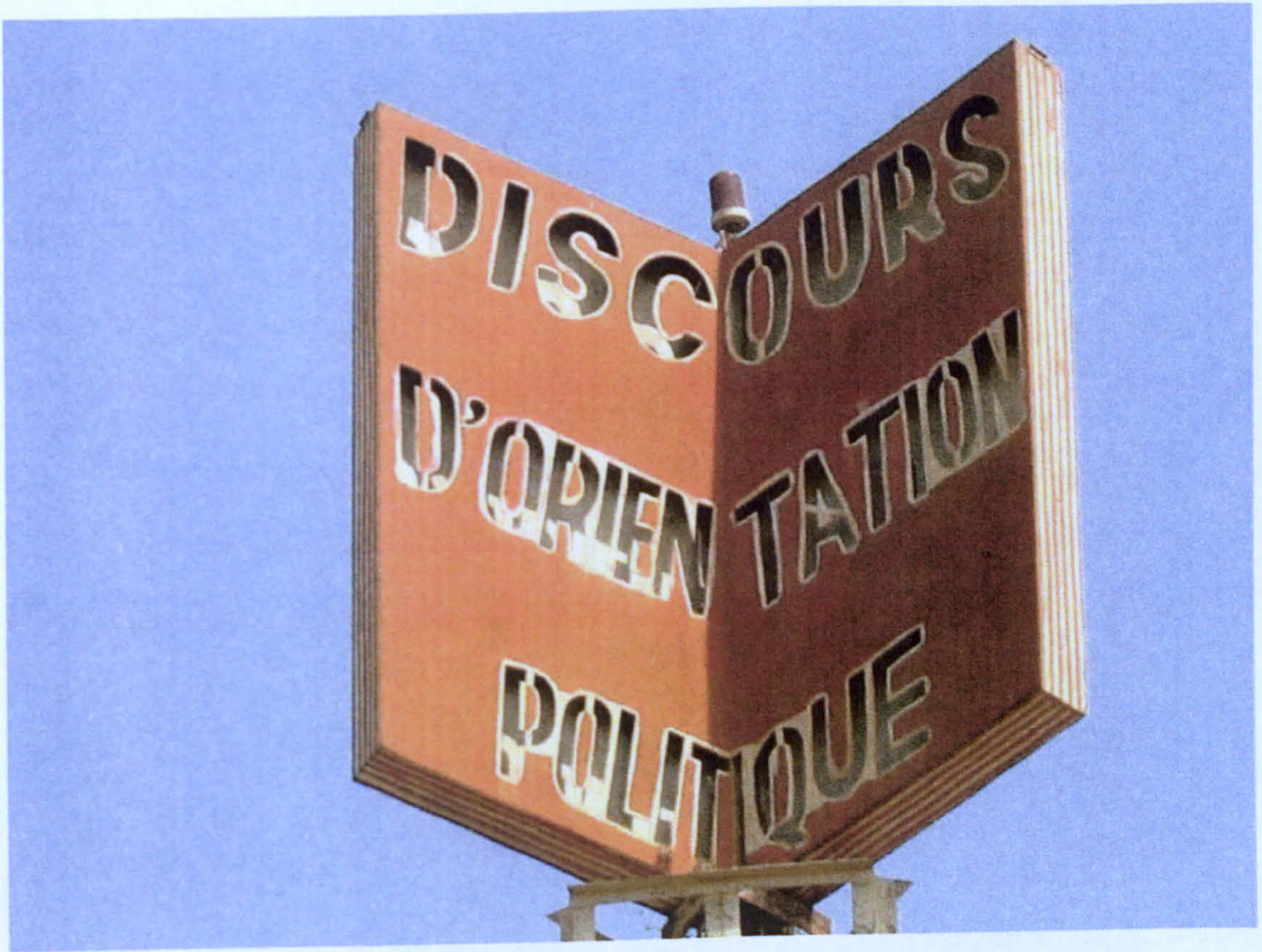


Plate 53
Discours d'Orientation Politique, Place de 2 Octobre, Ouagadougou



Plate 54
Isaac Julien, *Fantôme Créole* series, 'Place des Cinéastes, After Bodys Isek Kingeley', 2005

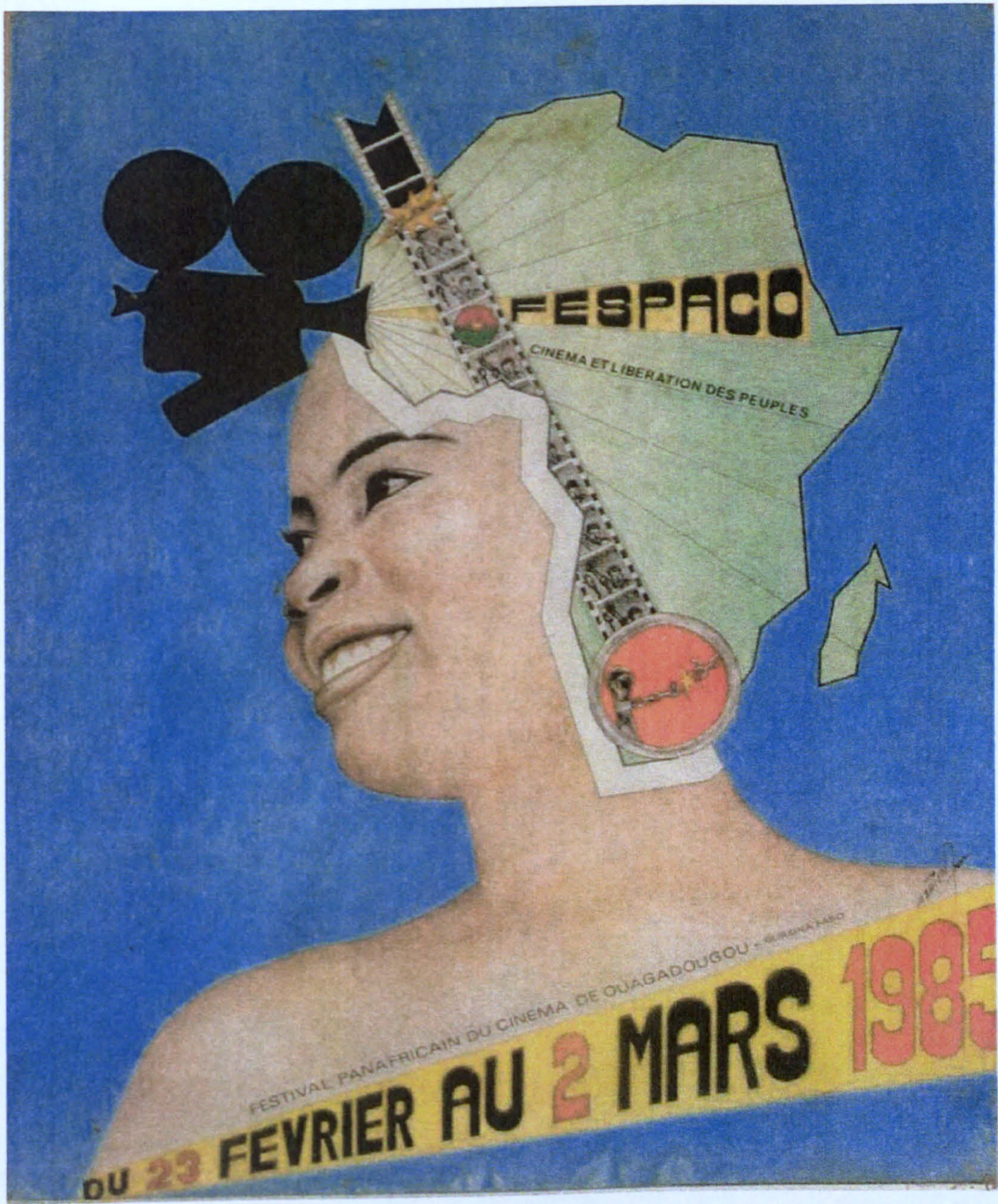


Plate 55
Poster for FESPACO, 1985 edition, 'Cinema et Liberation des Peuples'



Plate 56
Zan Boko, 1988



Plate 57
Bye Bye Africa, 1999



Plate 58
Isaac Julien, *Fantôme Afrique*, three-screen installation, 2005

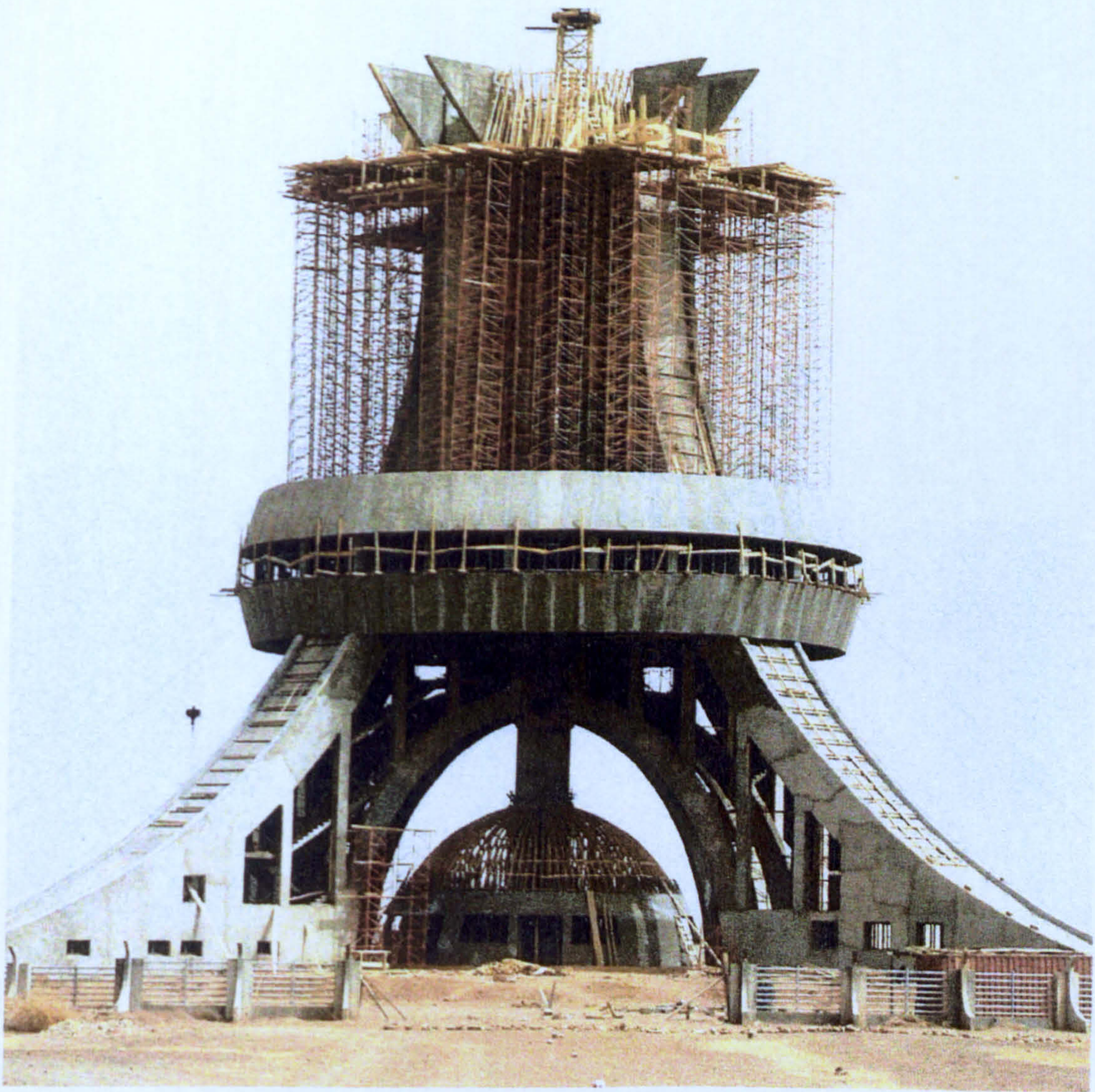


Plate 59

Isaac Julien, *Fantôme Créole* series, 'Ouagadougou 2000, Mémorial', 2005



Plate 60
Isaac Julien, *Fantôme Créole* series, 'Papillon', 2005



Plate 61
Ciné Oubri by day and by night, Ouagadougou, 2005



Plate 62
Watching *Vis-à-Vis* at La Causette, Ougadougou, 2005

Conclusion

In Ouagadougou a set of confluences, affinities and affiliations come together. It is the 'meeting place', as Sembène described it. As after some great gathering, however, when the sense that 'something happened' starts to fade, some concluding remarks are needed here to identify the significance of these cinematic fragments drawn out of the tangle of histories through which Africa and Europe's tumultuous decolonisation and resistance to capitalist imperialism played out. The research involved amassing an archive out of filmmaking institutions literally in ruins, piecing together and re-constructing lost pieces of once vibrant cinema cultures from conversations with surviving participants, from decayed film reels and video tape, from the worn pages of *Tempo*, *Tricontinental*, *Mozambican Revolution* and *Cahiers du cinéma*. It involved sifting the urban spaces of Ouagadougou, Maputo and Lisbon, these cities being another kind of archive of Revolution, one that similarly had to be approached by way of its faded surfaces, its gaps and omissions. Now is the time to examine critically the connections between Ouagadougou and those earlier histories of Revolution, between disparate figures and geographically distant struggles. What does it all amount to?

This conclusion works through the findings of the thesis, both in terms of histories uncovered and theoretical ideas that the events of the African Revolution set in motion. It investigates the extent to which certain ambitions of cinema to be an agent of Revolution succeeded. It examines how the African Revolution's most compelling innovations in cinema constitute new forms of knowledge. It considers how, in the wake of the politically engaged cinema of decolonisation, when so much of its archive has been lost, damaged or forgotten, the screen needs to be considered beyond the frame of cinema in order to determine how the memory of Revolution appears in the present and continues to signify. Doing so offers some answers to a number of inter-related questions: How do the unique experiences of cinema at different moments of decolonisation affect conceptualisation of Revolution, Event and Screen? What is the enduring significance of these events and how do they inform imaginaries in the immediate present? What remains of cinema's radical promise, and how might the screen offer other ways of understanding how the African Revolution is remembered today?

The African Revolution

The notion of 'the African Revolution' articulated in the writings of Fanon and Cabral sets out the conceptual parameters for making connections between the revolutionary struggles in Algeria, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Burkina Faso, places where cinema was harnessed as an agent of Revolution and radical filmmakers gathered to use cinema to make an intervention. Although the circumstances of each differed, the liberation movements of the FLN, MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO all recognised armed struggle as the only possible means to release their peoples from recalcitrant colonial regimes. They also shared the desire to push

forward radical social change after Independence so as to fight the spectres of neo-colonialism and underdevelopment. Although Sankara's CNR emerged at a later moment, when Upper Volta had been Independent for over twenty years, when it ceased power and renamed the country Burkina Faso, the CNR aligned itself with these earlier liberation movements. It strove to rid the country of a corrupt political elite and initiate a Revolution in which the people, led by the military and revolutionary cadres, would transform Burkinabè society and forge connections of solidarity with other revolutionary States in a global struggle against capitalist imperialism.

In the thinking of Fanon and Cabral, armed struggle made first Algeria and later Guinea-Bissau the 'vanguard' of the African Revolution. It was the means of unifying 'a people' around desire for social transformation rather than a static notion of ethnic identity. Armed struggle, in Cabral's words, thus 'brings about the need to understand the characteristics of societies in radical change and struggle'. Cabral identified the crisis of knowledge in the African Revolution since the 1960s as requiring such a theory of the human potential for radical change and collective action. This failure of States to change African societies from within, to make them progressive and no longer dependent on the West, is where the earlier processes of decolonisation had failed to deliver on the promises and aspirations of Independence. Armed struggle makes a demand for new forms of knowledge that can grasp radical change and for an understanding of culture that is radically anti-essentialist.

Both Fanon and Cabral understood that while the majority of colonialists would cling to their privileges, there would be progressive individuals from across the world who would dedicate themselves to global revolution through national liberation – a politics of active affiliation rather than filiation by birth. At the same time the African Revolution brought about the opportunity to take the best and most progressive aspects of indigenous cultures so as to actively shape forms of modernity different from those of Western capitalism or the Soviet bloc. In the ambitions articulated by the revolutionaries themselves, Revolution was to be the means through which Africa would re-enter the 'stage of the world' and contribute to the universal from diverse temporal and located positions. The new ways of thinking and acting together that revolutionary situations precipitated would have significance beyond the specific situations of their emergence, and would thus be Africa's contribution to humanity in a time when imaginaries circulate globally. It is in this sense that with the liberation struggle Africa becomes the vanguard of the world.

In this conception of the human potential for collective transformation, Revolution begins from within each individual, involving a revolutionary *becoming* through identification with the struggle, which replaces the filter of colonialist culture as the perceptual screen through which to understand one's Self and the world. The importance of Fanon's theorisation of the perceptual screen is his insight that the efficacy of a certain media in a revolutionary situation lies not in the instructional clarity of the message. Instead its potential depends on its capacity to gather a crowd who construct new meanings collectively as a mode of participation in the wider struggle. Out of the fragments of the radio broadcast 'The Voice of Free Algeria' a surface forms upon which a

figure of the *mujabadeen* comes into appearance – a blank sheet, so to speak, on which each individual can project themselves in collective identification with revolutionary action. The Event of the Screen thus radicalises personal trajectories so that they come to have a metonymic relationship to the Event of Revolution.

A transnational politics of cinema emerged concurrently with the wars of liberation, and this crystallised in 1973 at the Third World Film-Makers Meeting in Algiers with a set of ambitions to decolonise cinema and define liberationist aesthetics and modes of practice. It was a politics of cinema that would greatly inform the cultural policies of post-Independence governments such as that of Mozambique in its drive to create a national cinema harnessed to Revolution. This meeting constituted a coming together of key figures in politically engaged filmmaking such as Sembene, Hondo, Gomes and Alvarez. They shared with Cabral and Fanon the conviction that, as Sembene affirms in *Man is Culture*, in the ‘tempestuous zones’ of revolutionary war ‘the only form of artistic expression is armed struggle: the absolute quest for independence; the recuperation of one’s cultural patrimony and also its defence.’¹ For filmmakers such as Hondo, ‘Cinema was a way of asserting Africa’s presence in the world’; it was a means to pursue the fight that great thinkers of the African Revolution had engaged on the ground of ideas and politics through the moving image.²

There is a conceptual corollary between Revolution and cinema’s ambition to be an agent of radical change that lies in the capacity of both to enable collective imagining of and aspiring to a better future. Cinema ‘converts into potential what was only possibility’; in radical filmmaking it seeks to germinate change through that which it presents.³ Hondo’s *Soleil Ó*, therefore, embodies a moment in which Africa becomes the vanguard of a global emancipatory tendency in cinema, one which includes works by Rocha, Mambety and Solanas and Gettino, and spans back to that of Eisenstein and Vertov, in which formal experimentation is a manifestation of revolutionary desire. Here what Hondo calls cinema’s ‘foundational act’ becomes manifest: ‘the eruption of the masses onto the screen’.⁴ At the moment of Revolution the screen is the surface on which a new figure of the people comes into appearance, and cinema seeks to precipitate that which it conjures on the screen.

Liberation is an Act of Culture

The pivotal concept of the African Revolution that underpins the significance of cinema within it is the notion of liberation as an ‘act of culture’, in which the idea of culture is holistic, expanding beyond material artefacts to describe forms of life and ways of living together in which the potential for transformation is the fundamental human condition.⁵ Antonio Olé’s *O Ritmo do N’gola Ritmos* exemplifies a cluster of films made after Independence in Angola concerned with finding a visual language to complement the oral and musical

¹ Ousmane Sembene, *Man is Culture*, The Sixth Annual Hans Wolff Memorial Lecture, 5 March 1975 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press), p.2

² Med Hondo quoted in Ibrahima Signaté, *Med Hondo: Cineaste Rebelle*, *op.cit.*, p.25

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, *op.cit.*, p.156

⁴ Med Hondo, *op.cit.*

⁵ Amílcar Cabral, *A Arma da Teoria, Unidade e Luta*, *op.cit.*, p.223. There is a close affinity here to Sembene’s notion of culture as ‘the hyphen between the layette and the shroud’. It is ‘in all aspects’ political and is ‘the sum total of man’s needs, both material and spiritual’. Ousmane Sembene, *op.cit.*, p.8

expression of the liberation struggle. The panning shots of the urban surfaces of Luanda's *musseques* draw out the textures of the streets in which the songs of N'gola Ritmos were sung and heard, their music both a manifestation of an emergent culture of revolutionary nationalism and a cover for the clandestine political activities of the MPLA. In the film 'the rhythm of revolt' forms a screen-like surface of connections, only partially visible to the Portuguese, through which the work of the liberation struggle could be carried out. Olé's film visualises a notion of the screen as a tissue of connections, a textile surface formed out of fragments of sounds and remembrances that evokes a moment of revolutionary beginning when resistance was expressed through culture.

The concept that liberation is an act of culture emerged in the early cultural forms of resistance to colonial rule and was developed as a theory of Revolution and the human capacity for change by Cabral during the armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau. Many of the pre-revolutionary clusters of resistance to Portuguese colonialism were cultural gatherings such as film clubs. In Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola cinema became the pretext whereby educated elites could engage politically with the contradictions and injustices of colonial society. Poetry and song were the means for the assimilated to 're-discover Africa' and to form a network of committed individuals dedicated to social and political change. Though severely curtailed in their activities by repression from PIDE, these initial stirrings of revolt came to fruition when an educated elite, including Cabral, Mario Pinto de Andrade and Agostinho Neto, gathered in Lisbon for their studies. Ironically this gathering in the colonial metropole enabled the formation of national liberation movements that were closely interlinked through a network of relations, shared trajectories and desires.

Cinema became an active agent of Revolution at the moment when the meaning of liberation as an 'act of culture' shifted gear. From the late 1950s this educated elite began connecting with the peasant masses not through poetry and song but in the planning of a Revolution. Soviet military assistance included the donation of filmmaking equipment to the liberation movements, though they lacked the skills and facilities to turn footage into films. The liberation movements thus drew on the support of foreign filmmakers to use cinema to document the new societies being created in the liberated zones so as to garner support internationally and refute colonial propaganda. Very few of these films show actual combat; instead their focus is on the social transformations and local development the movements organised in each of the liberated zones in preparation for Independence, through schools, medical clinics and, in the case of FRELIMO in Tanzania, a university.

Three broad and intertwined threads to cinema's revolutionary ambitions emerge from the liberation struggles, in which the notion of liberation as an 'act of culture' has different implications. The first involves an internationalist cinema activism and a set of liberationist aesthetics that travelled through various revolutionary situations. Individual films sometimes articulate a trans-national subjectivity of Revolution that connects disparate times and places. Alongside a plethora of more conventional documentaries, certain experimental and fiction films, such as Rocha's *Der Leone Have Sept Cabeças* and Maldoror's *Sambiganza*, articulate new aesthetics of liberation. Films of the armed struggle testify to a radical desire that defied the boundary of the nation even

while it saw the nation-state as a means to global emancipatory aims. The second, which overlaps with the first, is manifested in films that seek to affirm new revolutionary subjectivities grounded in indigenous cultures of dissent to colonialism, formed through the armed struggle, and ready to participate in new African forms of modernity that would enable people to thrive and develop. The third involved building a pool of skills and connections with Socialist countries such as Cuba and Yugoslavia to draw on in constructing decolonised national cinemas after Independence. This was an ambition that all the *lusophone* post-Independence governments tried to realise, though only Mozambique had substantial success.

It is necessary to distinguish between the films made during the armed struggle that have an indexical relation to those events, and films made later, which reconstruct those moments through fictional accounts. However, the centrality of remembrance to the aesthetics of liberation that emerged during anti-colonial struggle and post-Independence Revolutions complicates these positions of enunciation. Many of the films made during the Revolutions in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola are actually simultaneously acts of remembering formative moments in the struggle, reflections on the nature of that armed struggle as part of a wider African Revolution, and contributions to the 'cultural front' of the immediate struggle of which they were a component, to challenge colonialist regimes of truth. The Revolutions of decolonisation opened up spaces where new collective subjectivities were articulated, often, for instance in *Mueda*, *Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos* and *Sambiganza*, by way of an dramatic re-enactment or retelling that is a collective act of constructing memory. These films demonstrate how identity and memory are made socially through on-going negotiation rather than emanating from some pre-given source, and are radically open to future appropriation. In the context of struggle, telling stories of Revolution was a revolutionary act in itself.

Flora Gomes' formation as a filmmaker during the armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau resulted in a number of fiction films that continue to examine Cabral's thought and legacy long after the ideals upon which PAIGC was founded had been abandoned by the political elite. Gomes' *Udji azul de Yonta* thus embodies the notion of liberation as an 'act of culture' beyond the moment of revolutionary beginning. It is part of an ongoing engagement with the struggles of the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde to free themselves from poverty and corruption so that younger generations can find out for themselves how liberation might be lived. His body of work evidences a different position of enunciation from that of Chris Marker. Marker was directly involved in cinema in Guinea-Bissau, but gives an account of the memory of the liberation struggle from the perspective of Western radicalism's investment in, and subsequent disappointment with, the African Revolution. If the notion of liberation as an 'act of culture' was Guinea-Bissau's conceptual 'contribution to the world' the armed struggle also did something else. In freeing themselves, as pointed out in Marker's *Sans Soleil*, the liberation movements 'gave rise to a movement that overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship and led one, for a moment, to believe in a new revolution in Europe.'

Portugal in Revolution

The brief historical moment between the overthrow of Caetano in 1974 and the end of PREC in 1976 is crucial to this thesis in that it demonstrates how events and ideas in Africa preceded and opened up something in Western Europe that had previously seemed impossible: a genuinely radical and emancipatory Leftist Revolution. While at the outset the Junta for National Salvation was headed by conservative figures from the military establishment, during the two years that the progressive wing of the MFA was in the ascendance the country veered precariously towards Socialism. The memory of Portuguese colonial history and that of Revolution, so intricately entangled, often elides the fact that Portugal owes its liberation from fascism to the struggles for Independence fought in its former colonies. It is an irrefutable example of how the African Revolution had emancipatory effects that stretched far beyond the Continent.

The Carnation Revolution precipitated a number of conceptual shifts, giving Portugal the opportunity to 'radically re-think itself' – its past, present and future – and to ask what it meant to be Portuguese after Africa. Revolution enabled the people of Portugal to become visible as a political constituency for the first time when they took to the streets of Lisbon. Portuguese filmmakers saw themselves as acting in solidarity with those across the world struggling for the decolonisation of the moving image. Anti-imperialism was expressed in terms of identification with the liberation struggles of the Third World, through radical filmmakers' perception that they too were colonised and under threat from American consumer culture and global capitalism, and in the drive to produce their own cinema that would tell new narratives of and for the Portuguese people.

The enduring figures that embody the radical promise of the Portuguese Revolution survive in the films made during those initial days of freedom. Filmmakers from around the world, including Rocha, Alvarez, Thomas Harlan and Robert Kramer came to document and participate in the Revolution, testifying to a nomadic radicalism that seeks out revolutionary situations and identifies with militant political action. The drive for filmmakers to act collectively was thus part of a wider struggle, but was also an immediate necessity to document the Revolution, to ensure the end of censorship and to safeguard the national archive so as to be able to tell new stories of national identity and history. Filmmakers' cooperatives and the Grupos de Acção e Animação Cinematográfica defined new social, political and pedagogical roles for cinema in Revolution, as more radical sections of the MFA encouraged people as they reclaimed the land, seized control of their places of work and collectivised the common spaces of everyday life. In this process cinema was the means to build an archive of moving images of people from different regions engaged in struggle to transform their lives. It enabled the transfer of knowledge and techniques about how to go about a Revolution, as films were processed quickly and screened in different locations. For many rural populations it was their first involvement in making films and their first awareness of the power of their own image.

In its brief existence the Portuguese Revolution was an opportunity for some filmmakers to experiment with what freedom might mean. During the Revolution cinema exploded into a profusion of different forms of collective action. While there was consensus on the Left in resisting the idea of cinema being a commercial

medium of reactionary ideologies, the filmmakers involved in the cooperatives also argued that it should not become an instrument of professional Party politics or one controlled via the centralised institution of an authoritarian Socialist State. Foreign filmmakers and critics participated in these debates on how Portuguese cinema should be both liberated and harnessed to the revolutionary process. These ambitions were always co-present, but, as events unfolded in the 'Hot Summer' of 1975, they became increasingly conflicting. The schism in different notions of what revolutionary filmmaking should be hampered attempts to collectivise film production, echoing a wider paradox. Tragically the critical space that the Revolution opened out, in which people could ask 'the big questions' about how to live and work together, led to a breakdown in the cohesiveness on the Left, leaving it vulnerable to reactionary forces from both within Portugal and abroad.

What reverberates in the cinematic archive of Portugal's Revolution is a series of gaps and potentialities that were not realised in the Event. Rui Simões' *Bom Povo Português*, for instance, evokes a sense of loss for the short-lived moment of togetherness between an obsolete, isolationist fascism and the return of daily life to the norms of capitalist relations when the political establishment regained the upper hand. In the 1980s João Botelho's *Um Adeus Português* made palpable an ongoing silence in Portuguese society over the trauma of its colonial wars, a repressed and painful memory incongruous with the continuing presence of Africans as part of everyday urban life in Portugal. With this foreclosing of the opportunity for radical change, the filmmakers who had come to Portugal to film the Revolution moved on to other revolutionary situations. Tracking their trajectories, aesthetics and political commitments maps out a relational geography of cinema that changes how to understand Africa and Europe as sites of innovation, mutually implicated in their manifestations of radical desire.

The Screen is a Blackboard

Among the filmmakers who moved on to other revolutionary situations after the Carnation Revolution were the Brazilians Celso and Luccas, who travelled from Portugal to Mozambique. The sequence in their film *25*, in which a crowd gathers around a blackboard, signifies a point when the anticipations that attended Independence were at their zenith, evoking a moment when the people awoken to the potential of their own Revolution. This scene of adults and children learning to read and write in front of a blackboard in a forest clearing is a paradigm trope of the films about the armed struggle. After Independence FRELIMO planned to extend the new social realities experimented in the liberated zones across the entire territory. The revolutionary situation of Mozambique gave to cinema the possibility of realising its most radical potential: to be, in Sembene's words, the 'night-school of Africa' – a school for Revolution.⁶

Drawing on its experience of producing films with foreign filmmakers during the armed struggle, FRELIMO understood the political potential of the moving image for a new nation. In a country divided linguistically and geographically, where the majority of the population had no prior experience of the moving image, FRELIMO saw cinema a tool for mass political mobilisation and education. Cinema would raise political consciousness by

⁶ Ousmane Sembène, *op.cit.*, p.9

teaching people the meaning of Revolution and Independence, and by showing them the struggles of different peoples around the world; it would reverse the alienating effects of colonialism by banishing racist and reactionary images from the screen and by telling stories of the Mozambican people; and it would work to consolidate the power of the State by promoting identification with revolutionary nationalism. The INC was set up by FRELIMO to 'deliver to the people an image of the people', a slogan that is indicative of the centralised, authoritarian notion of pedagogy that underpinned its mission to educate and inform.

While FRELIMO understood cinema as a weapon on the 'cultural front' in a battle against imperialism, the *cinophilia* of those working at the INC militated against films being understood purely instrumentally. One of the aims of the INC was to educate audiences so as to create a critical public sphere of cinema. The commercial success of the INC was grounded on a new system of acquisition whereby copies of foreign films were bought outright rather than loaned, so that the INC could build up an archive of world cinema and fund its own productions. Through the film seasons organised by the INC and the individuals and teams of foreign filmmakers who came from Cuba, North Korea, Yugoslavia, Senegal and elsewhere, various different aesthetics of liberation and forms of revolutionary filmmaking circulated as part of Mozambique's plural *ciné* culture. In the first years of the INC, before the economic crisis led to the government seizing its profits for other purposes, its system of acquisition/distribution/production was a resounding financial success.

In terms of production, pedagogical, documentary and propaganda films were privileged, but the range of collaborators at the INC meant that some films, such as *25*, articulate radical desire in experimental forms that did not conform to the demands of the Party, inviting audiences into other realms of cinematic pleasure. As a new generation of Mozambican filmmakers were trained up by foreign *cooperantes*, different priorities emerged in making films for people with no prior experience of cinema, and these, with their emphasis on making the moving image into a language that the Mozambican people could understand, disrupt the Western tendency to privilege rapid montage as the revolutionary form *par excellence*. The *Kuxakanema* newsreel was transported across the territory on mobile cinema units, providing an educative news service for the entire country and weaving an image of national identity that cut across ethnic and linguistic differences. The newsreel had a function to inform and educate, but it also promoted a certain model of revolutionary behavior. Samora Machel, who championed cinema from the outset, functioned as the leading actor. A specifically 'Mozambican personality' was defined with the figure of the 'New Man', made up of a set of revolutionary ethics and comportments that had emerged during the armed struggle and were embodied by Machel.

For individual filmmakers such as Ruy Guerra, the Revolution was an opportunity to move beyond the limits of working as an individual militant by contributing to the construction of an anti-Imperialist cinema on a national and international scale. FRELIMO was aware that television was likely to become the most dominant audio-visual media and initially supported efforts to theorise ways in which it might be possible to stop it from functioning as a socially alienating, privatised commercial vehicle of reactionary foreign material. Guerra invited Godard to speculate on ways in which the collective experience of cinema might be maintained via television,

and to think about what a genuinely liberated television might be. Cabaço rejected Godard's suggestion that local communities should be trained and given equipment to produce their own televisual contents on video, and the project has been criticised as utopian. The State's hostility towards Godard's idea may also have been due to the way in which it made an intervention into the question of who, in a situation of Revolution, should hold the power to produce the image of a nation, suggesting the radically destabilising effect of enabling people to make their own images of and for themselves.

Instead the government set up *Televisão Experimental (TVE)*, re-directing the drive to democratise production through the training of '*correspondentes populares*' by the ICS, who made reports that were broadcast on Canal Zero. In the context of the escalating civil war, these reports functioned as 'stories of hope' about the Mozambican people's resilience and collective heroism. In the first years of television the government attempted to maintain the screen as a communal experience by placing televisions in the *bairros*, a means of giving people access to television that was seen by some as more gestural than effective. In 1994 the first general elections were won by FRELIMO, who by then had renounced Marxist-Leninism. TVE became TVM -- a state-controlled private enterprise broadcasting mainly foreign imports -- a testimony to the extent of FRELIMO's abandonment of the notion of cinema as a collective, transformative experience.

Yet despite the demise of cinema's collective dream, during the Mozambican Revolution there were in fact a variety of ways in which this notion of the screen as a blackboard took more experimental, reciprocal forms in projects that aimed to radically democratise production of the moving image so as to empower local communities. From 1976, when Jean Rouch trained some of the first of a new generation of Mozambican filmmakers and advocated the use of Super-8 so that people could make disposable filmic 'postcards' of their everyday lives, Eduardo Mondlane University was a site more marginal to the State where a number of small-scale projects were able to experiment without attracting the attention of the Department of Ideological Work. Projects followed in a similar vein, using early forms of video to change the parameters of ethnographic filmmaking so that it might move beyond mere documentation to become a revolutionary tool of development and social transformation.

Rather than the projects of Rouch and Godard merely mirroring the dynamics of imperialism, in Mozambique concepts of ethnographic and documentary filmmaking were transformed into something more socially proactive and radical in situations that demanded that new political constituencies be addressed for the first time. Godard's insights into the power relations of the image vis-à-vis the State and the people, and his notion of filmmaking as a tool of empowerment and a form of research that makes visible social contradictions continues to be cited by filmmakers as relevant to their practice in Mozambique. Docu-dramas shot on video have been a means for Mozambican filmmakers such as Licínio Azevedo, Sol de Carvalho, Gabriel Mondlane and Isabel Noronha to continue to produce films that engage with indigenous cultures and address social conflicts, often enabling non-professionals to act out stories very close to their own experiences and concerns. The experiments with cinema that took place in Mozambique thus rupture the notion that Europe and the West are

sites of innovations that are belatedly exported to the Third World. Instead what becomes apparent is a set of histories that are more complex and entangled, in which resonances of certain earlier concepts may be found years later in projects with similar ethical imperatives. They hark back to the initial moment of the Revolution when Mozambique was a key site for conceptualising how filmmaking has the potential to educate, empower and transform, when it was possible to imagine it as a collective practice open, in theory at least, to anyone.

Sifting the Ruins of the INC

The screen that Gabriel Mondlane pointed out to me when I first visited the INC in 2004 – the wall of what used to be a sound-editing room – was a surface charred with the shadowy outlines of equipment, marks that would be visible through the projected image of the films they now project there, the works-in-progress of those few still able to make films after the destruction of the INC. The cinematic memory of the Mozambican Revolution is lodged in those reels of film that survived the fire that nearly destroyed the building. But this screen suggested a way of reading the urban surface that expanded beyond the walls of the INC. The city of Maputo, with its streets named after Karl Marx, Amílcar Cabral and Ho Chi Minh, is also a shifting archive of Revolution. The ruins of the INC raise the question of how to come to some kind of knowledge of the past not only through what remains of it, but also through its gaps, silences and erasures.

There are two components to this question. One relates to the cinematic archive itself. Examining the INC's output is a means to examine how cinema actualises a cartography of a revolutionary drive, one directed by a State whose emancipatory ambitions became increasingly compromised as its stand against Apartheid and capitalist imperialism made it the target of sustained violence. The other relates to ways of reading the urban surface so that Maputo can be understood as a repository of collective consciousness, one that holds stories of Revolution that are still to be told. With their faded remnants of revolutionary murals and crumbling modernist architectures interspersed with advertisements for mobile phones and Pentecostal churches, Maputo's urban surfaces are like breccia. The memory of Revolution is under erasure, but its urban traces remain slumbering in the present, different temporalities and imaginaries lying awkwardly alongside one another.

Kracauer's insight that analysis of 'inconspicuous surface-level expressions' can testify to 'the fundamental state of things' needs to be brought into conjunction with a Benjaminian perception of the potentiality of the past to reawaken the present. Remembering Revolution, as Benjamin points out, is that 'awakening' when the forms and images dreamed of in the collective consciousness appear as part of the texture of urban experience today. It is precisely at the 'moment of danger' when living memory starts to fade that the city's surfaces need to be read anew for those traces of revolutionary beginning when new collective agencies crystallised, political organisation intersecting and harnessing grassroots desires for radical change. While official monuments to the Revolution assert continuity between the past and the present, those faded murals made spontaneously by people in the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm are chipped and faded, constituting a more troubling persistence in the present as the aspirations that inspired them slip away. In this context the cinematic archive rebounds with even greater significance. With their indexical relation to the past, those documentary images

held in the ruins of the INC have the potential to re-animate the moment of Revolution, while the films that reconstruct through fictional re-enactment and/or personal testimony provide evidence of how the cultures of revolutionary nationalism were experienced and imagined. The hopes and dreams of Revolution thought to be dead and gone may still once again move among the living.

Desires for radical social change first found cinematic articulation in a few films, such as *Catembe* or those of José Cardoso, which were made under the Portuguese regime but immediately banned, their potential to precipitate social change suppressed until the moment of Independence when the colonial archive was seized. As the INC embarked on creating a politically engaged national cinema focused on documentary, even those moving images made to prop up colonialist ideology were re-appropriated by the INC in new productions such as *Estas são as Armas*, in which their meaning was reversed in new narratives of national identity forged through liberation struggle. The *Kuxakanema* newsreel and documentaries such as *Ofensiva* and *Operação Leopardo* demonstrate how filmmaking was geared towards exposing the violence that the racist States of Rhodesia and South Africa inflicted through their sponsorship of 'armed bandits', and the more insidious dangers of corruption through which the enemies of Socialism worked from within. *Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal* beautifully embodies the collective desires for new ways of living and working together that the Revolution hoped to deliver, yet the story of what happened to the village after the film was made indicates just how vulnerable these dreams were to attack from reactionary geopolitical forces that sought to wipe out Mozambique's project to transform its peoples' lives.

During the Revolution the INC became the most developed realisation of a strategy for decolonising African cinema through the frame of the nation-state. The Conferência Africana de Cooperação Cinegráfia held in Maputo in 1977 was a crucial moment in the crystallisation of hopes to create regional infrastructures through which to break dependency and challenge the economic and cultural hegemony of the West. The AACC, which was set up at the conference, sought to open up a 'new front of combat against Imperialism' by encouraging member States to nationalise their cinema industries and displacing foreign distribution monopolies with regional intra-African circuits of distribution. While it failed because of a lack of commitment by many of the participating countries, international cooperation across the Continent did take place, reflecting solidarities forged during the struggle for Independence and in the support Mozambique gave to other liberation struggles. *Cinco Tiros de Mauser*, made in Angola, and *Pambere ne Zimbabwe*, a co-production between Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, testify to this transnational anti-Imperialist politics of the moving image. Alliances with other Socialist countries such as Yugoslavia opened out possibilities for more ambitious film productions, culminating in the making of the first colour fiction feature film *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*, though there were occasions when this experience was coloured by patronising and even racist attitudes that gave the lie to the supposed equality of 'Socialist friendships'. José Cardoso's *O Vento Sobre do Norte*, made in black and white so that it could be produced entirely in Mozambique, offered a very different idea of what a Mozambican national cinema might have looked like in different circumstances, one in which the director's personal vision filtered the collective memory of a people's colonial past.

The initial revolutionary ambitions of cinema that emerged in Mozambique at Independence transmogrified with the drive to maximise the political effectiveness of FRELIMO's propaganda machine. Kanemo, the commercial film production company set up by the government as an interface with the open market of transnational capitalism, was an attempt to bring to Socialism the technical competence and quality that the capitalist system was thought to offer. The company was closely associated with the security services, but even this did not prevent its most politically controversial television production *Actas de um Processo de Decolonização*, about the trials of the *comprimentidos*, from being censored. When Machel was killed in 1986, the film *Samora Vive* documented the massive popular outpouring of grief for the President, despite the fact that FRELIMO's government had become increasingly authoritarian.

In the chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* 'The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness' Fanon warns that:

It is not in mobilizing dozens or hundreds of thousands of men and women three or four times a year that you politically educate the masses. These meetings, these spectacular rallies, are similar to the old pre-independence tactics whereby you displayed your strength to prove to yourself and to others that you had the people on your side. The political education of the masses is meant to make adults out of them, not to make them infantile.⁷

Cinema has the ability to present political leadership at its most authoritative, charismatic and seductive; in capturing 'the masses' as a spectacle of sovereignty it all too quickly degenerates into propaganda for the most pernicious personality cults. This, as Deleuze points out, is the 'death-knell' to its revolutionary ambition.⁸ The figure of Machel that circulates endlessly on *Kuxakanema* signifies the aspirations of a regime to an ethical politics that its leader continued to personify as champion of the international struggle against corruption, underdevelopment and Apartheid, even while his besieged government became ever more repressive. The outcome of this sad story cannot be extracted from the wider geopolitical context of the Cold War that was played out on African territory, and the sustained attempt of the South African regime to destabilise the region through acts of extreme violence. The ruins of the INC testify not only to the demise of an African socialist project, but also that the remarkable achievements of Mozambican cinema were made against extraordinary odds.

Ouagadougou, the Meeting Place

From the first edition of FESPACO in 1969, Ouagadougou was defined as the meeting place for a transnational effort to decolonise African cinema – it brought together filmmakers and films into contact with audiences in an affirmative act of decolonisation. The films screened at the first FESPACO, which included

⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, 2004 (New York: Grove Press), p.124

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: the time image*, *op.cit.*, p.164

films by Sembène, Paulin Vierya, Joris Ivens, Marker and Rouch, were seen as incendiary in their anti-colonialism by the French government, who banned its cultural centre from hosting subsequent editions, an act that epitomizes the contradictory and highly conditional nature of French financial and technical assistance to African filmmaking. FESPACO's organisers were concerned not only with the projection of African films, but also with encouraging local production. The ambition to decolonise African screens was thought to be achievable through individual States nationalising their cinema industries and cooperating to create alternative networks of distribution and production. The national state was seen as having the capacity to take a stand against global capitalism by creating a sphere of autonomy in which films with a Pan-Africanist aesthetics and agenda could be made and circulate. This transnational revolutionary drive to decolonise cinema was the cultural manifestation of a multi-layered textile of radical networks that spread from North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara across the Atlantic and to Europe in the late 1960s and 1970s. Pan-Africanism had infused debates in which filmmakers began to determine tactics for liberating cinema screens still 'colonised' by foreign films. However, this gained momentum with the formation of FESPACO just at the historical moment when the influence of Pan-Africanism on African governments was waning, the initial ambitions of Independence giving way amongst political elites to the *realpolitik* of neo-colonialist dependency.

Sankara's Revolution in 1983 thus re-awakened hope for radical change not only in Burkina Faso, but across the Continent. Renouncing the ties Upper Volta had maintained with France and more conservative African states such as Côte d'Ivoire, Sankara re-invented Pan-Africanism through alliances forged with Gadaffi and other leaders sympathetic to his revolutionary ambitions. The CNR attempted to transform Burkinabè society by making the army and the young cadres of the CDRs the vanguard of a highly voluntarist Revolution that sought to develop the country beyond the parameters set by international fiscal bodies, which at the time were forcing many African economies through the punishing rigours of structural adjustment. The revolutionary government sought to transform the city, its architectures and demographics in a massive programme of modernisation and redistribution of resources. *Operation ville blanche*, in which white paint was distributed to the population, made the urban surface a *tabula rasa* on which new monuments to the Revolution could give Ouagadougou a new and dynamic aesthetic contour. Project Zaca, in which whole areas of the city centre were razed to make way for prestigious new developments, involved the break up of traditional social structures based around extended families and attempted to reorganise people into nuclear units in high-rise buildings on the urban periphery.

Sankara recognised cinema as a weapon for development, a tool for consciousness-raising, and a means of affirming the dignity of African cultures and the struggles African peoples had endured. While cinema had received some State support under previous leaders, Sankara's Revolution enabled 'the great leap forward in new cinema infrastructures'. His political and financial support led to a renaissance for FESPACO when the festival welcomed filmmakers from the African diaspora for the first time in 1985. This increased government support benefited not only the Burkinabè film industry but also radical filmmaking across the Continent. Filmmakers such as Cissé and Hondo received support for major African film productions, while FEPACI held

a meeting in Ouagadougou to overhaul its procedures and make it more effective. Under Sankara FESPACO continued to present different aesthetics of African liberation, providing a space for the screening of films such as those of Mambety, Sembene and others often denied wide circulation by the ongoing colonisation of African cinema screens by multi-national corporations.

The Revolution also coincided with the emergence of a national Burkinabè cinema aesthetic. Kaboré's *Wend Kuuni*, made in 1982, was a film that Burkinabè filmmakers would continue to respond to over the following twenty years. It set a precedent in the making of films using local languages and defined a pace, form and subject matter grounded in everyday rural experience, indigenous modes of communality and systems of belief. Filmmakers such as Kaboré and Ouédraogo have sought out forms and structures that evoke traditional patterns of story-telling, so that the collective experience of the cinema screen becomes the modern equivalent of the gatherings of people around the baobab tree, where the griot tells stories that both re-invent and re-affirm the community and its sense of collective identity. The importance of building local film production is particularly apparent in these films as a means of enabling the form of collective speech they embody. The affirmation of the dignity of African cultures and the invention of indigenous cinema aesthetics adequate to their expression are in themselves political acts, though as more recent film productions have demonstrated, when divorced from an emancipatory politics this tendency has on occasion slipped into a more conservative essentialist mode.

The circulation of the figure of Sankara as a symbol of resistance and hope is inextricably linked to cinema's revolutionary promise. A number of films that make reference to him also stress the significance of the cinema screen in Africa as a site of radical gathering and collective transformation. Balufu repeatedly returns to the image of the baobab tree in his documentary *Ten Thousand Years of Cinema* about the FESPACO film festival. The image also recurs in his elegaic documentary *Sankara*. Together these works suggest an alternative temporality to the cultural politics of cinema in the African Continent. The cinema screen is the meeting place of a palimpsest of radical desires on which different historical moments fold and touch in ways that refuse sequential consignment to the past. Haroun's *Bye Bye Africa* demonstrates how, even in the aftermath of prolonged civil war and underdevelopment in Chad that has all but destroyed the film distribution infrastructure, cinema continues to signify hope and the possibility of imagining a better future for young people. The voice of Sankara haunts this film as it articulates a yearning for cinema to still be utopian in its ambitions. Something in the collective experience of cinema still embodies collective aspirations and dreams. A particular kind of territory is thus written through these contemporary cinematic articulations on a map that extends beyond the Continent. In the work of artists such as Isaac Julien, which appears in the art gallery, cinema is referenced through its associated technologies of the moving image to express and embody the diasporic and migratory flow of radical and avant-garde experience, its desires, traumas and memories.

Remembering Revolution

There is a kind of 'screen' through which the African Revolution figures in dominant audio-visual circuits. It is characterised by the political, economic and human catastrophes that have been a feature of many postcolonial African states. This 'screen' of disappointment is the pre-condition for how the West positions itself in relation to its former colonies. It masks the profound re-thinking of the Self that the African Revolution necessitated in both the colonised and the colonisers, as well as for those militants whose trajectories were determined by hopes that were global in their ambitions to liberate and empower. Countless tragic narratives of what became of the African Revolution, and of the aspirations for cinema it harboured, filter down in place of a critical remembering that engages with the initial 'spirit' of radical change that precipitated those event. Appearing again in the present, the films of the armed struggle and the post-Independence Revolutions interrupt the pervasive contemporary disillusionment with radical idealism, which so often labels the innovative and unexpected ideas of the African Revolution as failed experiments without engaging with them critically.

The 'screen of disappointment' hides the extent to which cinema's revolutionary ambitions were, in many instances, successful. Despite setbacks and defeats, extraordinary film cultures emerged from the liberation struggles of the late 1960s and 1970s. Mozambique and Burkina Faso particularly were places where radical cinema defied the destructive aggression of 'colonial revenge' and formed new aesthetics of liberation through which to embody the dignity of peoples emerging from the yoke of colonialism and to tell the stories of their struggles.⁹ Achievements were made against the odds, with new institutions and modes of filmmaking contributing to and inspiring progressive social change, and new forms and practices emerging that built on actual experiences of change and struggle.

The material of the thesis constitutes evidence of what Okwui Enwezor has called 'a cinema based on an ethics of transnational postcolonialism'.¹⁰ It is a cinema that, through the circulation and networks of films and filmmakers and the gathering of audiences around the screen, forms a public sphere in which the African Revolution is the defining Event. Enwezor's formulation, made à propos Black Audio Film Collective, is apposite here in that it allows for material from different moments to be considered together because of a shared set of political and ethical engagements, despite the numerous distinctions that have to be made between, for instance, the agit-prop films of Robert Van Lierop or Med Hondo and recent art works made for the gallery. The thesis argues that there is a way of doing history that heeds those moments of awakening to Revolution's radical promise, moments when 'politics attains primacy over history' so that certain theoretical

⁹ Enwezor describes 'colonial revenge' as 'a subtext of the independence and liberation struggles, whether exacted through imprisonment and exile or through torture and murder.' If we add to this litany the wars of destabilization in Angola and Mozambique, funded and equipped by Rhodesia, South Africa and the USA, the notion is extended to reveal how the forces of global capitalist imperialism are fully implicated in the demise of all the revolutionary projects discussed here. Okwui Enwezor (ed.), *The Short Century, op.cit.*, p.11

¹⁰ Okwui Enwezor, 'Coalition Building: Black Audio Film Collective and Transnational Post-colonialism', in Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (eds), *The Ghosts of Songs: The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982–1998*, 2007 (Liverpool University Press), p.123

ideas can be asserted as facts existing and circulating in the world.¹¹ This makes it possible to speak about a recurring trans-temporal subjectivity of emancipation that finds new aesthetics and modes in different situations, forming an alternative archive of modernity.

At the end of the Introduction the notion of the screen was left suspended, with the promise that manifestations of the concept would follow to enable the necessary theoretical elaboration. This very folding together of diverse places and times is one of the facets of the screen that emerges from the thesis. The notion of the screen has been expanded beyond the banal surface of projection in the cinema, through its metaphorical status as a perceptual surface constructed collectively at the moment of revolutionary awakening, to an understanding of its operations in the present. Today, as screens of various kinds become ubiquitous, it functions as that which filters those indexical cinematic traces of the African Revolution that have survived its tumultuous aftermath, as that which mediates how those past moments of radical transformation come to signify in the postcolonial condition.

In Africa, Europe and across the Atlantic filmmakers and artists continue to respond to the conceptual and aesthetic demands the African Revolution raised. The increasing proliferation of different technologies of the screen over the last thirty years means that the question of how the screen is theorised no longer entirely depends on the sites, operations and effects of cinema. Artists exploring the potentialities and radical histories of the cinematic screen in the space of the gallery grapple with another layer of distance between the experience of the present and those moments of hope and emergence documented in the films made during the liberation struggles. What such works offer is not only a rare glimpse at histories that formed the contemporary world, but also an opportunity to engage critically with the 'spirit' of those Revolutions, to read subjective relationships between the past and the present in the intimate distances of postcoloniality.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, *op.cit.*, p.390

Interview with Licínio Azevedo, 12 July 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

O Licínio pode descrever a vossa formação cinematográfica e política, e como foi que o Licínio foi a Guiné Bissau, e depois em Moçambique?

Eu, no Brasil, era jornalista. Eu só de Porto Alegre, no sul de Brasil. Fazia jornalismo na época da estadia muito tarde e comecei a trabalhar em jornalismo em 1970, mais o menos, e então, o jornalismo no Brasil, no qual a gente trabalhava, de uma certa maneira, era também um instrumento de resistência contra estadia ... Brasileira, num jornal de grande imprensa, mas da esquerda, não é? E então, lá no jornal, através do jornal, eu acompanhava muito as lutas de libertação na África Austral, na Angola, na África Lusófona, Moçambique, nas antigas colónias, e na Guiné Bissau. Foi através do meu trabalho de jornalismo no Brasil que eu fiquei, consegui acompanhar, o que era mesmo...havia muita censura de imprensa no Brasil na época, e mesmo essas lutas de libertação, aqui neste países não eram muito divulgadas na imprensa Brasileira, era mais tratado para terroristas. Não é? Porque movimentos mais o menos Marxistas, esquerda, então havia uma muito pouca informação lá. Nos como trabalhávamos dentro do jornal conseguimos através das agências internacionais acompanhar e ficar conhecendo esse movimento. Então nesse período também como jornalista viajava muito pela América Latina, América do Sul, onde havia Bolívia, Peru, aqueles grandes movimentos da esquerda greves de mineiros de Bolívia, aonde eu fazia alguns trabalhos pela a minha conta, pela imprensa Brasileira. Então... um determinado momento quando houve independência dos países, aqueles colónias, acompanhamos 25 de Abril em Portugal e coincidiu também com um momento muito complicado lá no Brasil, no nosso jornal, que e fomos um pouco pressão pelos militares para emitirem um grande número de jornalistas, mas o menos acabarão com o jornal. Então incluindo nesses que eram pedidos sair do jornal, perder o trabalho, e resolvi então, fiz a opção de tentar fazer visitar esses países que não conheci, e comecei. Já não havia voos regulares para Angola, por exemplo, porque era num momento lá de invasão Sul Africana em Angola. Então fui para Portugal, consegui chegar em Angola, era muito difícil andar com vistos, e eu já não trabalhava oficialmente como jornalista já na época. Então houve a continuidade de ir para Guiné Bissau, lá em Lisboa surgiu para trabalhar na formação de jornalistas no jornal *No Pintcha*, que é um jornal que saia duas/três vezes por semana no Guiné Bissau. Isso foi na 1976. Então foi para Guiné Bissau, junto com meu companheiro que conheci em Portugal, era jornalista também, e lá paralelamente eu trabalho no jornalismo. Recolhei histórias sobre a guerra de libertação, de independência, e trabalhei essas histórias de uma maneira, mais o menos, no meu estilo, que é uma mistura, quer dizer, é relacionado com a minha formação de jornalista que se escreveu de uma certa maneira como diferente, como novo jornalismo, e tudo isso. Uma fixura de ficção, mais com histórias reais. Então esse livro foi publicado em Brasil, saio no Brasil, saio no Guiné Bissau, e então foi através de esse livro que eu fui convidado para vir para Moçambique para trabalhar no Instituto Nacional de Cinema em 1977, por aí, através do Ruy Guerra, que é um cineasta Moçambicano

que viveu no Brasil, que tinha...vinha trabalhar no Instituto de Cinema, na organização, estava essencialmente criando o Instituto. E convido me para vir junto para fazer um trabalho, semelhante que tinha feito na Guiné Bissau, que era escrever histórias sobre a guerra de independência, que pudesse ser utilizado para com base guiões, ou ter scripts para filmes. Então foi assim que eu vim aqui, meu trabalho que como tal na Norte como escritor, lá na Cabo Delegado, recolhi e fiquei três meses, e a primeira pessoa com quem eu trabalhei conheci justamente é um colega meu Armando de Souza, não sei si já entrevistas. Aqui na época ele era, mais o menos, como... político no Cabo Delegado, e ele governou meu trabalho para recolher eu fiquei três meses lá nas antigas zonas libertadas de Mueda, e pronto recolhendo, vindo, depoimentos dos camponeses e guerrilheiros sobre acontecimentos da guerra. A guerra de Libertação.

E essas histórias foram publicados no Coração Forte?

Em Portugal era *Coração Forte*, aqui na época era *Tempo*, e tinha uma edição de *Vidas* também, que na época era dirigido pelo Sol de Carvalho, que é outro cineastas/realizador agora. Então publico correlates do povo aramado, dois exemplares, são dois volumes, não é? Porque eram tiragens muito grandes quase 30 minutos exemplares cada uma, foi um livro com histórias da guerra de independência mais conhecido na época, mais divulgado, e...

Então esse foi um trabalho feito para o Instituto de Cinema...

Para o Instituto de Cinema. E essas histórias depois serviram de base para numeras coisas, para bandas desenhadas, para programas radio fónicos, fizeram algumas coisas para cinema também, desenho animação e servir de base também inicial, muito inicial para o primeiro filme de ficção feito em Moçambique, a metragem foi *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*. Foi uma co-produção com a Jugoslávia. Quer dizer foi a base do script, a ideia inicial, mas depois aquilo completamente mudado, não tem nenhuma relação praticamente a história do filme com o livro, com as histórias do livro.

O Licínio pode descrever essa experiência de transformação, das histórias, e essa co-produção foi um exemplo do amizade socialistas? Pode descrever a realidade essa experiência?

Os Tempos dos Leopardos, sim. Exactamente. A minha experiência foi bastante limitada porque eu depois entrei em conflito com as pessoas lá do lado da Jugoslávia, porque eu fui para Jugoslávia, então por neste caso, Patriaquin, era um escritor Moçambicano, agora vive em Portugal que trabalhava na cinema aqui, e com quem eu trabalho junto até hoje em dia, e fomos para lá para trabalhar no script com os Jugoslávios, porque na realidade, estavam com todas as tecnologias, o grandes equipamentos, a equipa principal, era tudo deles, não é? Como até hoje com essas co-produções nos filmes, filmes com produções Portuguesas aqui, aqui utilizam os actores, usam alguma coisa, a história, então é uma coisa muito imposta, os grandes bens eram deles. Então desta vez foi bastante trágico, que nos chegamos lá, prontos para ficar lá três meses, para rever o guião a partir da a nossa história, e eles apresentaram o script já pronto, o guião já pronto, que era completamente absurdo, que não tinha nenhuma relação com uma realidade Moçambicana, nem tinham a mínima ideia do o que que foi a guerra de libertação. Então, aqui colocavam helicópteros, os aviões, os guerrilheiros da FRELIMO com aviões, helicópteros uma coisa non-existente. Ficaram muito admirados quando nos explicamos que eles caminhavam, fizeram toda guerra a pé, não..., então nesse sentido foi uma relação difícil. Mas depois sobre a filmagem em si, eu não posso falar, porque quem trabalho lá foi o Camilo, foi assistente de realização. Eu nesse processo do script, entrei em conflito com os Jugoslávios os cá e fora.

Então, afinal o filme não foi um sucesso aqui em Moçambique, mas não foi uma...

Sim foi um sucesso em Moçambique porque, aquele era o primeiro filme que mostrava a todos o Moçambicanos, tudo que todas pessoas conheciam, filmaram em Moçambique, muita publicidade, mostrava guerra da libertação, mas era mesmo o próprio cinematográfico era uma coisa muito básica, primária, com as cenas absolutamente ridículos. Mas isso é uma outra coisa, uma opinião pessoal minha. Não é a mesma coisa que dizerem os outros.

O Licínio pode descrever um pouco a visão do...as ideais da guerra, e o que eles tentaram fazer com Instituto de Cinema?

O Ruy Guerra, eu sei que ele teve muitos conflitos. Não acompanhei exactamente, porque meu trabalho era bem paralela, primeiro tive envolvido só nesse trabalho, de escrita, foi o primeiro período que ele esteve aqui, então praticamente trabalhava em casa escrevendo, depois eu sei que ele fez um filme muito tenro, muito importante aqui, que é o pouco... tem uma grande relação como o que se desenvolveu depois, que era *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*. Não sei se conheces? Que era – não era exactamente um docu-drama – era uma filmagem de uma pesa de teatro, no é? Popular. Mas aonde ele entrevia bastante foi na cinematográfica, era uma coisa que era um filme muito bonita, muito bem feita. Mas depois eu trabalhei com ele só escrevendo textos para alguns documentários pequenos, mas se ele tinha um projecto não consegui realizar-lho, inclusivo, teve assim um grande documentário que ele queria fazer sobre uma grande festival de canto e dança que teve no estádio da Machava, e ele filmo, participei nas filmagens também, um coisa muito bonita as imagens, mas depois de esse tempo nem concluiu a montagem, não monto. Mesma coisa, na época havia esse processo político dos comprometidos com o regime colonial que eu acompanhei praticamente tudo o processo, era reuniões assim de 10 ou 12 horas por dia, com muitas pessoas que tiveram uma ligação com o regime colonial, e com a participação do Presidente Samora Machel, que dirigia. Então ele filmo tudo aquilo, com dezenas de horas de material, e também não monto, não fez nada. Porque ele fico...eu sei que foi feito um filme depois, mas por um Holandese, ele então...quer dizer uma relação pelo como eu acompanhei, foi um pouco confuso, mais foi positiva a medida que ele trouxe uma equipa técnicos, muitos fortes de Brasil, que serviu para a formação das pessoas aqui, muitas das pessoas foram formados por esses, de produção, câmara, isso, esses brasileiros que vieram por ele, depois foi criando a Kanema também, houve uma coisa, mas ele realizou nada parece.

E esse foi uma 'agreement' entre os governos de Brasil ou não?

Não. Não tinha nenhuma relação com o governo Brasileiro porque na época ainda era estadia militar no Brasil, era e foi mais grupos, e através de Ruy Guerra, pessoas individualmente e tal. Também havia Cubanos, havia na montagem uma moça Italiana, havia pessoas da França, pessoas da Inglaterra também.

O que foi as ideais políticas e éticos que atraíram esses grupos, esses indivíduos, que foi o objectivos do FRELIMO, mas também da situação que foi visto como uma possibilidade para essas pessoas?

Acho que depende muito de quem são essas pessoas. Havia grupos, por exemplo, havia grupo dos Ingleses que estavam baseados au Instituto Nacional de Cinema, que conheci, porque eram de outros movimentos que apoiavam a guerra - a luta - de libertação. Simon Hartog e Polly Gastor, etc. Depois no caso mais específico da França e, Itália, e alguns Alemaghes, com relações pessoais, pessoas indivíduos. E no caso do Brasil, acho que tinha muito haver com o próprio Ruy Guerra, e a figura de Ruy Guerra, com o facto de ele ter um projecto aqui, e com a direcção no Instituto Nacional de Cinema, com o facto de ser um país que falava a mesma língua, inclusivo, o primeiro filme na verdade, o grande filme feito em Moçambique, foi feito por um, também isso é importante, por Celso, 25, foi directo da independência, então esse filme

foi muito conhecido, muito divulgado em Brasil. Então havia na época aquele desejo Brasileiro, devido da censura e tal, conhecer esses movimentos de libertação, e Brasil também estava passando num processo de resistência semelhante contra a estadia militar. E normalmente as pessoas de cinema, jornalismo, e tal, são da esquerda, publicistas, então eu acho que no Brasil conheceu muito desses aspectos e deu lógico a curiosidade de conhecer uma África Portuguesa, e a personalidade de Ruy Guerra, o movimento de Ruy Guerra. São coisas bem...depende do grupo das pessoas, da nacionalidade, já por exemplo, Cubanos que tiveram bastante influencia, era uma relação do governo.

Pode descrever o papel do Instituto de Comunicação Social?

O Instituto de comunicação Social era uma outra coisa completamente diferente. Que esta um pouco relacionado a origem da televisão Moçambicana, então foi criado o Instituto como uma coisa específica para informação para o campo. Então era inicialmente uma programa de radio, depois quando eu sai do Instituto de Cinema, quando, mais ou menos, paro este projecto de desenvolvimento do Instituto... com mas o menos alugados, e deixo evoluir, evoluir sem curso, então eu fui para trabalhar lá, bem no principio mas – estava dizendo estava mas relacionado com televisão porque só existia uma coisa muito pequena ainda, então não me lembro exactamente quando que foi criada a televisão aqui dentro da FACIM, um circuito fechado de televisão, televisão experimental, e foi durante uma semanas, então também participei junto com Patriquim nos erramos intrigados fazer o noticiário. E também fazemos um filme na época, que eu não tenho copia, talvez a Moira Forjas, não sei si conheces, tem em Portugal, é um filme sobre a primeira vez que as pessoas assistiam televisão nos bairros, que havia postes colectivos espalhados em alguns bairros na cidade.

Qual é o nome de esse filme?

Esse filme como se-chamava? *A Televisão no Bairro?*, não. Esqueci o nome, tenho que procurar.

E o filme existe em Moçambique?

Eu acho que não existe em Moçambique. Era um vídeo. Não sei si a Moira tem. Posso tentar lhe informar, pedir para uma copia, *Televisão no Bairro* - acho que esse era o titulo. Então, a televisão perseguiu seu percurso, e o Instituto evoluiu é já a função da propria televisão também, foi criado o programa...ai eu foi convidado trabalhar lá, antes de fazer o jornal, o jornal mensal *O Campo*, depois no certo momento para criar um sector de vídeo. Onde surgiu esse programa *Canal Zero*, era um programa semanal, que fazia amostrar na televisão, e foi onde eu comecei a...passei para a área de realização, porque antes só escrevia no Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Então começamos, mas ou menos, o processo, aprender juntos, da primeira vez a lidar equipamentos de vídeo, um estúdio, tudo isso, e então foi um sistema assim, um trabalho minha e dos outros. Eu mais na área de direcção geral da coisa. Então e ai começamos fazer experiências assim, em termos de linguagem. Era *O Poço*, por exemplo, que é um vídeo educativo mudo, podia ser compreendido o pais inteiro practicação da língua, e começamos a misturar nesses programas semanais, este documentários, as vezes mais jornalismo, um pouco de ficção, docu-drama, essas coisas. Ali começamos a desenvolver um pouco, eu pessoalmente mais no tipo de linguagem que eu uso.

E então o docu-drama foi o filme usado no Canal Zero - a forma do docu-drama?

Sim, foi usado. Mas foi muito primitiva ainda, muito básica, porque eu próprio não sabia fazer exactamente as coisas direitas porque não tinha ninguém informado para montagem, estávamos todos nos formando no mesmo tempo. Em montagem, em câmara, no som. Então era uma formação colectiva conjunta. Eu tenho copias de esses filmes aqui na Ebanó.

Essas exemplar parecem bastante importante porque ha questão de língua, da voz, das próprias pessoas que, para a primeira vez temem oportunidade de usar a voz e as suas próprias imagens, mas também o contexto político de Moçambique nessa altura quando FRELIMO torna ser mais um pouco autoritário havia essa contexto da guerra, da clandestinidade, e para mi é um coisa muito interessante, essa forma pode ser criado nesse contexto.

Foi justamente mais ou menos nesse período que aconteceu a morte do Presidente Samora Machel, ou um pouco depois, um pouco depois nos fazemos uma experiência que foi interessante também, que foi uma co-produção independente nossa, eu já não estava na Comunicação Social, acho já estava na Kanema, criando a Ebano, o Instituto de Cinema e a França, que foi *A Colheita do Diabo* que foi uma ficção de 50 minutos, fizemos com todo pessoal do Instituto de Cinema, uma boa maquina que ainda restava e tal, mas já com vídeo.

A Colheita do Diabo foi feita em vídeo. E esse filme foi muito importante para desenvolvimento do docu-drama?

Sim. Mas ai já é mais...era ficção praticamente, mas com personagens...havia actores profissionais, mas os principais eram antigos combatentes, não eram actores profissionais, mesmo viveu seu próprio papel, nesse sentido foi importante.

As 'performances' são bom, pode descrever como o Licínio conseguiu a ter um performance com pessoas que não são profissionais?

Ai é muito, depende mas normalmente as pessoas, aqueles que estão representando tem uma relação com a sua própria vida, então não é um uso psicológico de vivência das pessoas, agora nesse filme, por exemplo, que vamos começar agora tem um personagem que é fotografo no mercado, no dumbanenguei, e é Mangerman, de Alemanha, então esse que esta experimentando roupa é Mangermano, o papel. Não são todos, não é isso. Tem *Desobediência*, por exemplo, já viste *Desobediência*? Essas pessoas estão vivendo com errada condições a sua própria vida, reproduzindo. Então, quer dizer, muitas vezes eu faço um trabalho um pouco assim. Psicológico com as coisas. Jogo um pouco em termos das vivências as pessoas, quer dizer, varia muito, dependendo qual é o filme né? Mas depois tem montagem, tem isso, tem isso.

Mas também Desobediência um aspecto que é importante no filme, é possível ver bem o processo de fazer o filme, com o câmaraman no shot...

Isso na *Desobediência* quis amostrar isso.

Quais foram os ideias, os éticos, com essa decisão de demonstrar o processo de fazer o filme?

Sim. Isso surgiu durante a própria filmagem, porque, quer dizer, as pessoas estavam a passando no processo, assim quase uma catalítica de tático, que estavam se vendo a família, e inimigos revendo pela a primeira vez, e ainda mais trabalhando juntos com muita intensidade e havia problemas atras que não estavam resolvidos, então no intervalo das filmagens eles continuavam, a historia continuava evoluir, a historia pessoal deles, da famílias, então eu disse não, aqui não podemos interromper a filmagem, então ai pensei em fazer uma especie de 'making of', mostrar o processo, aproveitando esses momentos. Claro conheci também manipular um pouco, procurei dentro da historia, criei algumas situações, mas apartir de uma coisa real, e começo acontecer durante a filmagem.

Pode falar um pouco mais sobre a voz e o que vocês estavam a fazer com uma ideia de um filme mudo?

Sim, esse da Comunicação Social, esse que eu falei que era mudo. Sim ali basicamente eram experiências ainda, foi uns dos primeiros vídeos que fizemos muito simples, era uma coisa educativa, então foi simplesmente uma opção porque tinha que ser amostrado nas províncias do pais, na época não tínhamos

condições para fazer subtítulos ainda, o equipamento era muito básico da Comunicação Social, o vídeomatique, o equipamento e estúdio incompleto. Então foi mesmo uma experiência de tentar utilizar a história de cinema, si não mudo, transmitiu uma informação de uma forma mais acessível para o país inteiro. Simplesmente isso, mais uma pouca evolução de isso, é que a maior parte dos meus trabalhos, quase todos, só nas raras ocasiões, são falados nas línguas locais, justamente porque uma questão de expressão, de expressividade das pessoas, porque como não são actores, estão vivendo as suas próprias histórias normalmente e eles idioma deles é nas línguas locais, não é Português não é? Então quer dizer tem uma certa relação, o mudo, porque o Português não é uma língua de domínio, eles não consegui se expressar, expressar sentimentos com Português, então por isso que em filmes...Esse agora é em Português em mas é em Maputo, em cidade, todas pessoas falam, em qualquer sitio na província que eu vou no campo é impossível fazer qualquer coisa Portuguesa. Nesse sentido é preferível ter esse filme do mudo então, e até as pessoas nem lêem não sabem ler no colectivo. É uma grande limitação.

Adeus DDR é muito interessante como filme poste-comunista e estava pensar se é uma tema lá com a questão da voz, e os novos tipos de voz que pode ser exprimindo nesse período dos anos 1990, acho que isso é foi um novo contexto, não sei si se eu exprimi tudo muito bem o que eu estava tentar dizer?

De certa maneira, porque aqui tivemos muitos problemas com esse filme, que o filme levou muitos anos até ser amostrado na televisão. Porque era um assunto, ainda é, um assunto muito complexo, e na aquela época era muito mais complicado ainda num país que estava em guerra, voltando estes milhares de pessoas sem dinheiro, sem condições, e lembro que nos fizemos, estávamos na Kanema na época - não havia Ebano ainda - e havia um clube da juventude na frente, então nos organizamos e botamos o anúncio no jornal e convidamos, fizemos seções das áreas durante dois dias, de mínimo uma hora para os Magermans, foram assim alguns milhares assistir o filme, e depois, dois ou três dias depois iam fazer uma manifestação muito violenta, eles partiram lojas no Altômae, e tudo isso, confrontes com a policia, e o Ministro do Interior acuso o filme de ter provocado essas assaltações, e então o que aconteceu não era assim tão diferente, porque o filme depois levou muitos anos até passar na televisão, não passo - só recentemente passo, parece que faz dois anos que o filme não passou na televisão, na TVM, aqui. Não dizem que, 'Não...', mas também não havia crime para parar o filme, então na verdade o contexto não era tão diferente assim.

...

O Instituto de Comunicação Social era importante para isso, porque tinha, havia cinemaografo na época dos filmes nas aldeias depois na guerra destruiu-se. E tinha centros de Comunicação Social nas aldeias, com alfalante também az vezes faziam projecões de vídeos, então tinha uma dinâmica apartir do campo, na cidade do campo, e de transformação social, então não sei se de tudo isso foi primeiro golpe, mais sofreu com da guerra, tudo se fazia no campo. Depois fico muito difícil, mais o Instituto estava bem relacionado com o projecto de desenvolvimento social.

Durante alguns anos umas das temas dos filmes foi os efeitos da guerra na vidas muitas diferentes das pessoas, mas agora o que são os temas mais importantes nos filmes do Ebano?

Quer dizer, um determinado, sempre tiveram muitos relacionados com as fontes de financiamento, também os interesses de televisões de fora e tal. Então no primeiro momento era guerra. Então é como conseguimos fazer Maracuene, depois é o fim da guerra, depois consegui fazer com a BBC o aves antepassados, os refugiados, depois - então esta muito com a evolução - e nossos filmes são com raras

excepções relacionados com a realidade do país. Então primeiro teve a guerra, depois teve a volta dos refugiados, a reconstrução do país, que é *A Guerra de Água*, e depois de isso também esta muito relacionado com as fontes de financiamentos, fizemos vários filmes, três filmes sobre a vida em reservas, como “Metares”, “Machato”, “Malhanga Lua Ponte”, é relacionado com o interesse da fundação fortes financiando esse tipo de coisa. Quer dizer projectos assim bem pessoais, individuais, que não tiveram nem...foi *Desobediência* por exemplo consegui, mas ai já duvido, já no segundo momento não é, as pessoas já conhecem-me um pouco mais, já tenho mas acesso a fontes de financiamento, já conhecem meus outros filmes, e como um grande bazar, esse filme que vamos fazer agora que é uma ficção, sobe um tempo muito antigo, quinze anos atras. E um outro projecto que temos também que possivelmente vamos fazer no final desse ano se conseguimos completar o financiamento, é a historia das prostitutas que logo depois da independência foram enviadas para um centro de reeducação no mato em Niassa. Sim, já conseguimos algum dinheiro, é uma ficção uma metragem, mas a minha ideia também é trabalhar com as próprias prostitutas de hoje a viverem a historia daquelas de 1975. Então é uma ficção completamente, mas tem uma relação com a realidade através do casting e tal, e então, quer dizer, esta um pouco relacionado com a situação do país, a evolução, como a gente trabalha muito com documentário tem que estar relacionado com isso, e agora já nessa fase a gente pode fazer mais fantasia, e conseguindo recursos fazer coisas que já eram projectos antigas também. Porque na época não havia condições de financiamento.

Interview with Brigitte Bagnol, 7 July 2006, Maputo, Mozambique

You arrived in 1984?

I arrived in 1984 and I start working with the ICS. So I start working with video, photography and research, and I start working in Nampula, in the North of the country. There was a team of Brazilian assistants work in the ICS, including Licínio Azevedo, and we were starting a video programme called *Canal Zero*, don't know if you heard about it? In a certain way it was a kind of continuation of the *Kuxa Kanema* that was done on film. *Kuxa Kanema* was on film and it was broadcast and shown in the villages with mobile unit by the INC. So *Canal Zero* was similar to *Kuxa Kanema* but it was on video and it was also broadcasted and shown in the villages with a mobile unit. So we were starting *Canal Zero* and we were basically introducing video into the country. And, I took the first camera to Nampula. Before Mozambique I was in Italy and I was a camerawoman. So I start training people in Nampula and we start training a cameraman, a person doing editing, and a person was doing the journalism, you know, was the director of the little documentary. It was mainly documentary and you can see those kind of video in the ICS on Avenida Amilcar Cabral. And there you have also a very good archive of the documentaries that were done. I think they start in 1983 or 1984; maybe there are some in 1983 but mainly it starts in 1984.

So that was set up by the Ministry of Information?

It was the Ministry of Information. It was financed mainly by UNICEF, if I am not mistaken. I don't know what would inform you better about this. Myself, Licínio Azevedo, were working at the Social Communication Institute at that time. But maybe Cabaço can tell you better. But basically what I remember is that the Social Communication Institute had a lot of money from a lot of projects from

UNICEF. So UNICEF was financing this idea of having popular correspondent, as we used to call them, and we were training journalists who were farmers, to teach them to do little article on what was happening in their village, in their cooperative. And this was published in a journal which still exists called *O Campo*. *Campo* is a field you know. There was the journal *O Campo* and there was this *Canal Zero*, they were the two main instruments of communication between, lets say, town, because they were done at central level and urban, but it was in communication with those popular correspondents. For us it was a kind of way of democratisation of information, decentralisation information, and in a certain kind of trying to give possibilities to farmers mainly to get access to talk, to a voice. It was very ambitious and extremely political and I think its interesting to link the two because it was not only, or maybe in the ICS there was a possibility for a certain period of time, to link this possibility to give a voice to people through the two means: video and a newspaper. Because of course all the information we would receive at the ICS through the popular correspondents was not used only in the newspaper but also was an issue that could be dealt with a video programme *Canal Zero*. So in 1983 and 1984 was already during the war, so some of the possibility to explore the information given by the copyright correspondent implied that people had to go, like military column, to a certain area. But some times a journalist from the ICS and the video team would travel and do some video – in war zones of course. So there is a series of videos on cooperatives, on schools, and so on. There were a lot of documentaries on health issues, on agricultural issues, because of this UNICEF project, and its objective let's say. Because, of course, the objective was to give messages to a community about what is diarrhoea, and, you know, about nutrition, or how to sow, how to plant, how to improve skills.

How were these stories generated? Were there specific issues that the team wanted to address? Or these stories were generated from the grass roots? How did it work?

There was a team of journalists, and Licínio was one of them, and there were also other Brazilian journalists at central level in Maputo. And there were two other journalists in Nampula, there was also one other Brazilian journalist in Pemba. I don't remember at what stage Pemba started producing video, I'm not sure they started really. I think that Maputo and Nampula were for a long time the only ones who were producing video. So Nampula was one of the first province from the country was able to show its reality even at central level, even when the television was only broadcasted in Maputo, because only later on that the television was broadcasted all over the country. But the only information, the main information, was from Maputo or from Nampula, because of course television had no means to travel all over the country. So what did you ask me? How the information was generated? I think that those teams of journalists were analysing. Maputo was receiving from all over the country, but Nampula we were receiving the information from our correspondent. So, I mean, the people who had access to the new was doing a selection and would decide. I mean, it was the work of the director, the production director. In this case, it was this Brazilian journalist called Trinidad, he would say, 'Ok, this is interesting, we need to develop this issue'. Because, you know, sometimes things could be published in the newspaper as he knew only the text of the correspondent, or sometimes a team or a reporter would go there just to try to give more whole mix in this kind of news. And it was the same for the videos. There was a kind of agenda already, there was, if you look at the newspaper of that time even *Notícias* or *Domingo*, I mean there was a kind of agenda; it was fighting against the armed bandits. So all the effort, and our effort at that time, was to resist to the bandits and to give hope that the war will end soon. It was messages of hope, resistance messages, you know,

about resistance. People were able to organise themselves and maybe an expression of this is the fiction film that Lício and myself did together, the film was called, in Portuguese *A Colheita do Diabo – The Devil's Harvest*. I think that this film is a kind of summary of the ideology that all the information was about at this stage. It was about resisting, and this film is about resisting, its about the siege of a village and the village is resisting the bandits that were around and it was the way we were feeling ourselves in Maputo or in Nampula or we were feeling ourselves in Mozambique itself. Everybody in a certain way was under siege, and so all the newspaper and video material was trying to evoke and to show that the struggle was leading to a victory. That it was necessary to continue to fight.

So your reasons for coming to Mozambique from Italy, was it primarily political?

Yes of course, as with most people. But for the Brazilian team it was absolutely political because they were political people and they had had political problems in Brazil and had to leave Brazil. Some were exiled in Europe and then decide to come after Independence to Mozambique. Others were revolutionaries, they wanted to join a Revolution, like Lício, like myself. We were excited and willing to participate and be part of this. Basically most of the NGOs were working in Mozambique during this period were from the North Europe, Norway, and they were mostly political organisations. They were supporting FRELIMO, it was mainly political. And most of the people were coming were political.

So it seems like this project worked very well. I am curious about how this differed from earlier more speculative projects like, for instance, Jean Rouch or John Godard's video projects. How did these differ? This projects seems to have worked really well and taken off, despite the very different circumstances of the war, whereas Godard's project seemed to be discussed mainly as a failure.

I don't know, I mean, I have always heard about the project of Jean Rouch and Godard, but I don't know practically what they achieved. I have never seen anything produced during this project and I have no notion of how well spread was the distribution of those kinds of thing.

So distribution was the key...

Of course, distribution must always be a key issue, but even now, because when we say that the television can reach all the country, we know that there is no television in the villages. So it's still the main towns where there is electricity – it's not like in Brazil where you have even in poor rural areas electricity and people have television. Television is still something for elite and I think still only for the bourgeoisie. I'm not sure that in every setting even when there is electricity most of the people have television. You have the same problem in relation to radio; people cannot even afford it – they have to barter to listen to the radio. So distribution and access to video or cinemas has always been a problem, even when people were saying, 'Ah yes, we would go to the villages and with the screen all the village would come', but how many places could they go? It was quite difficult. The maintenance of the power, petrol, access. You should interview the people that were the drivers, and the people who ran these mobile units, who can give you more information. But even for us, *Canal Zero* was shown basically in the television in Maputo, and we would show it in a few places in Nampula town. But the mobile units...I mean, they could work three months and then they would stop working because there was no electricity but because there was a problem with the car and so on. And at that time everything was difficult, to get a spare part for a car was a nightmare because you need to get foreign money, in US dollars, and buy it outside the country and everything was extremely complex.

So how long was it before the situation of the war of destabilisation really started to hamper the ability of people running the mobile cinema units to get the films across the country?

I think even when it started, when this ICS project of video mobile units began, there was already the war. In some provinces, some districts, you know it has always been like that...it grows and starts all over the country little by little, but there has always been some space even if the possibility to go outside the village became less and less at that time. But already in 1983 in Nampula was under siege, it was necessary to go out by military column or something like that. I think the project already started in the worst circumstances.

So what was it like? I mean what were your experiences of training people, farmers and so on to become journalists and make them write stories? How did you go about it? Are there any particular experiences that you remember that exemplify that time?

I think that the people were selected by some kind of political institution within the Ministry. They would ask the district to send people. So those people were coming from very remote villages and from situations that we couldn't really understand what they were like. I mean, people were coming from very difficult kinds of situations. And of course there was kind of manual or guideline for the training and everything, so they had to have some kind of minimal education, maybe 5th class, 6th class or 4th class, so they could write something. The training was given to them on how to do an introduction, to develop one idea and to conclude in one page and to send it to the delegation at provincial level in the capital. And only this because for them to have paper, to have a pen or a typewriter (most of them were hand-written) and the capacity, the possibility, for them to send the documents to the central office in the provincial capital was extremely difficult. But what I remember of the training, many men, this amazing situation where all those people coming from war situations would meet and have some kind of rest, of peace, taking them out of their daily life just to be able, during one week, to share their experience and to learn to write, and then go back and they were completely isolated. So most of them would get lost after a while, because it was very difficult to maintain contact with them. And because there was not the possibility to have on-going kind of training or supervision, I mean there was war, people disappeared. And then months later they would send a new report. But it was not very well organised, nobody was really following them personally because it was not really possible. But the system was working and if you go to the ICS maybe you will find thousands upon thousands of letters, and maybe looking at some of them you will have an idea of what they were like. Maybe just looking at the first journal *O Campo* will give you an idea of the kind of news that they would keep – the delivery of a tractor, distribution of bags of maize... A lot was about the need to produce. There was a period when all production in the country went down: agricultural production, trading, everything went down because of this kind of centralised trade, you know. People had to sell to the government, had to sell same price, so they lost the incentive of producing. And most of the trade became a black market kind of trade, or trading just stopped because there was no transport, there was nothing, only the national state trade system and it was it inefficient and inadequate. The price they were offering was not good enough, so the production collapsed. And the kind of information they were giving in the newspaper: how good is production at this cooperative, or how well this other did, it was this kind of a socialist message of emulation. They managed to produce more than their objective than the goal, because, you know, it was all about achieving goals and doing more than the goal and it was this kind of competition about the goals. And there was a kind of message...but it was always balanced, you know,

about attacks on columns or attacks on villages. It quite well balanced, the attacks, resistance, production, health and the agriculture, so it was quite interesting.

Your impression of that time, was it of a whole society, a rural society in a process of revolution? To what extent was that the kind of feeling that you had at that time? It always strikes me that the question of who always asks the questions is a question of power and so it is one of the reasons why I am so interested in these projects with videos to train people so they can articulate in their own voices. To what extent did you have a feeling of that at that time?

The three people I worked with in 1984 in Nampula, I cannot say that they were farmers, but I mean, they were poor, urban – two of them – no, one, one was this kind of so-called ‘assimilated’ person, his father was a nurse, so he was well-educated, and spoke and wrote Portuguese very well. But the other two, one was a Makonde, so his family was participating in the struggle for independence. He himself was born or educated in Tanzania at the FRELIMO school. He was an orphan, educated by FRELIMO and was extremely poor. He was, I don’t remember at the beginning how it started, I don’t know if he was an editor and then he turned to be a director or boss. But the other one also was a Macua from Nampula, but also from a very background. But even if you speak now with some of the people who work at the Institute National de Cinema, if you speak with Gabriel, I mean those people were recruited in the villages and in the school and some of them didn’t even choose, I don’t know if they told you the story?

Gabriel told me the story about how he was chosen to work in cinema and he didn’t know what that meant at the time.

Yeah, what that meant. So it was really practically about poor people having access to the means of communication. But I mean, as we see on gender issue now and more recently, we say it’s not because its woman that they will struggle for women issues. It’s not because increasing the number of women ministers and directors that we are going to solve this, because we cannot. It is the means for most women to be able to adopt the same kind of new feeling and politics of attitude or whatever on gender. So maybe we can address and discuss this kind of issue, but it was really about opening the possibility, also because at this stage there was no class, this was the reality.

What do you mean there was no class?

There was no social class in the way you can see the social class here.

You mean in Nampula?

In Mozambique, in a certain way. You have the military, you have people who had access to power, but the social class was not based really on an history of access to power, or on an history of access to means, because the previous colonial kind of class, African class, were the traditional leaders. And the traditional leaders were outside of the political structure. I’m not saying that they did not exist, but the conflict was between the political power, between FRELIMO and, to a certain extent, with the traditional leaders. And FRELIMO was new. They had the power but the power was not based on anything else than the fact that they won the struggle against the Portuguese. And there was no middle class. Maybe there were some kind of individual kind of people, but it was not really organised as you can see it now more clearly. So most of the people were involved in this kind of possibility to develop their skills and to turn themselves into journalists were really from poor setting.

So the reports that they would write they would be written in Portuguese?

They were written in Portuguese. All of the articles were written in Portuguese.

Why was that necessary?

I think it was part of the politics of the country. This notion of national unity, and the notion of accessibility to all people, and because the cost and the possibility to produce were very low, there was no possibility to translate, and to put voice-over, and to put the title, so sometimes people would translate but mainly the interview would be done in Portuguese.

To what extent was the choice of Nampula strategic to this question of national unity?

Yes it was the North of the country. At some stage at the ICS one of the videos we did, Lícínio and myself, was a silent film. I don't know if you heard about this? It's called *O Poço*, meaning *The Well*. Because very quickly we understood that language was a problem, so we thought that the best way to deal with this issue was to try to go back to Chaplin and to those silent films, and to transmit, to give messages in a kind of international language, you know.

And was it a success?

Of course, it was amazing, it was beautiful. The problem of language was addressed by having people translate into the local language during the screening of the video or film. You know, kind of simultaneous translation.

So did you attend quite a few of these screenings?

Yes lots – because the work that we were doing research on the impact of the means of communication. So we were doing analysis of the newspaper of *O Campo*, of the video, and there was another initiative by the ICS called 'Centro de Comunicação Social', its social communication centre. It still exists in some area. It's a tape recorder, two speakers on the top of a big tower in the middle of the village, and those correspondents were trained in addition to produce news for the paper, to produce news for the community and to give voice to the villages. To take discussion of the issues to the villages and to produce little messages or comment related to health, agriculture, nutrition and such like.

That was in a sense an activity that could continue on after the video was made, that was more on-going...?

There were different things, but the correspondent could be an element of that, because when there was a correspondent, the correspondent could transform himself into a technician to operate this kind of centre. But there were not many centres. At the most there were twenty or something like that. And the newspaper *O Campo* would always speak about those centres and then they open another one, and its role would be to function at the centre of the village. Now UNICEF and other organisations are still financing kind of projects like that, but instead of being this centre, they call it a local radio. Of course, it is broadcast to a wider area, you know, but this the same idea, to have local people looking at their own reality, educated and trained on health issues, HIV, nutrition, agriculture, or ecological, or gender etc and be able to deal with the information and to use it to... so the idea is still the same, it is still there.

Could you explain more about the relationship between the ICS and FRELIMO?

The Social Communication Institute was FRELIMO, because it was part of the Ministry of Information. I think there was tension, but I mean I was not in the political kind of direction – managerial situations, I never heard about it directly, but I understand that there were. But I have never been involved in those kinds of discussions. And it was about the ambiguity, the difficulty and the balance that needed to be found so as to maintain the funding from international donor, and at the same time the kind of auto-censorship that we had to do to what we thought, to what we were seeing or what the correspondents were sending and what was politically correct at that time. So it has always been like that and it will always be like that in a certain way. There is always a kind of compromise to be done.

So by auto-censorship you mean there wasn't like FRELIMO, some outside body came and said, 'This has to be cut out'?

Censorship was at different levels. I mean there was a situation whereby a twenty, fifteen, five, six, however many people were killed, but this couldn't be the main news, because it was not adding anything new to what is known in a situation of war. And you want to maintain some hope, so it is a kind of censorship in one way, you know. Then there was censorship in relation to economical situation, because people were starving, there was corruption, there was black-market... we would never tackle those kind of issues because it was not acceptable. So sometimes you had images of people chewing... when sometimes there was not enough food. And there was not enough. People were queuing – we were queuing – everybody was queuing. Maybe myself, I had the possibility to have access to the only one shop was selling foods and goods in US dollars, but everybody was queuing for everything, for petrol, everything was in limited quantity. So there were a lot of problems, there was nothing in the shops, the shops were empty. There were no bars, because in the bars there was nothing. There were a lot of problems. But those kind of problems were not discussed.

So how long did that project go on for?

I'm not sure, I think in a certain sense after the idea of this project evolved and is still going on. Of course it has been diluted in the political and the cultural scene of Mozambique because now they are plenty of newspapers and plenty of television, the television is all over the country, plenty of radio, the political situation changed, the economical situation changed. There are more journalists in the country and everything. Oh, I forgot to say that as well as *O Campo* the paper, there was *Aldeia Comunal – Comunal Village* – which was a radio programme for the communal villages. Then there was *Canal Zero* and the Communication Centres, so now I think there is still the radio programme, even if the name changes, but I don't know the name now. The newspaper is still there under the same name, the video is still there with the same name and the Communication Centres changing into local radio. So for me the project is still there, you know what I mean, even if its different people, different NGOs, different provinces. But the idea, I think this kind of idea, has been used all over the place in rural development, in different contexts. I mean this was specific case because it was maybe the only communication programme, or project, outside of Maputo and in the whole Mozambique at the time, so maybe that's why it was important and because it was this situation of war. If you look at communication programme, when we speak about doing communication programmes on HIV, I mean its always radio, newspaper, using video in the villages and trying to have a local radio, or some kind of a local television. So I mean, it's all the same kind of idea. So when you ask me to compare this with Jean Rouch or Godard, I don't know. I think that in terms of impact and outreach and number of people that had access to this kind of information, I think that through all those means the essential communication was some kind of a massive and amazing structure. I think that at some stage we were more than ten different international technicians, and we were all very educated – maybe not a lot of experience because we were all young.

What was the television like at that stage?

It was called experimental television. I think the television was more or less what I was describing to you, it was kind of...first of course, Pedro was the director during this period, so he is the person who is best situated in all these things to tell you about. I mean the quality was quite low; they were training the first Mozambican technicians. There was a project with the Italian government, so there were Italian technicians training and putting in place also the equipment and everything to do the first. Everything was very, I don't

know, wild. And everything was very difficult you know, because there was no maintenance, there was a need to train in all areas, not only thinking about the production of content, or the contents of the day, or the contents of the week, but there was also all the technical issues, and nobody was able to maintain all this equipment. There was no local expertise and there were no spare parts for the equipment when there was some problem. In Nampula it was amazing, because the town was under siege, most of the time there was no electricity, most of the time there was no water in the town. And so we were editing and charging the battery in the palace of the governor, because was it was the only place in town during this period where there was electricity ensured all the time – not even in the hospital. So because it was so important for the government, for the party, for everybody, for us to be able, so we had negotiated the possibility to work in the palace of the government, in the provincial level. So we were editing and charging the battery and working in this little room. Everything was difficult. As I say, there was nothing in the shop, there was nothing in the street, there was no market, there were nothing in the market, there was no cars there was no petrol, there was nothing. Even the plane in Nampula, you never know if the plane was coming or not, because no petrol. Everything was difficult. So everything was a struggle. I mean when the news from the correspondent was leaving 200, 300, 400 kilometres would come and would say 'Ah...', but it was worth it. Something was always working.

How long was Nampula under siege?

Until the peace agreement.

Were you working on that project until then?

I stayed only one year in Nampula.

So then you came back to Maputo to make films with Lício?

In Maputo, in Nampula was too much.

How was your work affected by what happened after the fire at the National Institute of Cinema and the shift towards television, towards the setting up of production companies like Ebano and so on? What happened during that period?

I don't know. Me, I am an anthropologist by training. I was a camerawoman and a photographer in Italy and my dream has always been to do some kind of ethnographic documentary and using video. Yes, it's an instrument of research and investigation. So my personal, let's say, evolution, when I became confronted with the world, changed completely, because I'm suddenly faced to war situation and I suddenly realise that it was absolutely impossible for me to continue doing ethnographic research. Why? Because basically I understood that the needs were completely different, and in the situation were people were lacking basics, people were just protecting their own body, fighting to feed themselves, it was complete nonsense to start to try to study something else. I personally put my energy in this kind of activity; working for development, starting with the Social Communication Institute and then working in other kind of projects. And because doing video and doing cinema was possible in Mozambique, because I couldn't work as a camerawoman, and because I didn't want to make pictures, or to make photography, I didn't want to see even in a second way what I was seeing, I changed quite a lot my road, my career – what I was doing. And video for me became a more, a kind of, at some stage the possibility to express some of the thinking, of the understanding I had, you know. Like when we did the silent film with Lício in the early 1980s, it was an answer to this difficulty to communicate with the people, the problem of languages, which was huge, we wanted to communicate with many people in the country. At a certain level doing a silent film was a possibility to have that national unity without assuming that Portuguese should be the national language.

So it was a way to eliminate this problem by turning to a kind of the international language. And then working on *The Devil's Harvest* was also the possibility to show abroad...it was important, it was necessary to do it. There was a need to give information to the world, to the world outside, of what was happening inside. Different kinds of political situations had more coverage, and we thought that this war had no coverage at all. So, doing films also to be seen in festivals or to be shown on other international televisions was also an objective. And sometimes the two objectives, of course, were contradictory, you know. But doing *The Devil's Harvest* was to show the world that there was this war in Mozambique, and that people were resisting, and to try to continue from this kind of ideology war in Mozambique, to convince people it was necessary to resist and resist and resist. So maybe later, after the war, after the peace agreement in 1993, the kind of film and documentary that I was involved with changed. After the peace agreement I was mainly involved in the other one called *A Guerra da Agua, The Water War*. and for me it was mainly for the first time, the possibility working to use the kind of work that I was doing, because since the beginning in 1984 my objective is to work with rural people, and I want to be paid to be sitting under the trees to speak with farmers. So I have this amazing possibility to bring this story from a rural area, and each trip, each work, each research, its an amazing possibility for me to find out anything, everything. Sometimes it's completely mystical, you know, this kind of belief in witches, or spirits, this kind of mystery, or sometimes its related to realities, to difficulties. *A Guerra da Agua* began in 1993, after the peace agreement, and just after the first election in Mozambique in 1994. So it was the first time for me that I have really the possibility to live in a village after the war, and to be there, and to stay there, and to spend the night there, and to spend the whole day there. And it was extremely intense and there was really the first possibility that I had to listen to the people, and when I came back home and I explained to Lício what I saw and everything and I think immediately there was a huge desire for us to go out of the town, because during ten years we absolutely not able to go outside of the town, we lived within the border of town. We would fly to South Africa, fly to Swaziland, fly to Inhaca, fly to all the provinces, I would travel a lot or so, but flying. If you wanted to go out, it was with the military column and I never wanted - I think I went in military colon once or twice because I did not want to...I mean I thought that what I was doing was already the maximum, I couldn't risk more. While Lício and the other journalists from the ICS would risk their lives often, I said I am not able to do that, I don't want too. So I think that after the war, the kind of documentary programme changed, because Lício left the ICS and started developing a very independent kind of language, where he starts linking acting, of using the legit act, and I think the first one did using people acting was the silent time. I think so. I should go back to the chronology of the film and start - but maybe there are other ones before - there is one that he did for the ICS called *A Escola em Armas* - it was this idea of the school student fighting and hiding themselves at night to protect the school. And so he recreated the situation of the attack with the people who defended themselves, it was not only interviews. So he started using this kind of situation some of the documentaries. Then it evolved a lot. There was this idea of, coming from Godard and Jean Rouch to avoid having voice-over and doing interview, and this also came from Lício's history of journalism, telling story, not 'He said that...', putting it in a nice kind of way, and I think its also come from my anthropological view, respect for people, giving people a voice in their own, without putting in very different kind of special setting, and the capacity to look maybe at different issues that were not addressed before. Without maybe criticising or giving explanations, but dealing with the issue in a different way.

People being able to express themselves?

Yes from their point of view. From the point of view of the people. *The Water War*, for example, is not a political film, but at the same time it gives people their voice, because it is their point of view. They were saying all of those things all this period, and there was asking for...so I think in many ways after independence, after the peace agreement, it was easier to give people a different kind of voice, because the voice of the people also changed.

How do you feel it changed?

I mean slowly slowly. I think just after independence because of the situation of the war, where everything was secret, everything was a political secret or military secret and everything was protected, everything was defended, police all over the place, at night there was all the militias, groups of men and women who were trained and went around towns and villages everywhere during, like you saw in the film *The Devil's Harvest*. We were living in a state of tension all the time... And then after independence, after the peace agreement, everything changed because all this fear disappeared and people start being able to express their criticisms and point of view in a different way. So this is related only because of the political ambience, or is it related to the war? I think it's a combination of the two... I mean for me it's obvious that this was the price of Independence, because from my point of view, we were fighting against Apartheid. For me the war was not a civil war, it was a war against Apartheid, it was a war against RENAMO. And RENAMO was not a political party – it was an expression of Apartheid, and was an expression of the will to destroy the Mozambican Independence. And I think it was really strong. The Mozambican contribution to the end of Apartheid is important, and sometimes this notion is lost somewhere in the process. So the kind of expressions that you can have in a situation of war is completely determined by the situation of war, determined by the situation of it.

You were about to say some thing about the new kind of voices that were starting to be expressed at the end of the war...

It's extremely difficult to speak about that, because I have become very emotional about it. People's faces changed. During the war you would go to the field and everything was dramatic, everything was heavy, everything was difficult, it does not mean that the people were not laughing, or singing, or dancing, or drinking, or eating, but there was a huge tension and after the peace agreement slowly, you saw the faces and people laughing more, because during the war it was very difficult to do parties at night, because you were not able and not allowed to make noise in the villages. The children were not allowed to cry, the children were not allowed to play very far, the farmers would go to their field but sometimes would walk on the mine or be taken in an ambush – everything was extremely difficult. So afterwards everything is possible with peace coming back and this kind of happiness coming back. So it was a kind of expression of being able to look at other issues, you know, your life is not concentrated any more just on protecting yourself, your own body or your family, you can just start discussing other things. So in this sense there is this change of voice. Because your need, the issue that you are raising everyday start changing, because they can look at life as life and you are not looking at it as only protection and survival... For me the peace agreement was important in making a change more than the political issue, because the political issue was a slow process – after the holocaust of all those years it starts slowly, there was not only one moment. There was economical change of course once they started with the World Bank to change the economics of the country. So of course it is important because in some ways the production starts slowly to grow and change. Of course there is the possibility to vote... I'm not saying that its irrelevant, but I think from the

human point of view, from a personal point of view, the peace agreement and the end of the war of course...

There is something that becomes apparent to me when I was watching some of the Kuxa Kanema newsreels from that period during the war, you get people that were talking about getting attacked or something like that, what really struck me was the expressions of fear on peoples faces, I felt like there was this double trauma in telling what happened to them, there was this sort of trauma about 'what do I say?', 'what can I say?'

Everything was difficult. There was also a lot of internal violence, the government of Samora Machel was also extremely violent. There was a cycle of violence, violence makes everything violent. In war there are no rules, I mean this kind of situation where all the excesses were justified because of the war, in a sense is the easy justification for all excess.

And in terms of your choice to come to Mozambique, it seems like that part of a wider struggle against Apartheid, is that right?

I was a political militant in Europe, in France. It was just a continuation. I was a Trotskyite. I was, am still, a Trotskyite. So for me being in Mozambique was in a certain sense a kind of a school but also an immersion in all that Trotsky was saying was the bad side of socialism and communism. Very soon I was against most of the decisions and most of the politics. And for me, as an anthropologist, all this idea of communal villages and obliging people to be into villages was completely absurd. It was a mess, it was a mistake. But as everything, as what I said, its very difficult to look now at the situation because even this was done as an objective to help people to have the basics, like the school, the water, the health and it also became an objective to protect people from the war - maybe it was a way to oblige people to resist in an organised way, because maybe it was better when they were scattered in the country, instead of being all organised in the village. But it was all part of this kind of discussion, difficulty to find the way, because the war was always added on the possibility to analyse these things in a more relaxed kind of association.

So how much did your political formation differ from other filmmakers like, for instance, Camilo or Lício?

I don't know, I think that my experience is different because I was against Stalinism since the beginning. I came with this kind of background and I think that maybe for the Mozambicans this was more difficult. Because there were not seeing things from outside, and Independence was possible, because they managed to organise themselves around a common goal, which was independence, but also around a common vision that was in a certain way Stalinist.

Also they were fighting against an enemy that was fascist as well...

And against fascism. So it makes difference of course. But for me, I think it was a very interesting school and still it is a very interesting school. Because now as I travel more in the region, I am able to compare the evolution of the situation in different countries - in Tanzania, in Angola, in South Africa, in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Where I travel and where I work. I am still able to see how different countries are faced, and are facing all the difficulties to overcome after Independence. And the difficulty to build a national bourgeoisie or to maintain a social policy, to combine the compromise with society against poverty, and with other compromises with the international institutions like World Bank, and all the dependencies that Mozambique has on international donors. They are still compromising. While in another country like in Angola its easier not to compromise, and maybe in another country like South Africa, its more easy not to compromise. Or maybe they are compromising for their end of situation, maybe it is more national in

South Africa. But I think it is still worst. I am still observing, I am still looking, and still trying to understand and see the differences - and the school is still going on! It's a non-stop process.

Interview with José Luis Cabaço, 13 July 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

Então talvez se nos podemos começar com o que era a situação no cinema Moçambicano quando o senhor começou o seu trabalho com o Ministério de Informação?

Bom, eu estive duas vezes no Ministério de Informação, uma durante o governo da transição, e aí o cinema não teve um papel especial – não havia o Instituto Nacional de Cinema – cinema estava ligada algumas produtoras privadas desse período, elas estavam desorganizadas porque estava no fim do colonialismo, e de facto naquele período o único cinema importante que nos registramos, no Ministério de Informação, o único papel importante que nos fizemos no Ministério de Informação em relação a cinema, foi apoiar os cineastas estrangeiros que vieram cá para filmar os últimos meses do colonialismo e a Independência, nomeadamente Bob van Lierop do Estados Unidos, o Celso do Brasil, depois também um cineasta, Popovic da Bulgária, e senhor estrangeiro – da Jugoslávia. E portanto, cineastas que já tinham feito filmes durante a luta de libertação nacional, o FRELIMO e vieram aqui Celso, os outros dois já tinham feito, e que vieram aqui portanto fazer um filme de preparação de independência, depois filme de independência. Nos nessa altura apoiamos os cineastas com alguns Moçambicanos que estavam nas empresas privadas nessa altura, mas não havia uma política de cinema, a política de cinema era essa, de filmar a independência, para registrar aquele momento. Com a equipa existente aqui, fez um esforço só que foi de registrar a viagem do Presidente Samora Machel, *Do Rovuma a Maputo*. Fernando Silva, que era um cineasta aqui com alguma experiência com guerra. Ele fez esse trabalho, de registrar esse material, e guardamos esse material. E depois devia ser usada esse material mas tarde para fazer um filme chamado *Do Rovuma ao Maputo*, um documentário recordando este acontecimento. Estes foram efectivamente, digamos, o governo em transição, depois houve a questão de criação do Instituto Nacional de Cinema, portanto um pequeno grupo de já no quadro Ministério de Informação depois da independência, o Ministro Jorge Rebelo, o actual senhor Jorge Rebelo, a ministra então poderá contar muito melhor estes acontecimentos. E o Instituto Nacional de Cinema, começou-se elaborar realmente uma política de cinema, e uma política bem estruturada, porque uma política previa, não só parte de produção, não só a processão de produção, ou a parte de produção, mas um grande destaque arte de exibição. Quer dizer, cinema móvel, mas também a criação de cinemas rurais. E a tentativa de criação de um círculo de cinema que permitisse a produção Moçambicana, e não só a produção Moçambicana, de atingir sectores amplos da população – fora das zonas urbanas. Por isso, lembro-me que houve várias pessoas contribuíram, o projecto foi nosso, mas tivemos aqui passado também cineasta Ruy Guerra, veio com algumas ideias para trabalhar e participar nesse projecto aqui um pouco com nosco. E de registar nesse período também, a criação na Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, de um projecto de cinema. De cinema ligada a comunicação. Um curso de comunicação fundamentalmente. Projecto esse que foi muito interessante, porque é um projecto realmente centrado no trabalho nas comunidades rurais, das zonas mais longe do capital de Moçambique, e que fez interessantes pesquisas, era um trabalho um pouco respirado que tinha o apoio do Museu de Lome

de Paris, com Jean Rouge também, e que pretendia realmente compreender realmente, numa forma sistemática, a produção de imagem Moçambicana, numa imagem cordialmente integrada de Moçambique. Esse projecto depois morreu e acabou por ser entregada numa para no Instituto Nacional de Cinema, outra parte na televisão, que nasceu depois em 1981. Eu voltei ao Ministério de Informação, entretanto, nesta situação neste período criou-se um documentário, chamado *Kuxa Kanema*. *Kuxa Kanema* foi a actividade principal do Instituto Nacional de Cinema, era o registo de acontecimentos históricos da realidade que estava desenvolvendo, e registo, e arquivo de isso, e nos alguns casos a edição de alguns filmes, de as vezes em quando, mas para uma debate que foi por uma forma sistemática de comunicação com o publico, de criar o *Kuxa Kanema*. *Kuxa Kanema* devia ser um specia – um resumo inicialmente um resumo mensal dos acontecimentos do país, não havia televisão, e que deveria procurar o país, isso que primeira versão do Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Foi muito importante porque foi uma produção que teve muito cuidado, muita pesquisa, do ponto de vista na qualidade de imagem, de uma imagem adaptado ao publico Moçambicano, foi um momento grande de debate entre jornalista sobre questões de linguagem cinematográfica, mas foi uma produção relativamente pequena. Os filmes eram para ser uma vez por mês, mas em alguns casos, os filmes acabaram por ser menos de uma vez por mês, as vezes não tinha uma produção regular, não tinha uma produção devidamente estruturado de ponto de vista do produtor.

O senhor Cabaço pode falar um pouco mais sobre esse novo tipo de língua cinematográfica e a concepção de essa língua?

Sim, esse é um discurso que depois vem, digamos assim, vem formalmente debatido e com a renovação do próprio *Kuxa Kanema*, quer dizer, esse discurso é um discurso entre cineastas, é um discurso sobre formas, sobre montagem, sobre ritmo, sobre varias questões e elaborava muito sobre questões técnicas. Depois em 1981, já não lembro-me muito bem, houve uma grande reunião sobre cinema, e houve a necessidade de se passar para uma... sentiu-se a necessidade para cinema avançar, precisava de lhe dar uma disciplina de produção, e um rigor, um certo rigor na produção. E então fez-se um grande esforço para tornar *Kuxa Kanema* um documentário semanal. E no primeiro momento aceito-se sacrificar um pouco a qualidade, estética, que era uma grande preocupação de *Kuxa Kanema* anterior, a qualidade produtiva, quer dizer, a disciplina produtiva. Então começo-se a fazer um *Kuxa Kanema* semanal. Que aos Sábados, e nos aviões na companheira nacional, era distribuído por todos as capitais províncias, ali ia um pouco mais profundamente. Teve qualquer forma. Esse *Kuxa Kanema*, semanal na ausência da televisão, mantendo, um numa medida, uma actualidade importante no deformativa da imagem do país. Foi no curso desta...na função de *Kuxa Kanema*, nesta período, além da sua presença informativa e de divulgação de cinema, teve, como eu disse, uma função fundamental, um função disciplinada por cinematográfica, isso foi muito importante. E a partir daí foi possível começar-se a pensar numa outra dimensão do cinema Moçambicano, porque começamos a trabalhar com planos, com planos de filmagem, com tempos, com orçamentos, com perspectivas reais da produção cinematográfica. Primeiro ia-se fazendo e havia um plano mais ou menos, havia um orçamento mais ou menos, havia um, 'Há, não fico bem! Da mais dinheiro...', e isso mudo. Agora, começo-se a disciplinar isso. Eu penso que isso foi o grande...e de facto com esta, neste esforço de disciplina que o Instituto Nacional de Cinema fez a volta do *Kuxa Kanema*, o primeiro director de *Kuxa Kanema* foi Sol, foi Sol que tinha vindo a pouco tempo para a área cinematográfica, vindo de jornalismo para cinema. E ele foi o primeiro de director da *Kuxa Kanema*. E a volta de este esforço que se fez, nos passamos de produção, mais ou menos, de quatro horas, quatro horas e meia na tela, por ano na tela, por uma produção de 20 – 23 horas por ano na tela, quer dizer, foi aumento muito grande, a presença da

imagem nacional na ecrã dos nosso cinemas. Paralelamente isso formam feitos, continuação da produção de documentário sobre temas específicos, me recorde que fizesse sobre diversos temas, incluindo, a independência do Zimbabwe, nos só documentamos, a primeira co-produção Moçambique com Angola, foi feita a volta do filme do cinema do independência do Zimbabwe, e entretanto fez-se um grande esforço e com apoio também do Ruy Guerra mais uma vez, para se criarem estruturas de informação, e vieram cineastas internacionais de boa qualidade fazer cursos de fotografia, de som, de produção, de direcção de actores, de varias coisas.

E essas foram organizados pelos governos, o individuais?

O Instituto Nacional de Cinema e individual, quer dizer, o Ruy Guerra mobilizo, houve um projecto oficial, que foi com Cuba, que tem um cinema extraordinário gente, mando gente para ca também, para nos ajudar, esse era um projecto de institucional, mas o outro com Ruy Guerra foi através de um pouco de voluntariado. O Ruy Guerra tinha amigos, ele convenceu os amigos, 'Vamos a Moçambique, para dois meses ou um mês e tal.', neste actividade de cinema sempre há momentos em que você não esta a trabalhando, e que portanto, pode arranjar tempo para visitar. Eles vinham, a gente pagava a passagem dava alojamento, e um salário de um moçambicano, quer dizer, véu gente aqui com espirito muito bom, que não véu cá com contratos fabulosos para fazer de formação. Então os dois niveles de formação foi esta formação, digamos assim voluntária, de voluntariado, que foi criado por Ruy Guerra, depois foi uma formação de institucional também, voluntário logicamente, que foi um acordo com o governo Cubano, não sei que, já não me lembro se houve mais alguma coisa. Foram os dois elementos na formação. O campo pratico da formação foi *Kuxa Kanema*, e o *Kuxa Kanema* teve um muito equipa que rodava nas suas funções. Exactamente para que todos os cineastas do Instituto Nacional de Cinema passassem por uma experiência de produção muito intensa, e muito disciplinada, quer dizer, com tempos, com prazos, com entrega, e *Kuxa Kanema* era um exercício muito interessante também, porque era feito inteiramente em Moçambique, quer dizer, ele era filmado, revelado no laboratório, eram feitas copias no laboratório em Moçambique, e distribuído inteiramente em Moçambique. Estas a ver exercícios totalmente nacional. Naturalmente em preto e branco, naturalmente com qualidade técnica, inclusivamente dos mateiras, não era melhore, mas era o exercício totalmente Moçambicano, e foi, na minha opinião, o coração da produção cinematográfica Moçambicano. Nesse exercício de *Kuxa Kanema*, e nessa intensidade de colaboração, houve uma reflexão mais ampla dos dados que tinham recolhidos da primeira fase de *Kuxa Kanema*, e também da experiência da cinema móvel. A experiência de campo da cinema móvel. Entretanto depois de independência cria-se ainda mais um serviço o Gabinete de Comunicação Social. O Gabinete de Comunicação Social é um gabinete ligado fundamentalmente a comunicação rural, o próprio Gabinete de Comunicação Social também produz os técnicos, também produz suas reflexões, e então há uma discussão sobre as questões da comunicação cinematográfica no país, de tradição oral dominante, e subdesenvolvido, como no meu caso. Como era no meu caso em Moçambique. E ai se colocaram, ali se identificaram efectivamente as dificuldades de usando o meio tecnicamente muito avançado, quer dizer, ali se compreendeu efectivamente muito bem que o cinema não é uma linguagem explicita. Cinema é uma linguagem profundamente implícita, porque na realidade o cinema sugere através das imagens um conjunto...transmite um conjunto de informações que o espectador re-interpreta, liga e estabelece a sequência e portanto faz a desqualificação daquele processo. Este processo de desqualificação é cultural, é profundamente cultural, os símbolos, as referencias culturais, quer dizer, todos os elementos que te

permitem ler e entender um filme tem uma grande componente cultural. Quando a cultura profundamente diferente, como meu caso, cultura rural, tradicional, Africana, e a cultura urbana, moderna, Europeosante. Muitas vezes aqui que parece obviou para quem produz, não tem leitura, o tem leitura muito diferentes para quem recebe. Então – e nos verificamos que alguns elementos de confusão muito importantes, são por exemplo, a questão da língua, indiscutivelmente. Portanto a língua é um instrumento de desqualificação fundamental, ha questão dos ambientes, onde, portanto, se o filme é situado nos ambientes rurais, e falado na línguas nacionais as pessoas entendem, tem mais facilidade para compreender. Seleccionando ambientes urbanas que as pessoas não, não dominam culturalmente, se é falado a língua Portuguesa por exemplo , tem mais dificuldade em compreender. E depois, de ponto de vista narrativo principalmente as questões de espaço, tempo, e também as vezes de enquadramento. Há certos enquadramentos que surgem as pessoas de forma chocante e eles não percebem, temem dificuldade em estabelecer a interpretação dos determinados enquadramentos. Eu sei por exemplo que no campo pessoas reclamam, ainda hoje reclamam, eles reclamam quando aparece planos Americanos, reclamam porque que não tem as pernas, e eles não gostam de ser filmados em planos Americanos, por exemplo, eles não gostam e reclamam muito. Eles gostam de se ver em enteiros , porque a sociedade Africana é um sociedade inteira, um cidade global, totalizante, e outra coisa, outro coisa elemento, importante na estrutura narrativa, não pode-se muitos figurantes, porque se tem muitos figurantes atenção das pessoas é distraído para os figurantes, e não se concentra necessariamente exactamente porque a processão global da realidade, as pessoas não – e teve casos – agora fiz uma pesquisa recentemente sobre cinema móvel, cinema móvel como instrumento de divulgação, mas a pesquisa era só a comunicação de cinema na província de Cabo Delegado, e coisas muito interessantes. Muito interessantes, inclusivamente as pessoas, por exemplo, reclamando numa determinada cena aonde as pessoas reconheceram, por exemplo, ou acharem interessante, um personagem secundário, um figurante dizemos assim da cena principal, quando acaba se mov e deixa fora esse personagem, eles ficam irritados, eles estavam perseguindo essa personagem, não estavam a perseguir essa personagem que o realizador estava seguir . Então não gostam de isso, então, ‘aonde esta aquele?’, porque na aldeia, no campo visual das pessoas toda gente esta dentro, a cinema limita, o obriga limitar o campo visual, portanto você não pode pegar naquilo que você quer. Portanto é muito interessante porque há muita, há muitos problemas. Evidentemente esses problemas tendem aos poucos, a reduzir por acção da televisão, eles vão se habituando a uma certa linguagem purificada e vão se habituado principalmente uma precessão de cinema, muitas vezes dominada pela motividade. Quer dizer, a força e motivo das imagens, as pessoas acabam por gostar de um filme porque a força e o motivo das imagens nos impressiona. Mas se você for, muitas vezes se você for pedir para fazer o relato do filme, as pessoas não relatam o filme. Não relatam aquela cena que lhos emocionou, relatam duas ou três cenas que lhe emocionou, mas não relatam o filme. Nesta pesquisa que eu fiz, por exemplo, é muito interessante a relação com a realidade e com o controle do tempo e espaço, que as pessoas tinham a tendência, quando entendiam a historia, de dizer, ‘O teatro de ontem foi muito bom’. Quando não entediam a historia diziam assim, ‘A cinema de ontem foi muito bom’, pois na cinema, para algumas – pelo menos na aquela mostragem que eu investiguei, o cinema é uma linguagem que não se entende - é uma linguagem bonita e motiva mas que não se entende. Quando se entende uma historia é o teatro, porque teatro é uma coisa localizada. De ponto de vista de espaço, do tempo, tem uma comunicação muito... não tem limitação do campo visual, tem enquadramentos, tem uma relação directa com os espectador com a cena, e com a voz também , e portanto e muito mais fácil de

acompanhar o teatro. E normalmente é feito o teatro em zonas rurais, normalmente é feito na língua local. Então estes são elementos importantes que, hoje esta elaborados numa outra forma, nasceram nessa... E esse debate foi acentuado com a ideia de se criar a televisão. Quando se penso em criar a televisão, fez se um debate mais acentuado sobre estas questões porque a televisão, por definição, era uma linguagem que há directamente, e quotidianamente, entrar nas casa das pessoas.

E quem participava nessa debate? Quem foi?

Gente que, quer dizer, neste debate participo fundamentalmente foi o Instituto Nacional de Cinema. E do projecto da universidade. E do Gabinete de Comunicação Social, esses três sectores. Apareceram depois mais tarde elementos do teatro, foi também começaram aparecer, alguns elementos da radio, que depois entraram para televisão. Mas esse era fundamente um debate nosso. Prevalcido pelos moçambicanos.

E que foram as estratégias que foram desenvolvido nesse período, nessa altura apara criar uma nova linguagem em cinema?

É muito complicado. Deis me dizer que me esqueci dar uma informação, que nesta debate, indirectamente, porque ele não esteve presente nos debates, mas indirectamente participo também o Goddard, o Franceies. Porque ele esteve cá com o projecto, e depois esteve cá como outro projecto, o projecto ligado a criação da televisão e ele subsisto...ele teve muitas conversas com ele, e no curso de estes conversas ele subsistiu as questões da natureza cultural, da formação da imagem. Ele tinha um projecto muito interessante, que depois nos podíamos realizar por causa de falta de fundos financiar o projecto, que era aquele de ensinar os camponeses a filmar tecnicamente e entregar-lhes as maquinas para ver o que tipo de linguagens eles produziam, tipo de imagens queriam, que enquadramento eles faziam, e coisas assim. Então isso foi um elemento, quer dizer, isso subsistiu muito o debate que depois que nos tivemos.

Então mesmo que o projecto novo de Goddard não foi realizado, continuo a ter um influencia e importância na nível de concepção?

Sim, eu devia dizer uma coisa, o projecto não foi realizado porque há um grande adversário neste projecto, que é a própria estrutura do cinema, porque o cinema é uma formação, é um industria, é uma tecnologia ocidental, a formação da nossa gente é uma formação feita nas escolas ocidentais, escolas Europeias principalmente, mas é na escolas Europeias, culturalmente Europeia, e a tendência das pessoas é, por exemplo, os cineastas também tem como qual quer outro profissional, o seu orgulho profissional e a sua função executa-se em duas direcção, uma em direcção publico, e outra direcção aos colegas, ele tem que se por em frente dos colegas com a qualidade da sua produção, que é uma pessoa competente, que sabe, que conhece, que domina ainda bem a regras do jogo, tem um outra direcção que é de tentar comunicar com a população. Agora, esta dualidade do cineasta, com do resto de todos os profissionais numa maneira geral que trabalham nas instituicoes de modernidade em África, esta é o grande inimigo fundamental de um discurso profundo. Porque a gente culturalmente discussão com os colegas que são modernos como nos, e nos queremos amostrar que nos dominamos a modernidade, que somos competentes, que somos capaz, somos actualizados a nível mundial, e nesse momento entra em conflito com nossa função social que que é aquela de comunicar com a população. Então esta contradição, contradição permanente, que as vezes é resolvido pela uma forma, as vezes é resolvido da outra, portanto eu não esto a culpar os cineastas, como ser daqueles de cidadão, vivem este drama. E as vezes conseguiram coisas muito interessantes, as vezes não conseguiram ultrapassar certas barreiras. Penso que neste momento na ultima fase de cinema temos feito alguns passos enfrente, encontramos formulas, portanto, os vários cineastas que estão baseados aqui

encontrarão formulas interessantes de ir rompendo, digamos, esta dicotomia, mas ainda não esta resolvido. Ainda não esta resolvido esse problema.

O senhor pode dar alguns exemplos...

Sim, eu penso que alguns filmes que foram feitos aqui, por Licínio Azevedo por exemplo, são filmes muito interessantes neste tipo de linguagem, nesta ideia que ele faz de reconstrução de docu-drama, pesquisar uma historia verdadeira e depois recreá-la com seus próprios personagens, que viveram a historia, quer dizer, esses personagens trazem por dentro do filme uma carga cultural, que o Licínio sabe aproveitar bem. Devo dizer que o Sol também tem, dos filmes que eu conheço do Sol, tem um filme sobre a Ilha de Moçambique, aonde também a gente sente esse dialogo do realizador com a cultura, cultura representado pelos próprios actores, que estão a viver a historia da vida deles, conhecem aquela historia portanto. Uma participação...actores não profissionais, que estão a viver a historia da vida deles e esse, penso que são alguns, não são os únicos mas agora lembrei-me neste tempo, são alguns, esse dialoga entre o realizador que esta atras da maquina. Esta atras do instrumento técnico. E digamos a forza cultural das pessoas, quando você monte uma historia muito montadinha e tal, que é um historia que sai exclusivamente da cabeça do realizador, normalmente isso funciona menos bem. Quando você aproveita as sinergias culturais nessa pequena sociedade e monta encima de casos concretos, e de vivências concretas, você conseguiu muito mais isso. Se eu, por exemplo, pessoalmente gosto muito mais dos filmes, gosto muito mais dos filmes feitos inclusivamente dos nossos realizadores da Promarte, da Ebanó etc. do que os filmes que foram feito em co-produção, por exemplo, com Portugueses ou com outras pessoas, na minha opinião são filmes muito menos concebidos, muito menos representativos de Moçambique na realidade são visões extemas da realidade Moçambicana, e não cinema Moçambicana.

O senhor pode descrever a ligação entre essas novas formas de docu-drama, por exemplo, e a questão do tempo e espaço?

Sim, vamos pegar nos dois exemplos que eu dei, por exemplo, são filmes... Kucha narrativa por exemplo, é uma narrativa limitada quando passa-se numa aldeia, ou passa-se na Ilha de Moçambique, principalmente num bairro de Moçambique o espaço é muito limitado neste caso, autorização das línguas locais é muito incentivada pelos realizadores, portanto no caso do film do Sol sobre Ilha de Moçambique dos quais como outros filmes do Licínio, como se trata de um episódio concreto, com principio, meio, e fim, a questão temporal, mesmo a questão temporal, de infância, juventude, etc., de idade de adulto e tal, é um coisa que passa em poucos dias, é um historia que passa em um mês, dois meses sei lá, mas passa se num tempo relativamente curto. As pessoas são iguais do principio ate o fim, digamos, a sequência narrativa tem uma lógica cultural, uma lógica que as pessoas entendem, a senhora que o marido não deixe ir estudar, que depois abandona a casa, quer dizer, é a historia de todos os dias das pessoas, então as referencias simbólicas, as referencias culturais são muito próximas dos espectadores, da vida dos espectadores, então isso permite o espectador conseguir fazer um certa de desqualificação de processo, e eu penso que esses casos são exemplos do caminho bom para o cinema Moçambicano que esta percorrendo contra alguns outros bom exemplos que eu não só tão entusiasmente.

São contos quotidianas...

O problema tem que tem de se-fazer o cinema, quer dizer, o dialogo com nossa população, população Moçambicana, o dialogo entre o realizador que é um produto sofisticado, da tecnologia sofisticada, e um publico que é ainda um produto ainda de uma tradição ainda muito aprisionado e dominado pela tradição circular, tem que ser feito através da vida, como aquilo que é comum a todos. E não através de

representações abstractas da vida. Que isso, a abstracção, é um factor cultural que vai colocar caminhos muito diferentes de cultura para cultura. E eu penso que toda cinema, todo cinema bom nasceu da cinema, cinema Americano, ou da cinema Italiano, ou cinema Franceies, nasceu do quotidiano. E isso é na minha opinião, e de um quotidiano, tudo cinema teve um parte popular, nasceu em parte do quotidiano popular. Porque quando fazemos os filmes sobre os grandes salões de ..., etc., para as pessoas é uma projecção, mas não é uma realidade. E hoje é uma projecção nos países desenvolvidos, esta muito imediatizada através da televisão, através dos jornais, etc. As pessoas conseguem estabelecer aquela projecção. Agora quem não tem jornais, quem não televisão, quer dizer, quem tem comunicação oral com um factor dominante, a sua capacidade de projecção passa através da sua realidade, passa através do mundo ou a realidade, e aonde o mundo de realidade termina, tem um certo limite, então faz -te como o mundo imediato da sociedade moderna.

Parece-me que o nível de produção no cinema Moçambicano que saio do Instituto, ha três grupos de tipo de filme; há esses filmes que foram feito na luta de libertação, filmes colonial, que foram critica, e critical em Deixe-me Pelo Menos Subir as Palmeiras, e então os filmes que foram feito depois, essas tipo de docu-drama, pode falar um pouco da contribuição muito diferente no criação num sentido de ser Moçambicano.

Vamos dizer assim, para mi pessoalmente, a historia do cinema Moçambicano divide se em varias fazes. Um cinema colonial, virado para a consolidação do poder colonial, esse cinema e dirigido principalmente aos colonos mesmo, dá forza aos colons da sua 'superioridade'. Que era ideologia do colonialismo. No fim do colonialismo aparece dois filmes, três filmes, de contestação ao colonialismo, *Deixa-me pelo menos subir as Palmeiras* que foi um filme publicado, e que correu, mas pouco tempo, mas correu, foi o *Catambe* do Fred Almeida, que bem foi muito cortado, só muito mais tarde que teve uma versão, e foi *O Quilómetro 71*, feito no final de 71, já não me lembro como que era...que era um filme feito pelo João Ferreira e pelo...eu não lembro do outro nome, não. Que era um filme muito interessante, e que não consegui concretizar-se, terminar. Acho que termino a filmagem, mas não teve nenhum espaço político para passar. E era o João Ferreira e o Fernando Carneiro, era quem fez esse filme. E portanto, esses são os três filmes que digamos assim, de quadro ainda da vida colonial que nascem com uma, foram consumidos e realizados com uma perspectiva de questionar a ordem colonial. Não chega ser um linha, porque são três filmes e três experiências isoladas, mas elas estão pouco ligadas também experiência Ciné-Clubista, que é uma grande experiência interessante etc., mas em fim há esta experiência. Depois há um terceiro grupo de filmes, que é o cinema da Luta armada, quer dizer, não só os registos dos cineastas grileiros fizeram dos acontecimentos da luta armada, da luta armada, como também dos documentários dos cineastas estrangeiros, que vieram visitar as zonas libertadas, filmaram as zonas libertadas, no caso de Gigarinho da Itália, como é no caso de Van Lierop da Estados Unidos, o Popovic, o próprio Popovic esteve, também teve lá um cineasta Russo, outros cineastas Cubanos, Coreanos, etc., tiveram vários. Esse é um filme, digamos assim, a gente podia chamar um pouco, chamamos, cinema da guerra. Depois da independência o cinema avanço temporalmente em três direcções principais. Uma foi o esforço do registro, porque há muita via, não sei se da, mas é muito material que nunca foi editado, que estava revelado com som sincronizado e armazenado. Então há um registo histórico de imagem no pais, os principalmente nos primeiros 5, 8 anos, 10 anos talvez ha muito, muito, muito importante. Portanto, foi este primeiro registo. Segundo, a criação de documentário que estavam ligados a consolidação da nacionalidade, solidariedade Moçambicana, quer dizer da nação Moçambicana. Eram documentários políticos, que procuravam criar o espirito de unidade no

país, procuravam afirmar esta existência de Moçambique, e se foram importantes também em lançamento da ideia de Mocambicanidade.

E esses documentários, por exemplo...

Do Rovuma ao Maputo, O ano de Independência, sei lá, vários, vários. Depois houve um outro registro paralelo a esse, que é o registro do... já dos casos concretos, sei lá, o festival de Música, outra, também faziam ponte com isto. Havia dois níveis de documentários, digamos assim, especificamente políticos, e havia um tipo de produção que já tinha uma mais...cultural, digamos assim. Portanto este foi Kuxa Kanema faz um pouco a ponte de estes dois, porque eram muito de reflexão, unidade do próprio Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Depois com a vinda da televisão a estrutura produtivo do Instituto Nacional de Cinema sofreu uma alteração. Perdeu gente, e também perdeu impacto porque a televisão ocupou um espaço, então houve, *Kuxa Kanema* tinha essa faz de produção que Kuxa Kanema tinha passado, eu tentativa de se passar a, digamos, a se passar a longa metragem. Criando a ideia sempre foi, procurar, ver-se, por ano se podiam dar um, dois filmes de longa-metragem da realidade moçambicana, da história, do dia a dia moçambicana, etc., para passar nos cinemas Moçambicanos, uma imagem nacional é importante. Nos achamos que o discurso da Mocambicanidade ele passava muito pela restituição ao cidadão de todo o país, da imagem nacional de vários pontos do país, portanto, isso se fazia, 'Ah, em Maputo é assim...em cabo Delegado é assim...Tete é assim', não sei o que. Então o cidadão de Maputo via o resto do país, os outros viam pela forma de viajar o país através da cinema e da imagem. Nesse esforço pela longa-metragem fez-se a primeira longa-metragem, que não foi muito importante, mas não era um discurso cultural, importante, era um discurso político, e era um discurso técnico. Troce um equipa de Jugoslávia profissionais para, digamos, fazer um exercício da organização de uma longa-metragem. Que problemas que ponha de uma long-metragem.

E isso foi Os Yempos dos Leopardos?

Foi *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*, sim. E esse é um filme que tinha uma função histórica, fazia-se dez anos da luta, fazia-se vinte anos do início da luta armada, portanto, era para celebra uma ocasião também, festejar uma ocasião. Mas procuro-se fazer um exercício com os Moçambicanos que tiveram presentes, participaram, mas assistiram como é que se faz, como é que se monta uma long-metragem, quais são as problemas que se ponhe estrutura narrativa, com os seus problemas de organização, etc. Não foi uma experiência muito feliz nessa aspecto, porque no fundo, depois a equipa de Jugoslávia que véu não era tão solida como a gente pretendia, podia sido muito profissional, embora, fosse todos profissionais. Mas pronto lá deu muita experiência, uma experiência muito boa. E essa experiência permitiu depois, foi logo depois, o um pouco depois de um ano, tenta-se o segundo filme. Foi o filme de Zé Cardoso sobre *O Vento Sopra do Norte*, que já foi um filme completamente feito pelo Moçambicanos. Beneficiaram daquela experiência também.

E na vossa opinião, esse filme dá mais num sentido de um estético Moçambicano?

É, bom seguramente *O vento sopra do Norte* é mais moçambicano do que *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*, é um filme feito com padrões internacionais, com só uma história Moçambicana. E *O Vento Sopra do Norte* é um filme mais Moçambicano indiscutivelmente. Mas a ideia era que os Jugoslávios, a gente estava bastante consciente, que os primeiros filmes de longa-metragem ainda iam ser dominados pelos problemas técnicos que se apresentaram os filmes, portanto, a questão da linguagem era um pouco subordinada a outras variadas que eram mais prementes, eram mais importantes para a gente dominar ainda. Então não foi possível dominar tudo no mesmo tempo. Mas a ideia era que este caminho, quando a gente se fosse

familiarizando com uma estrutura produtiva de cinema mais fluida, podia-se mais uma vez re-propor as experiências da linguagem que tinha a vida, propor no campo numa longa-metragem. A longa-metragem não pego porque veu a guerra, não foi possível concretizar toda essa experiência. Mas este digamos era um caminho, que pretendia para cinema Moçambicano para poder dar um pouco todos os anos uma, digamos assim, um filme grande. Dar imagem de Moçambique aos Moçambicanos, aos historia dos vários acontecimentos de Moçambique, da vida de Moçambique, e estava isso houve experiências e não foi possível continuar, entretanto, o Instituto Nacional de Cinema também entro em crises depois...e portanto houve a privatização de distribuição. Era distribuição que praticamente....distribuição e exibição financiava cinema, com a privatização de exibição o Instituto Nacional de Cinema decho de ter fundos, passo Instituto de produção, um Instituto de regulamentação. E portanto perdeu a função dinâmica que tinha na criação da cinema Moçambicana. Eu penso que foi prematuro o destruição do Instituto Nacional de Cinema na altura porque estava numa faz de consolidação de uma experiência, se tives demorado mais uns 10 anos, talvez tese ganho realmente outra estatura, outra vida dinâmica que não consegui ganhar. Então pouco de toda essa experiência que eu falei perdeu-se, quer dizer, não se perdeu porque ela acabo depois, os cineastas que de cinema porque já não havia oportunidades de fazer cinema foram-se organizaram em cooperativos, em pequenas empresas, começaram a fazer pequenas produções. Nos passamos completamente da produção em película e começar em vídeo porque não havia capital para fazer, não havia capital, nem financiamentos para fazer a produção em película. Então durante, quase 20 anos , a nossa produção viveu exclusivamente no vídeo. E agora nos estamos de novo a fazer outros *Os Tempos dos Leopards* mas de outra forma. Pedindo outros realizadores estrangeiros para virem cá, técnicos para virem cá, para começarmos a fazer de novo produtos comerciais. Produtos comerciais. E a nova experiência da nossa cinema de longa-metragem aqui, em todo produção, ela é fundamentalmente sossegando parâmetros de cinema com convencional, sem nenhuma reflexão, sem nenhuma incidência, sem dar muito importância aos públicos, porque a co- produção logicamente, quem dos Portugueses, ou Francaisses, ou Ingleses, ponhe numa co- produção, para que o filme passa no seu pais. Porque ali é o grande mercado. Então a linguagem tem que ser uma linguagem que sirva Portugal, a França, a Inglaterra, etc. A ultima coisa que se pensa é no mercado Moçambicano, todos os discursos de linguagem nas co- produções desaparece, e voltamos para trás para fazer cinema convencional.

Em relação a essa linguagem cinematográfica Moçambicana, aonde é o futuro possibilidade de desenvolver esse mais, porque essa forma de docu-drama...

Docu-drama, e a curta-metragem, eu penso que o caminho é curta-metragem. Curta, media metragem de 50 minutos, filmes ate 50 minutos mais ou menos. Quer dizer, aquilo que a gente chama dimensão da televisão, o formato de televisão, mas porque? Porque normalmente, aquilo que curiosamente esta salvar, na minha opinião, o cinema Moçambicana, são os filmes institucionais. Quando você haver dinheiro para, num filme sobre AIDS, o seu destinatário, é o publico Moçambicano. Ali você pode fazer exercício de comunicação, e pode fazer um exercício, e faz certamente um esforça de dinheiro, quais comunicativa Moçambicano. Então este cinema institucional é único exercício neste, principal exercício neste momento, o se não cinema independente, que é alguns casos do Sol de Carvalho e da Ebano, ne? De Promarte e da Ebano. Conseguem arranjar dinheiro, temem uma ideia, arranjam financiamentos, fazem um filme relativamente independente, mas esses filmes são destinados ao um mercado Moçambicano, porque só ai que podem passar. O que era muito importante neste momento é porque uma estrutura cultural existe

quando há um produtor, com há um financiador e o um leitor – um publico. E quanto você não tem este triângulo você não tem uma estrutura, então ai grande, é grande falha da nossa de cultura, ainda não concebeu o esquema de cultura tendo presente que o mercado é fundamental determinante a cultura, é preciso entrever mercado, é preciso dizer – o estado tem uma obrigação criar instrumentos iniciantes para criação de ..., em enquanto não haver isso não há cultura. Quando a gente se faz um filme, sei lá, mesmo o Sol ou a Ebanô faz um filme independente, fica sempre com um olho no mercado internacional porque é aonde pode vender o filme eventualmente, para uma televisão internacional. Porque a nossa televisão aqui não compra filmes. O estado não dá, não compra para filmes. E não há circuitos para passar os filmes então é isso. Ligados um pouco a isso. Os filmes institucionais aqueles são exclusivamente para o mercado Moçambicano para intervir sobre os problemas de saúde, o os problemas sociais etc. No fundo há parceiros no campo privilegiados por um exercício numa linguagem Moçambicana. E de alguma forma tem sido aquilo que tem mantido vivo, o discurso de uma linguagem Moçambicana.

Interview with Joao Paulo Borges Coelho. 16/08/05. Maputo. Mozambique.

What was the project you were involved with?

This project, we at the Centre for Technology had to design a development project with the Centre of Communication studies, so we were neighbors, and we were together in the project not just to film the project, but to put the cinema to work with the same objective. And so we, and the university of Nanterre, and UNICEF, they were involved supporting, I guess it was the first project supported by UNICEF with a 4x4 vehicle and Nanter provided us - this is the pre-video times - with Super 8, with good taping and sound and general equipment; a Nagra, very professional thing, something like, I am not sure how, but something like 20 Super 8 cameras with sound, and two 16mm cameras. People from Nanterre involved in cinema that gave us short-term courses. People, if you want names I can recall some of them; one is Miguel Arraje, he is important because he is the son of a very famous governor in Brazil, the other was Nadin Vanono, the third Philippe Constantin. Nadine Vanono - something...it is not Vanoato, but Vanono. And Philippe Constantin. And also somewhere in the process came Jean Rouge, you heard of him? He is that historian linked to cinema and - well Goddard was a more distant, but we also touched Goddard.

He was here in 1978 wasn't it?

Something like that. It was the beginning of the idea because we started documenting with cinema, the Centre for Communication studies, around Maputo. We did a couple of films, short documentaries about peoples lives. I can remember one about someone who had a business around a donkey that would transport stuff from one side to the other, something like that. And then we moved with a rather different perspective to Chinavane, which is some hundred kilometers from here. It was a project to support a centre for adult education - the alphabetization...the literacy, and it was the kind of scenario like, you know, they had problem with facilities so they did not have wood to build, and we saw it was a very clay rich zone, so we brought simple technologies to make bricks and to build with bricks and the cinema covered all the process. And so it was one stage different from the former. I mean, the cinema involved in making clear the technical options and so on. When we moved to Niassa it was a third stage, because Niassa it was

for us rather surprising, seeing it was really a remote area. Not just that people did not know of some of the vegetables, no tomatoes, no nothing there. But also that for most of them cinema was a complete strange. So it was a first time they would see cinema at home.

The films that you showed there were?

No we didn't do that. We learned fast that we couldn't just go around showing films. So we first start with like popular meetings trying to identify the problems and the scale of priorities. And so again building was a problem. Clay was a factor, I mean, it was a very rich soil in terms of clay, you know, so we started with youngsters, former refugees, to build a brick co-operative and we used...then we introduced material from the previous experience showing the process of making bricks to mobilize the people there, and it was very successful. So this cooperative started, we built a hospital and we...but it was like working in intervening in several layers. For instance, the authorities wanted to appropriate the bricks from the cooperative, we have to teach both sides how to negotiate, I mean, cooperatives were doing that job to sell the bricks to the state because it was a public maternity, and the stata local authorities had a budget, and this budget should be used to buy the bricks - not just to go there and pick up the bricks as if it was belonging to everybody because... you know, this kind of intervention, which was very tense at times because the state culture was like, 'We own everything'. Voluntary work and so on. But the interesting thing, I mean, we covered a lot of areas like, I am bringing just some of them just to give you an idea of the role of cinema. For instance, we went around the district and we found out that the smiths were not operating, it was a long tradition of smith work, iron work, but that they have raw material and so they.... And we went to Nampula, which is some 100kms away, and we found like a...we called it a cemetery of old military vehicles of the Portuguese in Nampula because Nampula was the head quarters. We found that we could take the springs of the old cars and this would be next to fit the smiths. So we would film first and go back and show them and they would discuss the parts they wanted, so we would come and take that iron and go and spread it in the villages and document the smiths restarting their work and stuff like that. Another, was they would come and ask us, 'You know, we produce sunflower but the oil we extract from the sunflower, direct from sunflower, is really grose and how come that this clean sunflower comes in bottles from the city?'. And so we would go to Maputo and film the factory and show the process and go back and discuss with them. And this would provoke rather different kinds of discussions, not just in terms of the purpose, technical purpose, so we can improve here and there, but also about the cinema itself. I mean, we discovered that in order to... but equally on - we call it in Portuguese 'montagem' - to cut?

Editing.

Editing. Right. And I'm not a cinema specialist, I have that course, we used the.... by the way we had a wonderful cinema man called Russell Parker, an American who was a schizophrenic, but in between the crisis, he was really great. He had been in Laos and Cambodia during the Vietnam war, and he just affected in such a heavy way that at times we had to call health people to take him to hospital and would spend there one month or two and back, but he did great in this work. But as I was saying, we found out that the acceptable editing for them, it was something that would last 24 hours to describe a day! I mean you could not jump from one stage to the other and assume that, I mean, you realize that this is done and then the next stage you had to describe in detail all the processes so that the people would accept. And at the same time, you had to be careful with shooting because, I mean, the first impression is the classical one; people go around the screen to see what is behind, you know? The second is, 'Why you cutting my cousins legs

when you filming? Where are their legs?', and that kind of proximity between reality - it was a very strange thing. And then editing became a matter of negotiating, you know? To be acceptable, you know? We cannot do this, this is long, you know, you would spend the day just to progress just this little bit. So they would accept some jumps towards the end, so this was really a very illuminating process for the people working on communication. I belonged to the other side, but we were together, and the discussions were together. But I learnt a lot, but it was their objective to learn with that. And it was like a self-education because the French, you know, I think they couldn't see the scope of this work, I mean they more interested in more like documentaries, supporting with material, but not such a deep involvement of cinema in developmental work. And for us, we found...that was not just something to document but it was really a weapon to do what we wanted to do much more in-depth telluric involvement. And this was very interesting for us and, you know, the pity is that nobody wrote a strong piece about this experience. And also another very important dimension of this was the discussion with the party and state powers, because at times, towards the end, cinema became so popular that we would - I mean on the top of a hill - just we had very strong sound system, we would just put Bob Marley on really loud and see five villages, people starting to climb the village because they knew after the music comes cinema, and it was a very strong feeling of power that you could mobilize. And then the party started to approach us, like, trying to make a sandwich of rallies with cinema, first we do first part of rally then you project your film, and then we do the second part of the rally, so that they could really get people together, and we would resist to that, I mean, we have other purposes, we have nothing to do with that. And things also become a bit tense at times in that front, you know?

How long had the project been going on before it transferred?

It lasted two years from more or less from 1980 to 1982. And it had the blacksmiths, the brick cooperative, the maternity, we organized district sports, athleticism, we introduced vegetables, the garden, we had Wednesday soup with the vegetables for pregnant women, it was another sense of power - I was checking in the long queue more than 100 people who was pregnant and who was not, to be entitled to the soup, so it was a way of showing how casual this could be useful. So all this kind of stuff. There is also a funny story that shows also the distance between the state and communities because when the maternity was ready he came on a helicopter, he was Minister of the Interior, who like to officially open the maternity, and as the helicopter was coming down, the wind just destroyed the roof of the hospital and he came out, you know, smiling and shaking hands and I was looking at him and I was thinking he destroyed my hospital - with patients inside! Another anecdotal story was that once came a military truck, that stayed over night in the village, the soldiers slept, and the next morning the truck had no tires, so they went around very angry and they arrested the shoemaker, because they started seeing people moving around with tire sandals. And it was a fascinating story, I mean the trial, when the shoemaker stood up and said that no way he could be blamed because everybody knew that he only worked with raw material provided by the clients, never worked with his own raw material, and everybody could witness that. And so he was sent away, he wasn't arrested. Which is very funny, I mean, the peasants took the tires and they cut the tires and they distributed the rubber and each one came to the shoemaker with his little piece of rubber to do the sandals. And as I was like a project coordinator, very young at that time, as I was going to Lichinga, the capital, and talking with the director, trying to explain...telling him this story and I was looking at the window at his office and seeing in the back yard of the District Director, they were burning hundreds of tires. And you feel how

distant is the state from the peasant, that they ca not understand how needed, how useful, this tire would be like 100km's away. So it is this kind of stories, funny and very sad, at the same time, that we were facing. And cinema...I mean, later on came the video, Televisão Experimental, and we tried to...because we also received from the French like a processing Kodak machine, very sophisticated with closed box, you put the tape in the one side so the film then becomes on the other side processed with sound and everything, but one day we put the tape and nothing would come from the other side, so it had a problem and we wrote to the French, and they said first we have to send a technician to find out if its an electrical, or chemical, or whatever problem, and then we will send a specialist to do the part. We managed to open it, to repair a little bit and then it broke for good. The Televisão Experimental was starting and we managed to pass some of the films into video, and we used some of the films in the training centers - the agricultural training centers, but the war was starting at the same time, and most of the films were burned in an attack in the southern Tete, it was a training centre, Renamo attacked and burnt everything - at least most of the films. I am very interested now to find out what have resisted in terms of video on TVM, I am postponing every day this contact I want to make to see if I can copy part of it because it is a wonderful documentation... And they were transmitted onto television some of them – in the early days of television. But since then, you know what I fear? Is that they could erase it, retape different stuff on top, I don't know but... I mean, worse things than that happened with the cinema archives. So maybe something like that happen, I'm not sure but I have to find out. Because one of our operators, one of the cameramen, he is working with TVM, called Arlindo Mulhovo.

Well that sounds really important; I have seen some of the Canal Zero material...

It is rather different. With *Canal Zero* it was the concept of spreading the message, we were working on the much more bilateral basis. I mean, using film to dialogue and for the peasants also to have a word, and a very heavy word, in terms of subjects and of everything.

The peasants who you were working with in the cooperative you working with, to what extent were they able to negotiate over the form of the filming and how the editing was done?

It was not outspoken but they had an impact. I remember several times we had to re-cut, to re-edit, because it was not acceptable for them. So in those terms it was a strong negotiation.

And were they involved in making the films as well?

Not really handling the cameras. We did not reach that 'post modern' stage. Because we could not also run the risk of loosing the sense of narrative, whatever it was, and how negotiated it was. But in technical terms, we did an effort to have it right, focused plans, I mean, not shaping – really doing the proper thing. But editing was a matter of discussion. But in the end it was rather clean material. The objective was it had to explain and to count the story of that process, so that everybody would understand, the peasants themselves in the first place. So that was the idea.

It seems that there was also a question of a process that was initiated in a certain place being able to be translated elsewhere, was that part of the idea?

Yeah, it was part of the idea definitely. So that we brought material from here to there, we refined, in our minds, what that was supposed to mean in terms of instrument and the other phase, when the films were burned, was that they were used already also in experiences not controlled by us. So in a certain way it was using a parallel process very distinct from Kuxa Kanema and, I mean, we had the conscious that we did not like Kuxa Kanema and you would talk down in a unilateral way of using cinema. So, in a way I think

we were also making theory in our own grounds. Without rationalizing entirely the process, we were building step by step an alternative. And the fact is that the public powers, like the Departamento de Trabalho Ideologico, the State and the Ministerio da Informaçã, they never dialogued with us. And we did not dialogue with them either. Because we had the clear idea that if they approached us they would control us, so we wanted to keep it marginal and that the umbrella of the university and try to develop this...I am sure this would have grown to a very different stage if it was not the war, because the war cut abruptly the access to the rural areas so...

So what happened? Why did the project stop?

In fact, the project there and you were lucky it stopped in '82 when the Governor called us, so it was myself from the department, on the part of the centre, and my colleague on the part of Centre of Communication Studies, and he called us and he said, because the problem was that we were developing on the cooperative became the centre of the problem, because they were doing really well. And the young people... who could do some money in the village was the elder from the village that were the representatives from FRELIMO. Yeah, they used to do clay pots sell them outside, suddenly the young were doing these bricks and making money out of it, and the old guards were accusing us of introducing capitalism because we were introducing money, And then the Governor called us because we always kept a very clean relationship with the government. But called us one day and said, 'Wonderful job you have been doing, but you cannot expect myself going against my men, the old people, so you have to leave. I'll write a nice letter to your Rectors saying that you did a wonderful job, but you to leave.' That is how we left. And the day after we left Renamo took the village in an attack in 1982, so that got the Governor kicked us out otherwise we would be in trouble.

So all of that work was effectively destroyed by Renamo?

It was really remote and Renamo really occupied it, and it became a provincial base of Renamo that village. So that is how it ended. Some of the material was used for other purposes as I said for the cooperatives, showing how to find solutions, how to implement solutions, but I was not involved anymore in that, it was like using the material... Again, this guy, so his name is João Azevedo, they did the project. I guess they were interested in... It was stronger link with like an anthropological cinema, like documentaries, probably the early days of a revolution seen from the grassroots, but filmed by them. And we started negotiating this kind of agreement that they would provide material and maybe they found our perspective, like, having some potential and they provided us with all the equipment plus two Citroen vehicles that would never run in the bush, so it was very funny to... So we kept them at the provincial capital Lichinga, and just to walk around in the city. And I do not recall them being in the village, never, since the beginning. Yeah, it was only the course they did here and that's it in Maputo, before we went to Niassa...But we also have to take another probably very interesting process is the Cine-Club, that had traditions from the colonial days. So there is a guy, Cardoso...I remember him when I was a kid he ran the Cine-Club in Beira and the colonial tradition of the Cine-Club was that they would show movies, some of them that were like censored in the commercial circuit, and lots of times the authorities come and close the Cine-Club, and they would re-open. So there, there was a democratic tradition and this like curiosity - not just for Potenkins, but also for more modern stuff like Chabrol... But the interesting thing which I feel is a good line of enquiry to follow is that the Cine-Clubs remained marginal after independence, filling the same space they had before in a way, because, I mean, you could not afford - the ideological work could not afford just opening entirely.

They opened, but with a different purpose, with a different stance, but technically close. If before you could not show subversive movies, the concept of subversion remained because you could bring capitalist propaganda and stuff like that. So the cine-club is interesting to see to what extent they kept this marginal role of providing a parallel view of the stuff, so you have several platforms here to work with, which makes it really interesting.

I think the cine-club, as a sort of site of democratic possibility, is also really important, but I have not really connected it with the experiments with video and so on which came later.

No, in a way I think our project was unique. It was unique because it was not on the basis of specialized group conveying the political message to the wide masses. It was a entirely different philosophy, while the rest I think was really on that basis. That basis was completely revolutionary, but we were considered in those days as Leftists.

The different logos for Kuxa Kanema and for O Campo, they say alot. Like the Kuxa Kanema has this circle emanating up from the centre of the country, and the ICS has the two loud speakers.

Yeah, for us that was unacceptable. We were questioning those projects used during the Revolution based on the same stuff. And sometimes they really become absurd. I remember doing the first meeting for communal villages. They installed those kind of loud speakers at the village, and at 4 o'clock in the morning they would start doing noise, telling the peasants, I mean urban people telling the peasants, 'Wake-up, it's time to work. The good peasant wakes up early to go to work.' I mean people that didn't know what they were talking about. I mean, the peasant always wakes up with the sun to go to work, they do not need loud speakers teaching him, you know, how to do his normal life. How his universe operates. So I remember looking at that, you know, an urban guy fast asleep forced to wake-up to tell the message to the ones that how....for long...it was ridiculous. But still, and the interesting thing is that that thing did not leave its marks. To the point of Cabaço, he is a personal friend of mine, and he was the Minister of Information at the time, now doing this research on cinema, he is asking me for testimonies, because they didn't even cover that process well, so its absurd... Maybe you know this stuff, I do not know if João Azevedo kept some reports, because there are several scattered small reports but not really one powerful written testimony of that. But I am sure that talking with him you could go a bit deeper into the technical stuff since he was a coordinator he was much more involved in that.

There was a certain degree of theorization based on this work on the ground then?

Yes. I mean not strong theorization but at least trying to illuminate the next steps, so it was like board for discussing stuff and definitely there was an intention that went as far as hiring people like Russell Parker, I mean, people who were more professional. He came as a camera man with a contract. So we were pointing not just doing developmental work and documenting, it was something more than that, because for the project we had developmental objectives and cinema had its own clearly defined objective. So that includes a certain amount of theorization and reflection.

So what was Russell Parker doing in this project?

He was filming everything. I think he was a very strange person. He had a doctorship in Physics in Berkeley, and then he left everything. He was much older than us, probably the Woodstock hippy crisis of the 60's, and he turned up to be a cameraman in Vietnam, and so began working on cinema. That is when he had this huge crisis and so... and in a way this is linked with previous if I can try to do some archeology of this, I did not follow with that guy, João Azavedo, he knew Russell Parker from previous cinema

experiences in Portugal when the coup d'état took place in 1975. They worked for a while in 1975, in the summer, at a cooperative where they were trying to make agrarian reform – a revolution when the people took the old manors, the houses and the lands. Yeah, and one of the guys involved in that was, perhaps you heard of this name Thomas Harlan.

Yes.

Yes this German guy who did the film then, so I think there is a connection. I mean, he came here...this is a long story.... and I am not sure if it's the proper way to do it but some of this radical people, they came after independence and some radical moves failed in Portugal as government became turning to the right and then they were more and more marginalized, and they became like radical groups, doing terrorist action called FP25, so Popular Forces 25, F.P, so its 'Forças Populares 25', and some of them turned up here and were working in development. I do not know if there is a connection but a lot of the people involved in cultural action doing those early days of the Revolution, came to Mozambique.

That is really interesting because there was also Lício Azevedo who was in Portugal, then went to Guinea and then came to Mozambique...

Yeah but Lício came somewhat later than the others.

He came in the 1980s?

Yes, that's right. These people, though, they came it was a different circuit. Lício, when he came, he was younger than these people. These people they had done some interesting things. One was Camilo Montagua, who was involved in those things like stealing a boat with hundreds of tourists doing Sol Azar days and taking the boat to Brazil, and hijacking a plane coming from Casablanca to Lisbon and going around in Lisbon sending leaflets against Sol Azar, those kinds of really leftist.. I am not sure if it is legitimate to link all this, but the fact is that these people came, and the fact is that probably some of the philosophy of the cinema work in rural Portugal immediately, I mean, in the revolution days came to Mozambique. But what happened here was entirely different from what happened there. Thomas Harlan made a film about those things. We tried to do something rather different, so maybe you could go much farther with João Azevedo on that discussion.

Harlan seems to have been a strange figure...

I mean even the gang that came later they looked at Harlan rather suspiciously, they did not like him.

So what were they doing then? Camilo Mortagua?

Mortagua came to work with the cooperatives at Ministry of Agriculture. But João Azevedo came straight from there to the Centre of Communications Studies here at the university. So this project was like we drew it together, myself, from the part of the Centre for Technology, and himself from the part of the Communication Centre. So we decided we have to do something together in way that we would put content to their job, and they would provide us to develop our job. It was like a... it's not like neighbors, but really one helping the other, structurally together. And it was really a very close relationship in a way that, so many years later we still have a distance in geographical terms, but a close relationship rooted in that past. And that is it. That is what I have to tell you about that. I hope I opened another area for you..

Yes, really it has.

These small islands that try. And maybe, I am not sure, maybe you could find something else but.. I mean of course Lício is a root of his own, you know, in the way that he managed to survive and to modernize his perspective in an interesting way, though it is a bit isolated, in my view... You know, I used to do

comic books in those days, its a very isolated experience, but the books were very successful...

Was that linked this project at all?

No, no completely different from that, but it was so successful that they would publish 20,000 copies. I did three - and it was mostly history... of Mozambique. And at some point we tried to develop like a, how can I describe, doing it, like, frame by frame.

Like a story board?

Right. But using those drawings – it was a huge work barely conceivable in those days.

Did you draw them yourself?

Yeah. And like stories of the armed struggle with some tricks to cut and change positions. And by coincidence it is what my kid is doing right now but with the computer, you know like, with stop motion, doing motion and doing loops, and it's much more easier to do these days. But we tried and we never managed to have a final product to do stories of the armed struggle with this kind of drawing. But I'm not sure if there is some material left and where maybe with him because we started...we tried to film that, you know. But it was a really slow and difficult process... Now I write novels, but now for me there is a clear distinction in what you do involving - it is hard to explain and even harder in English - involving people in a product and the artistic process, which for me its inegotiably like personal. So for me it's legitimate if you produce art individually and its not negotiating, it is what society has to put in you and you produce whatever you want. And I was doing the comic strips on that basis. I mean, it is my story board, it is my drawing and that is it. I'm not making an effort for people to understand. But people follow, because if you do not see the problem is that most of those initiatives you look at people as stable receptacles and you do all the work trying to do - that is completely unfair as a relationship, so you have look at people as the ones - and this does not do with literacy and it is the ones that do their own way, looking for their own references in an autonomous and positive way. And so I resisted very strongly to attempt to use that kind of expression in other contexts. I remember being called to work on a very specific action to give amnesty to Renamo guerillas, couple of years after that process with the cinema, like drawing for a story board defined by the ideological department. I would say, 'No, I am not on that'. They took some of the drawings but I said I do my own story board. And it was a very tense thing.

One of the things that struck me is that there seems to be very little cross-over between filmmaking and the writers and plastic artists here.

Yes, because the room for research was very narrow, it was very limited. I mean cinema and other forms of art were seen much more like instruments in the service of something else. That is probably what makes the difference Not just for – I mean, I do not want to be unfair – not just for reasons of ideology and control, but also for reasons of rationalizing resources. Cinema is a very expensive business, and artists, film makers who did not have the resources to express themselves unless they would join that kind of areas where the resources were available, I guess.

Polly Gaster actually talked about that, those kinds of discussions, and the National Institute and the conflicts there were between José Cardoso and others on one hand who wanted to do artistic films, and Polly Gaster and those, how can I say, those more involved in the administration and the allocation of resources who wanted production...

It was a very conservative, orthodox, stand of theirs. Behind of those arguments it was, for me, very orthodox thing. While comic books and black and white, it would be cheap and easy to do, and I would have the product and if it was not, Machado da Graça who was editing comic strips involved in that , and

coming to my place and say, 'Let me publish that'. So I did not have to negotiate anything, I just had to produce something, that is a luxury that the cinema people could not afford, you know? And so I managed to choose this kind of... at least with the cinema our experience was something else, we did not look at as something artistic. It was something else, really positive and it was a search of a different narrative language, or if you...

It was a very different idea of what cinema might do in terms of social transformation and more embedded in ideology you mean?

But discussing issue openly. It was not about delivering ideology, or rather what I mean is that we were very conscious of that.

Interview with Sol de Carvalho, 12 September 2005, Cinema Scala, Maputo, Mozambique

Perhaps we could start by talking about how you first got involved with cinema?

I first got involved in cinema before thinking about Mozambique. Just before university I failed the last year and I asked my father if I could make an application for the film school in Portugal in 1973. Out of seventy people, I came second. Then I took the papers to my father and said, 'Look, I passed the application', so I wanted him to let me be a filmmaker rather than an architect or a doctor or something like that. He said yes, and then I went to Portugal to study at the Conservatorio de Cinema. That was 1973 to 1974. Then in 1974 was the Revolution, and I decided to come back. Then when I arrived I wanted to get into cinema but at that moment I was much more involved in politics. I was twenty years old and there was a Revolution going on and a new world. I asked FRELIMO to give me a job, and they said that I should go and work in radio. So I went to work in radio rather than cinema, and spend four and a half years at Radio Moçambique, and then I asked again to go and work in cinema. But during that time when I was working in radio I was also half involved with cinema – writing texts and making criticism and stuff like that. But not producing, only after working in radio did I start to produce.

So your first encounters with cinema, what were they? Where you involved in the ciné clubs?

Yes I was. At that time when I went to Portugal I was already involved in the Ciné-Clube de Lorenzo Marques with Guilherme Alphonso, Raphique and other guys. I was involved in that movement. You must remember that it was close to May '68, but May '68 arrived in Mozambique a little bit late – in 1971, 1972! But at that time there was a boom of cultural events. The whole 'rock' generation and stuff like that. But I was more in the area of cinema.

What were the ciné clubs like? In what kind of environment did they function?

It was basically politically Left wing, but in the context of colonialism and fascism at the same time. In that environment we had to use all the forms that you could use at the same time to open the minds of the people to new information, to new things that are going on in the world, stuff like that. And of course the history of cinema has always been linked to social events, so there was a group of people who moved into the ciné clubs and started from there.

Where there internal conflicts within the ciné clubs?

In that case it was just the ciné club of Lorenzo Marques. There was a section of cinema that produced a very interesting stuff because for the first time Georges Sadul's *Story of Cinema* was published in Mozambique. I've still got my copy – it was published on this rotting paper page by page. A huge volume, and we published it at the university at the association. But they didn't have regular activities of showing films, that was more the ciné clubs. So in fact when I moved to Portugal I joined the Ciné Club of Lisbon, and the Ciné Club of Lisbon had strong link to the extreme Left-wing in Lisbon. And this was the reason why I jumped into political activity – the cinema!

So your politicisation was through cinema...

Through the cinema, yes.

Was your decision to come back to Mozambique political as well?

Yes. I remember sitting down with my friend Henrique Caldeira after the Revolution, we were participating in the same political movement there with other guys from the cine club. And we sat down and said, 'What the hell are we going to do? Is this our land?' Because all the political activity that we did in Portugal was to try to support the liberation of the colonies, so the question was 'What are we doing here?' And the other question was that FRELIMO at that time was already presenting us with a Socialist option for the future. So we could see that there was more possibility that something could happen in Mozambique than in Portugal, in the environment of Europe that would be very unlikely to happen. And I think also a little bit of adventure, at twenty years old we said, 'Let's go and find out what's happening in our country!' But I think that basically it's a question of roots. We ourselves didn't feel exactly at home in Portugal.

Before you went to Portugal, what kind of information was available about FRELIMO?

As I said it was much more at the university than at the ciné club. The ciné club was much more cautious. At Café Continental, here opposite, at Continental a group of young boys used to spend the whole afternoon with Goncalves, a former leader of the Communist Party in Portugal, he was the one that trained all of us. And in the ciné club there were lawyers, lots of people, democrats, who were around, so we were the young generation who came there to drink from those ideas. And they helped us to open our minds to something different. But we in a situation were we, our generation, were fighting our parents, our country and the police! All the forces of order were against us, and we wanted to liberate ourselves. That's the reason why we became involved in that. It was a generational thing, it was a political thing, and it was also a personal thing I suppose.

So it was when you were first back in Mozambique working in radio, that the INC was being set up and when Jorge Rebelo was Minister for Information. And your involvement at the INC began a little later...

In 1980. Before that I was called there to write some texts for films. I also made one of the *Kuxa Kanema* documentaries and I was writing some reviews and criticism about film for the radio. I was always linked, but not making films. Then I asked permission to move to the INC, and that was given to me. But the day that I was supposed to move they sent me to work on *Tempo* magazine. That was in March 1979. I worked from November 1974 to March 1979 in radio. So when I went to *Tempo* I said 'What the hell?' The government has allowed me to move to the INC, and you are pulling me away. The point was that Mia Couto had asked the minister to have a team because he'd just been appointed director of *Tempo* magazine. And as he had selected me, I agreed to work for *Tempo* for one year and then go to the movies! And during that time when I was working for *Tempo* magazine, as you have seen, I started to be more and more involved with cinema.

What kind of journalistic work on cinema did you do at Tempo at that time?

Much more about the film seasons and weeks of cinema – week of African Cinema, week of Brazilian Cinema, Cuban cinema – all of those kind of things I was writing up for *Tempo* because I was part of the cultural section of the magazine. International news and then cultural stuff. But my institutional involvement with the INC started with a commission to decide whether or not films should be selected – censorship and classification. The Commission for the Classification of Spectacles – it was called something like that.

When was that?

I don't remember the exact date. In the late 1970s I was there. That was when my involvement started more specifically. While I was at *Tempo* magazine I did something that I'm very proud of – a very in-depth article, about twelve pages! I convinced the director to give over twelve pages of the magazine to cinema. Guess what for – Karate films! I researched the whole story of Bruce Lee and karate films because I was already fighting with the idea, and I'm still in that position, that if you want to fight imperialism on the cultural level it's not going to work if you just do something very intellectual. You need to be avant-garde, you need to be deep enough, complex and intellectual but at the same time you need to speak to your audience. So I was very interested in knowing why it was that those films spoke so much to their audience. I think that this question is completely valid nowadays, because we still have this fight about how you can produce something that is both artistically good and at the same time speaks to your audience. That's my feeling about doing cinema. I came to some very interesting conclusions. For instance, one of the reasons why karate films were so linked with our audience and cowboy films are not so much is that in cowboy films they use guns and in karate films you use your hands. So this audience has this identification with the hero who can fight the oppressor, the invader or whoever is disturbing you, with your hands. And that's what Karate films' subliminal message is saying.

So it was the message that everyone has the potential to fight back?

Exactly! And the audience can identify with that hero who was fighting against those monstrous empires with their hands, which is a completely different situation from when you do science fiction and you use some technology, when the people here do not have access to the same technology. Even simple things like guns. At that time the people had no access to guns. So Karate films had that identification, quite apart from being the Third World, so there could also have been a racial identification. And the story of Bruce Lee is a little bit like that.

And this was all very important because it made me realise that I would like to make films that spoke to people on different levels, which could be intellectual, good artistically, but still speak to people.

In terms of the criteria that was being developed for cinema at the time, what were the objectives?

At the Commission for Classification of Spectacles there were basically three criteria. One was pornography, the second was gratuitous violence, and reactionary-ism – that is films that promote colonialism, right-wing films. At that time we would definitely not pass a film by Leni Riefenstahl, we wouldn't pass the old Portuguese colonial films, and anything else that promotes colonialism and racism would have been shown in cinemas in Mozambique. But I don't remember us banning lots of films because the contradiction of that Commission was that very soon the person in charge of it was the same person who went abroad to buy the films. So the moment those films were chosen, you know that they would fit in Mozambique, so in a way we weren't censoring the enemy, we were censoring ourselves! That

was a bit confusing for me at the time. I had problems about making judgements about what's good for me, what's good for you. But the one-party State ideology helped us to think that we knew what was good for everybody, which was a mistake of course, but that was the way of thinking at that time. But also we were invested in this sense of power – that is the trap of these things – you're going to choose what is good for the people. It was done in good faith, but still it was a mistake. No one has the right to choose what's right for other people.

How would you characterise the initial phase of production at the INC?

I would describe it as heaven! I don't think there was one situation in the world where you could arrive in a place and try to make a film with all the production means at your disposal. That was what happened at that time – on the condition that you don't do anything against the government of course. But from a production point of view that period was a period of very enthusiastic initiatives, of very enthusiastic projects, very interesting projects also, where everything was up for discussion. What happened was the government decided to nationalise all aspects of cinema (and I was involved in drafting that law, by the way) – distribution, exhibition and production. So all the means that existed in Mozambique came to the State, all the cinemas went to the State, and all the distribution was nationalised. And one very important thing you must remember was that at that time there was no television. So there was a time in 1978, 1979 when cinema was the second or third highest earning company in terms of profits produced for the State. Because the whole idea of nationalisation is that you have an enterprise and it produces money that goes to the State, who distributes it for other things. And I think that for a while the INC was the second or third company. And why? Because most of the other companies weren't profitable, whereas the INC could only have profits because the money that they paid for the films was transferred from dollars to *metapais* at the time when we began using our own currency. That transfer was on legal terms, so there was a time when the official rate was 1: 40 and the black market rate was already 1: 2,000. So it was very cheap to buy films, very very cheap. So you pay for that film to the State and then distribute it to our own cinemas, so it was State money to the State. So if you're buying from outside on this official rate, its very cheap and at the same time inside you have this incredible audience. I mean, I've seen karate films playing at Scala, Gil Vicente to such a reception – full houses of 800, 900, 1,000 people in one night. So I'm talking about big audiences. I mean you look at the cinemas here in Mozambique and you see that they are big, right? Here in the Scala we have 1,100 seats. At that time the cinemas were full every day! That was the only leisure time activity in Mozambique at that time – to see karate films, adventure films, whatever, but also to see interesting films. At that time, also, lots of countries gave us films. So we saw lots of French films, lots of Italian films, I'm not talking about just the Soviet Union. Cuban films, African films, we have been able to see all these films that we're not able to see now because now its just Hollywood action films. End of story.

So there was a huge differential between the price that we paid for the equipment and to buy the films, and the income that we generated with the exhibition. We were able to have all the equipment we wanted and all the money that we wanted, and without the organisation that we needed, without budgeting. There was no question of, say 'let's budget the film and you have X amount of money to do the film'. No, you did the film, the production-manager said yes, you had the editing table for free, for two weeks, or three weeks, or four weeks and you didn't have to pay anything. And if you used the camera for two weeks or four weeks it was the same thing – it was heaven! I don't think we have a situation anywhere where a filmmaker could just take a camera, take an idea, and just have all the equipment there to do it. We had that

situation. The ... from 1975 to the 1980 was that one. I think that in a certain way we responded to what the demand was. Because when FRELIMO arrived, and this comes back to something that is very important for your research, which is the 1st Ideological Conference, so when FRELIMO arrived in November 1975 at C in Cabo Delgado we (I say we because I was there) have made the first Conference of Ideological Work. That conference decided the priorities for Information, the Press, and so on. The concept was that radio would be the big priority, because radio was the means that could best reach the people. Then the press was considered to be at the same level of importance as the image. Why? Because FRELIMO realised through their own experience of radio (because they had their own liberation radio during the struggle), their journal and films. They knew the importance of moving pictures and they knew the important work those films made during the armed struggle had done all over the world. So they knew that the only way that they could reach the people with the message that they wanted to project was through cinema and radio. And that's the reason why the government supported this policy of nationalisation and took over this vehicle. So during those five years they did that in a dispersed way. What I'm talking about now is the power objectives towards cinema. I think that Rebelo's main worry at that time was that we – the journalists – were not at all 'yes men'. We were disruptive and put in brackets lots of the orders that were given to us, and we've questioned those orders in a fight for liberation. In the INC what happened was that the people who came there were not simple workers, simple bureaucrats. In fact the guys who set up the INC were filmmakers. So this struggle over freedom and the quality of expression and the constraints of a one-party country that wanted to use cinema politically was always here in the history of the INC. But during that whole time none of those parties won, meaning that that struggle still exists at the moment, but meaning that they weren't able to destroy the ability to create new things and to take artistic routes. And on the other hand we have not been able to convince the government that there was another way of doing things. So none of the parties won, but both parties used the situation. Because the party used the fact that we are there, and even if the guys are not so disciplined, they're doing the job. Because we believed in FRELIMO, we believed that a change needs to be made, so we weren't radical on the other side of the barrier. It's about the methodology, the one-party control, censorship and those kinds of things. So there was a group of guys, they're not very disciplined, but they're doing the job. And on the other side, we have a very splendid situation and we're going to take it and try and do our things. Especially during that period, because the beliefs of the people working at the INC were the same beliefs as FRELIMO's there was no basic conflict. There was a conflict about methodology, so things have been balanced. And I think that they created very enthusiastic projects for that time. And also there was agreement that the war was a very bad thing – there was the invasion of Mozambique and war against Rhodesia – on those things we were agreed. I would characterise that moment as a very active and very alive, but very dispersed. One initiative here, one initiative there. Then the concept of *KuxaKanema* began.

Before we get on to talking about the period in which the INC's work became more systematised, I'd like to ask you about the interview you did with Godard, when he talked about his concept of 'cinema as television'.

I did an interview with Godard – it was basically a political interview. I think that part of the interview was published in a magazine, or something like that. But basically Godard was called after Rebelo, after the first experience of television. Because the first experience of television changed everything. So first we need to talk about *KuxaKanema*, and then we need to talk about television, because it was part of this thing.

Ok.

Because during that period there was another experiment that was very important – I think that João Paulo Borges Coelho talked to you about it. There were a group of guys who tried to make a kind of anthropological cinema, where the cameras and stuff were with the people, and you make the films with the people and show the films to the people. It was very linked with the ideas of Jean Rouch. That group was from the university. There was one meeting, I remember, of those people with the INC. It was completely a university experience – made in that institutional framework. But it was a very important experience too, because it was a completely different way of doing things – small scale, film what happens and give it back to the people according to what the people want. If they want ten minutes they will have ten minutes, if they want three hours they will have three hours. And I'm telling you about this because it is a very interesting experience, and later I had a very similar experience when in 1986[?] I shot three hours of Samora Machel, and afterwards I showed it to an audience of four hundred on a television set, and they said 'Where is the rest?' And I said, 'Well, that's all I've got'. Those are people, you must remember, who have never seen one single image. So if you go to those remote islands where people have not seen one single moving image, you can show for ten hours and they will be there for ten hours, no problem, because everything is new for them. So that group tried to make something based on that concept. At the other end there was at the INC a number of very important influences, like Med Hondo, like Sembène, African cinema and the Brazilians. And the Brazilian filmmakers were already in that period involved with Ruy Guerra's initiative at the INC. Ruy Guerra was around at that time and made two things – *Mueda, Memoria e Massacre*, and that is still called 'the first fiction film of Mozambique' because it's a theatre play that was shot, and ...*Buffalo*, which was about the culling of buffalo on the reserve to reduce the quantities. He also filmed the first dance festival, shot in colour. It never was finished that material, and its amazing material.

Ok, so Ruy Guerra was there all that time, coming and going between here and Brazil. So there was the Brazilian influence, and Med Hondo was making conferences and speaking to everybody there, and there was the whole concept of African cinema and doing something new. Remember that at that time we were very proud about doing something completely different in Africa.

How was that conceptualised?

Ah it was more a behaviour thing. Because there was all this corruption that had been around for so many years, and Samora was completely against it. I mean there was nothing in the shops, but no corruption. I think it was more on that level, more a question of behaviour and a cultural thing, because of the leadership.

So it was more about personal comportment and behaviour?

Yes the whole idea of 'the New Man'. The 'New Man' must be born. The person who wrote about the 'New Man' was Sergio Vieira. So in 1979 through the 1980s there was this change in the Ministry of Information. So Rebelo went out and Cabaço came in. And I think that in August 1980, but I'm not sure about this date, it was the first emission of television.

In April 1981, wasn't it?

No no wait. April 1981, yes you're right, the first broadcast. But the very first emission was at the trade fair in August 1980, where television was broadcast for the first time, but only for that one week. What they did, because there was no television, was put television sets in the *bairros* and that's where the signal was directed to. And that's why Godard got involved, because Godard at that time was very involved in alternative ways of doing cinema, he was involved with the Palestinians, video stuff. They did this first, and

very soon people were, like 'Oh my God, this is live show!' Live show used only to be on radio, but now you are live on the image. They very soon saw the potential of it. The Italians supported them in doing 'Experimental Education Television'. Then, ok fantastic – all these experiences that happened in cinema, but where things were very heavy and time-consuming, could be done on television. Now the power thought – we have cinema, we have television, how are we going to cook all of this together? And that was, in my opinion, the fantastic conceptualising of José Luís Cabaço. Even if I had lots of conflicts with him in my own history of my life, I have to say that he conceptualised it very well. And this was when he called Godard. And the idea of Godard's was bought by the Mozambicans for a while. It was a very simple idea. You have the opportunity to do a completely new kind of television – to do television with the conditions that cinema has, that is, that you go together to see a movie, so let's go together to see a television. So ok, television is there, much more massive, you put the television sets in the *bairros* and don't sell individual television sets to anybody privately. Its only available to public audiences, so the people in the *bairros* will go and see it. Of course it was completely a dream. But in that interview that Godard gave to me he was very aware of that. He knew that if there was no political will private television sets would kill the public television set network. But for a while it worked. So what happened was they decided to put the television sets in the *bairros* and start to do experimental broadcasting. And who is going to support the making of that? The guys from radio – so I was called, Joao de Sousa [?] was called, other guys were called, Jorge Costa was called, three or four guys were called from radio to do the first transmissions. Then the technicians would come from radio, and for a while the INC was left out. But Cabaço realised, 'Wait, wait, wait... we need to put the INC in control of this.' I must tell you one thing – underneath all these things – the change of ministries happened because of this, because Rebelo was against television. Because he knew that television would get into people's houses and the possibility of using television for public means would be lost. Cabaço was very much in favour of it. And then Samora decided that he was the right man to do it, and he called Cabaço. Samora didn't push Rebelo away, in fact he pushed Rebelo into a stronger position, but he took him out of government. So Cabaço very quickly realised that the only possibility of producing for the television should come from the INC. But how, if you're producing a film just once in a while? One film here, one film there, television required, even if it was experimental broadcast once a week, was already required its own produced stuff because the danger was that very soon we knew that once the soap operas hit the televisions, we'd be fucked! We'd have failed. So everybody was very aware of that. And Cabaço knew that. And Godard said to me two things during that interview that were very interesting. He said to me 'Look you don't need to be a doctor to lead a country, you need to be a good cook.' I remember this phrase very well. Because the good cook is the one who takes all the ingredients and puts them together and gets a very good result. Of course he said to me he'd like to make a film with Samora Machel as the main actor, but that was out of the question because everybody who knew Samora Machel knew that wasn't going to happen. And he also said one thing, he said: 'You must be very aware because television is having the same effect on the political power that it has on children. I remember this phrase also, it was completely accurate because in fact that was what happened.

But what happened on an institutional level was that Cabaço realised he had to 'cook' all these elements together. To have the television as experimental in order that television will grow into normal television, and in order that we don't lose the identity of growing a 'Mozambican' television you need to organise production capacity to fit the television, and that production capacity was at the INC. Because television

had none. What could be done is that the INC would supervise the television, and at the same time would grow to fit the television. What needed to be done was to start creating a concept of making films to fit television. And then we don't have a school, we don't have anything. And that was when Ruy Guerra came in again, spoke with Cabaço. Cabaço was very clever. He called Godard and he called Ruy Guerra. They were his friends, especially with Ruy Guerra, he was very good friends with him, and he conceptualised this idea. And it's at that point that I came on board. Until that moment all the production had been very dispersed, disorganised and so on. So what we decided to do was to institutionalise the distribution, production and exhibition. And we give them financial autonomy. So what was going to happen was that the distribution was going to buy the films that you produce. Even if it's internal, even if it's forced to buy, but the budgets for the production will come from the results of what you do. That was the first nice idea that was made at that time. So you stop making films for free, you sell your films to distribution, and with the money you make other films. Of course the money was decided by us, how much the film was going to cost was decided by us, how much they are going to pay for the film was decided by us. I mean it was the same group of people. But the idea of organising this was a very nice idea because for the first time we realised that we needed to know that there was a cost and a price for what we do.

So the second idea was that, as there was no school of cinema, how could we create a school of cinema? And the third idea, which was linked to this, was that we needed to produce fast. And to produce fast? What? What? What? What? And they went back to the BBC and its concept. The BBC in the colonial era. What the colonialists had done here, and what they did in Mozambique, was newsreels. In fact before television, this was the concept that the British have used in the way they employed cinema, and the way the Americans used cinema, and the way Hitler used cinema. Do documentaries, do the newsreel, the newsreel being a package of news on a format of 35 mm. So it was decided that we should go back to this concept and use this concept as a base to produce something very regular in Mozambique that would be ours. And that was the *KuxaKanema* in its second phase. Because the *KuxaKanema*, I'm not going to go over the whole story of *KuxaKanema* and the meaning of the two words and all these things, because it started during that period of 1975 to 1980. But as I said to you the first *KuxaKanema* were dispersed and made one here and one there, and absolutely irregularly. So they have decided that we were going to make it regularly, we're going to do it weekly. Do we have the conditions? Yes. It's going to take all the machines that are old. The Bolex – which was still used to work like that! The Boleux [?], etc, etc. And keep the new equipment, which would give them two Steinbecks ... the lab in black and white to work. And, and this was a very important thing, we did have the negatives coming from Germany... the DDR at that time was giving us all the negatives you could want. That was also very safe money that you had for producing films because you didn't pay for the negatives. You only paid for the work in the lab, because all the chemicals came from Germany, from the DDR, and paid back in prawns or politically, I don't know. Then they have decided at that time, which was when I was called. So the group was – me, I was called by Rui and the ministers said I should come here and leave *Tempo* and you're going to lead this project of *KuxaKanema*. You're going to have a group of people who are still in the institute of cinema who are going to do the documentaries and Shorback [?], he was the technical director of television, you're going to be leading the television. And that's the three parts. What was the structure of the INC at that moment. Let's introduce here the personnel who we are going to need. Cardoso and Luís Simão, who were production manager and production manager's assistant, and Pedro Pimenta's the deputy director, who was linked with the

production side of television. Pedro, Cardoso, Simão, me and Shoback was the group that had all the meetings in order to conceptualise the *KuxaKanema*, to conceptualise the documentaries, and conceptualise the television. So we went around in meetings and meetings and meetings, and there were two Brazilian guys who came to help us, Luis and Elisa, Rui was there and we discussed and discussed it. And it ended up in one big meeting where Cabaço said all of these ideas to the audience (I mean all the filmmakers and people like that). And then it was decided that I would be the director of *KuxaKanema*, Pedro Pimenta would be the General Production Manager, and he's going to lead the documentary group, and still *KuxaKanema*, but *KuxaKanema* would have autonomy, distribution and exhibition outside, and Shoback on television. Then I was supposed to start, the meeting was in November I think, and I was supposed to start in May. So I was supposed to conceptualise all the *KuxaKanemas*, which I did, and make *KuxaKanema* '0'. And to do the *KuxaKanema* '0' I had to make a trip all over the country where we made thirty small 3-minute films, and this was to feed that concept, which was the concept of a newsreel with three-minute inserts. So I did that trip all over the country, and when I came back we started a discussion, and I was punished, but that's not important about what my process was. ... But at the same time to organise all this production properly, the INC side of it and the *KuxaKanema* side of it, you need to have training. And Rui was in charge of providing this training. And that was when Alberto Graça and Vera, for the production side of it, and Antonio Luis on camera, and Labi on sound, those four guys have arrived in Mozambique and made a long-term training for all the technicians of the INC. Alberto and Vera were giving training in production for us – what is an executive producer, what is a synopsis, this kind of thing. So that was my first work, deep work, for the INC was to produce the manual of production, which still exists, was made during that training, because that training was then written up section by section, and then Alberto and I sat down and wrote everything on paper and we produced a book.

Are the Manual of Production and the documents in which KuxaKanema was conceptualised still available?

I don't have either of them. The *Manual of Production* is available in the copy at the INC, but I don't have the others, or the document in which I disagreed with the directors of the INC. On the 1st of May I was supposed to start, and I'll tell you this in the simplest way, I said to them that its not right that there should be the poor guys and the rich guys at the INC. The poor guys were the *KuxaKanema* and the rich guys will be the documentary filmmakers. So they'll have the Rolex 35 ... and the new Steinbecks, and we'll have the Bolex and stuff like that. I was requiring that, I mean, information and documentaries should be both parts of the same coin so we should also have better equipment because if somebody has the ability to do something that will be more than just simple news that we should be able to do it. And that was the root of the conflict. It was the whole tradition of 'You want to walk, well before you walk with the feet, then I'll give you shoes, they I'll give you'. You know. So there was this concept that the only way to start working with cinema is to start to work with Bolex, and I said no, its not right. So that was the conflict with me, but that conflict with me is not very important. Its only important because in the original idea I was supposed to stay there and I would be replaced by one of the other directors. All the directors of the documentaries were not supposed to come to *KuxaKanema*. But after I left they made the decision, they realised they made the wrong decision about leaving me there alone, and that the other guys should also go and work on *KuxaKanema*, and they did it, and I only came back to *KuxaKanema* in 1984, after three and a half years.

But that is all internal conflicts, the more important thing is the conceptualisation that happened at that time. What did happen later, very very soon, was that they started to loose control of the television, and

when I say loose control of the television, its not about political control about what is said there, it's the vehicle itself, because suddenly, I mean the President knew that he was doing a speech at eight in the morning and he knew that the speech would be on television at eight in the evening, and we at the INC could not provide it that fast. So what Godard said is going to happen. And of course the ministers are going to have their own sets, and then the rich people started to buy their own sets, because television sets were around, in Swaziland they could start to go to Swaziland, and then boom boom boom television has done with us the same thing that it does with children. I mean they lost control of that. And even after twenty-five years they have still not released that disease. Since that period the means that have been given to television, money and conditions and stuff have never been equalised to what they have required from television – I mean political control, to be there all the time, to be spreading our news, but that should be a contract between the government and the television. They never gave the conditions to the television to do that. And then in a colour environment you're giving them *KuxaKanema* in black and white to see. Come on! No. No way. Then the rest is history. The rest is the free market society in 1986 [?]. But during that time there was a balance. When the INC was still producing some films, films that could go on television, there was already a conflict between colour and black and white, and that was clear then, and it was understood by the INC that they should move to fiction. And that was when *Os Tempos dos Leopardos* came in 1984. In that context you can understand why, in 1984, there was the decision to do a fiction film in colour, you can fill the television and there is still a role for the INC to produce fiction, because television will take care of the documentaries and the news and all of those things. Because they knew that they would be losing out, but the INC had a very strong card, and that was that the television was only for Maputo, and the cinemas were still showing *KuxaKanema*. So there was that competition. Ok so you'll do the newsreel for Maputo but we'll do the newsreel for the country. So that means that the reason why *KuxaKanema* should exist – it never disappeared during that period until 1986 to 1987. Because there was always this moment of truth – what about the rest of the country?

But also concurrently there was a rise in some projects done with video and shown on Canal Zero?

Canal Zero was able to deal with the television system from the very beginning, out of that concept, because, well that's a different story, and you need to interview Jores de Maya [???]. He was in charge. And Jores he can tell you what the concept of that department was. But basically I'll tell you – it was to take information to the villages. The Instituto de Comunicação Social was set up to make education information for the villages, so radio, film and newspapers, and stuff like that. So at the time that they did the experimental television, they moved to the ICS. So those in those first months between April and August they worked at the ICS. And that's when three of us were called, and we said no we don't agree with that, we're not going to work on television, so-called experimental television. We want to go and work at the INC.

So the docu-dramas as a form really only got going later?

Later, much later. I mean now you need to go to the other story, which was *Kanemo*, and how, after *Os Tempos dos Leopardos* until the free-market society, how cinema collapsed. That is a different story that is dealing again with the changes in leadership at the Ministry of Information.

Who was the Minister of Information after Cabaço?

Teodato. Who in my opinion was the guy who killed the INC because he pushed to lead the whole area by one guy who was completely incompetent, and that is Mateus Chavier [?]. And he lead the whole INC to

collapse. Helped by the fire. Well, that's another story. I was not involved in that because I came back in 1984 to work on *Os Tempos dos Leopardos* on the condition that I would work only one year on *KuxaKanema*. And I've worked exactly one year. On the day that I finished that I said bye bye.

So where did you go afterwards?

I went to a photography cooperative. And then the collapse of the INC happened later. And I went to the photography cooperative and I started to make video on a United Nations project to do with agriculture and stuff like that, training, using video to train personnel, and stuff like that. That was a different story. So the collapse of the INC started during that period, with television growing up more and more, and becoming stronger. I mean, no television sets in the *bairros* anymore! But that's a different story. We'll talk another day.

Interview with Margaret Dickinson, London, 13 October 2005

When was it that you came to Mozambique and how was it that you found yourself there?

Did Polly not tell you the story? It must have been 1967. Polly for various reasons was keen to go back to Africa. She had spent a bit of time in West Africa. I was then working as a dubbing assistant in feature films, which was well paid at that time but not very intellectually stimulating, so I was keen to have a break and use some of this money for something. So we just decided that we would make an overland journey to Africa. The assumption at the time was that we couldn't do anything useful in Africa at that stage. I had a friend there in the copper belt, where at that time you could get jobs in, and we thought that we would just get an ordinary bog-standard typing job. So we'd just go out and come back that way. And it happened that, when we got to Egypt, we just happened to be changing money in the Hilton and Eduardo Mondlane was in the queue and he didn't reveal himself to us but you know he's an anthropologist and he likes to know about everybody as anthropologists tend to do. So he started talking to us and kind of pumping us for what we were doing in Cairo and where we came from. And of course he discovered that Polly's godfather was Thomas Hodgkin, and then he thought that these people might be interesting, so he asked us for a coffee and when he heard that I was a film editor he asked us to call on his wife Janet when we got to Tanzania because he thought they had a lot of unedited film of the struggle, the armed struggle. So some considerable time later when we showed up in Tanzania we called on Janet. I think that Eduardo was away or something, or couldn't be found, anyway, we were asked to hang around in Tanzania for a little bit and while we were waiting for things to clarify they had lots of things that needed doing and Janet had started using Polly to help her in running the Mozambique Institute, which is not to be confused with the later anti-FRELIMO organisation of the same name, but at this time before Independence the Mozambique Institute was a kind of civilian programme, charitable, which could get funds from the West. In particular it had a Ford Foundation Grant. So she had a little money for volunteer's wages. In order to do something with me they asked me to help out in the information department of FRELIMO.

So was that working with Jorge Rebelo at that time?

Yes. He was my boss. So then what transpired, when the film eventually turned up it was about half a dozen rolls of 8mm, which there wasn't very much that one could do with.

What was it film of and who had taken it?

It was film of the liberated areas. Cabo Delgado.

And that was shot by FRELIMO?

Yes it had been shot by them. Somebody had given them an 8mm camera.

That seems to be to be a very important point, that so early on in the struggle there was a recognition, even if FRELIMO didn't have the means at the time to realise it, of the potential of the moving image...

Yes, well they were keen. So with that discovery that was when the idea of making a film was born. They wanted a film, they thought they'd got some that just needed me to edit it, but they didn't. So that was the kind of starting point. But then Polly and I stayed on for about a year because they were so short of people who could type, and people who could type in English and that kind of thing, that they found us useful. We were like VSO volunteers, working for them. Not free VSO but doing it independently. So they kept us on in that capacity. I was working in the Information Department and Polly was working in the Mozambican Institute, and I was working with Jorge and she was working with Janet. But then during this year Eduardo started writing a book and he didn't have time to do it, so Sergio Vieira and I started to ghost the book for him.

Was that Struggle for Mozambique?

Yes. You'll see that there is a little acknowledgement to us both in it. So then when Polly came back to England she started, probably the initials were CUFMAG. She started the first solidarity movement. There had been nothing in England before, although the Movement for Colonial Freedom had hosted some sort of meetings. But by that time they were quite a moribund organisation. Like, are you in touch with MAC – the Mozambican Angolan Committee – that's the kind of leftover from the original solidarity movement, which is run by a few oldish people who are probably thought by people of your generation to be out of touch with how things are. And the Movement for Colonial Freedom was kind of rather like that then. So Polly started this new solidarity movement. I came back a bit later than she did, and as soon as I came back I joined it and I made as one of my main aims trying to make this film.

What were the main concerns of the group at that point?

I can put it in a broad political context. It was supporting FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola and the PAIGC in Guinea, because they were progressive movements that promised socialism. This was when socialism wasn't a dirty word. You have to remember it was a completely different political climate. It was promising a socialist democratic future for Africa and not neo-colonialism. It was a small organisation whose idea was to dynamise bigger ones, so it didn't attempt to set up a large membership organisation in competition with anti-Apartheid, it saw itself as a kind of ginger group. So any of the activities, demonstrations, boycotts and things, it would work with Anti-Apartheid. I think that Third World First got going around that time, and one of the big aid agencies, but one that has always been quite political, War on Want perhaps. We called ourselves jokingly a 'self-perpetuating elite'! Because we didn't have a membership, we just invited people to join or people joined if they came to meetings, it was a fairly spontaneous thing. The reasons for doing this, and there were endless discussion about whether this was how we should be or whether we should become a membership organisation, because in a small organisation a very small number of people can completely overturn the policy. I mean you could just have

had a group of people coming in and voting for, for instance, the precursor of RENAMO. But the other reason was that it's a huge amount of work running a membership organisation. Anti-Apartheid already existed and was a big and respectable organisation, under whose wing it was felt that we could perfectly well be as a ginger group. What it did was provided information, tried to encourage academics working on Southern Africa to take an interest in the Portuguese colonies, provided press briefings, tried to interest the press in coverage, held seminars, public meetings and demonstrations. Particularly it mounted a campaign against Barclays Bank because at that time the Cabora Bassa Dam was being paid for by South Africa and was going to supply electricity mainly to South Africa, and it was seen as an Apartheid-colonialist plot to keep Mozambique in subjugation and Barclays Bank was funding it. That was a very successful campaign. Shortly after this I was an editor for a time and Caetano visited Britain for a time, and there were demonstrations everywhere against his visit. So generally we did the kinds of things that a solidarity movement does.

And did that movement fund the film? How was that organised?

No. It was a terrible problem funding the film, and basically this was where Contemporary Films came in. Contemporary Films still exists, but in a very small form. They used to have a number of cinemas – the Paris Prom in Chelsea and the cinema that still exists, the Phoenix in East Finchley, and there was a cinema on Oxford Street called The Academy, which was independent, and Contemporary didn't own that one but they had a good relationship with the guy who ran it. They distributed, basically, a wide range of alternative films, but particularly Charles Cooper who ran it and who started it was a serious Communist, I mean he was a paid-up member of the British Communist Party, and so Russian films and lefty films featured prominently in the catalogue, but they also imported films from a range of countries because the other mainstream distributors were tied to Hollywood and distributed nothing but American films. Charles had quite a broad taste in films, and you wouldn't have known that he was a card-carrying Communist from the films that he showed because it was such a broad selection, and he had a nose. You know, these were West End cinemas, and you needed to get audiences, and he had quite a nose for getting audiences. Anyway, he also in a small way, he didn't provide money for films but he helped by supporting the film and by promising that it would have exposure when it was made. So he did that for me and *Behind the Lines*. He promised to release it. So people knew that at the very least the film would have some exposure. Then he was the kind of respectable elder statesman behind a system of trying to get people to invest. So it was done by a number of investments, which were given primarily for political reasons. There was a hope, I mean, Charles promised that if he could make money he would pay everybody back from the proceeds. It is very difficult, I mean there's nothing like learning in practice. When I saw the returns it had made its budget several times over, but none of it came back, it all went into the costs of distribution expenses, so the investors only got paid back about 10% I think in the end.

How did it work with making the film with FRELIMO?

Well, because of having worked with them I was a *personne grata*. I mean I had to tell them that I'd raised enough money to make a film on a very inexpensive basis.

So you went back to Mozambique and shot the film in the liberated zones with FRELIMO?

Yes we went back and went up to one of the border camps. We joined up with a military detachment and we walked across the border with them and walked around the liberated area. But there was an unfortunate-ness about it, which is... I had wondered why film... A Yugoslav team had made one film

before, a silent film, black and white with just commentary and music on it previously, and there had been one or two films about similar guerrilla struggles and I had wondered why they were all so boring and consisted just of people marching. And so when I was negotiating with FRELIMO I said, 'Look, I don't want to make that sort of film.' So what we actually wanted was to go to a village and stay there for two weeks, not move, and just film what happens. And they had agreed to that. But we arrived just exactly at the moment that Operation Gordian Knot started. This was a big (I don't know how much you've looked at the history of the liberation struggle), but this was the point when the Portuguese army made a huge putsch. They were going to re-capture the whole of the liberated territories, they thought. And they threw everything they'd got into it. And so suddenly in an area where FRELIMO had been fairly confidently in control they were now running really scared. They might have cancelled the filming all together. They couldn't dare let us stay in a village because the Portuguese were flying around and they would have found out and bombed us, which would have hurt the village as well as us. So they kept us constantly on the move. We were walking twenty miles a day most days and scratching a bit of filming in the morning and in the evening. So apart from the fact that you couldn't hang around and get to know people, we were also quite honestly in a state of chronic exhaustion. Its not the best state to think of the most artistic way of making a film!

Nevertheless, the film does show schooling, a medical camp, and so on...

Yes but in a very set-up way that a film unit that drops into a place for one day can do. I mean you don't really get any sense of what those kids' families are like, what the teacher is like. Its all set-up shots.

Yes a lot of films about liberation struggles almost seem like they are all using the same footage!

Because the people know what they want to show a film unit, and that's what they show.

How was the film distributed? What channels did it go through?

As I said, Contemporary distributed it and it had an opening showing at the Paris Prom, and then it had society screenings. It did the rounds of alternative venues where films were screened at that time in England. It was sold to a number of television companies. I think all three of the Scandanavian countries, or two of them, bought it. This was the short version – there was a half-hour version and I think that most of the television sales were with that. Of course various Eastern Bloc countries bought it. I think also Australia. Anyhow, the reason why we didn't get the money back was that these were all relatively progressive countries with small-ish populations, which doesn't pay very much. To get our money back we needed a sale either to France, Britain or Germany, and being all NATO powers they wouldn't buy. The film was much to... I mean it may seem mad now, but it was much too political for them and much too Left.

Was it shown in the liberated zones, or in Tanzania?

That I can't remember. After independence it was shown extensively in Mozambique.

I'd like to ask you about that – about the films that were shown in those first few years.

The thing that you have to remember is that although people enormously exaggerate the way that digital technology has made things easier for this kind of enterprise, one thing that is important is the cost of making each print on celluloid is enormous. The equivalent in today's prices would be two or three thousand pounds. So each time the film was sold it had to be sold to somebody who could pay for a print. Probably in Tanzania there was no organisation who had the money to buy a print. Because I would have been very concerned that FRELIMO did have a copy. I can't remember whether they were given one of

the prints from the lab (you know how they go through a number of prints at the lab before they get a good one), because there is a rather awful print that ended up in Mozambique, so maybe we gave them one of those early prints which you don't use or it may be that one was lent to them. I don't think they had a proper print until after Independence, but I'm not sure.

Could you tell me about your involvement with the INC?

Yes.

Where you there to give training?

What happened with that – I'm sure people must have told you – Mozambique wasn't really planning to do much nationalising initially, but an awful lot of the Portuguese people who ran an awful lot of things just walked out at Independence and amongst the people who walked out were the cinema-owners and cinema distributors. So there was a danger of there being no cinema at all and that's why the cinema became a national concern, because it was a matter of keeping it going. What they needed above all was somebody to set up a system for getting films. I was sort of in the running for that job, but what happened was that my husband who's an anthropologist, he was doing a year's fieldwork in India, also our daughter, our eldest child, was one-and-a-half. I didn't want to miss out on that entirely, you know its important to understand each other's work, and he's the sort of anthropologist for whom fieldwork is everything rather than high theory. And with an eighteen-month year old it would have been difficult to have taken such a heavy job. So what happened was that there was a chap we were in contact called Simon Hartog who was very knowledgeable about the distribution system. In fact he and I later started writing a book together about it, but he then decided he was too busy to do his half so he passed his half over to a woman called Sarah Street. It got published – its called *The Cinema and the State*. Its just about Britain really, but its about the relationship between the MPAA (the Motion Picture Association of America). So Simon got appointed to this job of setting up the distribution, and for that year he was actually the head of the INC. So the key thing that the INC was set up for was to get film shown to people, making them was a secondary thing, but that was also important. By the time I arrived there was a man called Americo Soares who was head of the INC, and I'm not quite sure what the relationship between him and Simon had been, whether he was Head and Simon was a kind of consultant, or whether Simon was Head and he followed him. During that period they had been recruiting people to come and teach filmmaking, and they recruited an eccentric Canadian who ran the Lab, another very different Canadian to teach sound, Murello Sauls[?] to teach camera and me to teach editing. So I then went a year after Simon to teach editing.

So the people you were teaching, who were they?

Vuvo, he was one of the students of editing. Gabriel was one of the sound students.

Who is now head of the Association of Mozambican Filmmakers...

Yes Polly said she went along to meet them because they were setting up this association, and told me that Vuvo now has grey hair! Polly was reminding me that we must have been only about ten years older than them, but they seem so very young to us. They seemed almost like children when we were teaching them.

Well, they were plucked straight from school, weren't they?

More or less, but of course people go to school later in Africa, or they went to school late then. They'd completed 5th and 6th class, but they'd probably done it much older than Portuguese kids would. But still, they were very young. They were still living with their families and unmarried. So the idea of Vuvo with grey hair was really startling!

Were you involved in the selection process?

No. They'd been selected before I went. Polly was Head of Production at that time, I think.

To what extent was the training programme an attempt to decolonise cinema? To what extent were your efforts at that time part of a more ambitious project to create a new kind of cinema system?

Essentially coming from FRELIMO there was this determination to Mozambicanize. One of the things that made it more radical than it might have been was that the people who were brought in to become filmmakers were so poorly educated really. This wasn't really so much an ideology of bringing people up from the grassroots so much as the fact that the cinema had to have a low priority. There was a terrible shortage of educated people of any sort, and obviously they needed the best people to be involved in food production, industrial production, and sadly enough, the military, because they were of course under pressure from the borders – South Africa and such like. So in a way, Polly got the leftovers! Don't say anything like that to Vuvo or Gabriel, but of course more important industries got 7th or 8th class leavers, or even higher, while cinema got these 5th or 6th class leavers. I mean, I was able to correct their Portuguese sometimes, their Portuguese was that bad. And their general knowledge was very limited. One only really slowly gathered the implications of this as one worked with them.

So the basic impetus came out of FRELIMO concept of non-neocolonial-style development, but I think that Simon also had an almost visionary sense of what the cinema could be, and a deep sense of anger at what it isn't. Do you know about the Estates General of Cinema in France during the events of 1968? You know when there was an abortive revolution in France in 1968 one of the early things that started happening before this was a huge convulsion in the cinema world in Paris, which started with something to do with Cannes. Then Henri Langlois, who ran the Cinematheque, was sacked by the government, and this stimulated an immediate uprising of the cinema. And then it all kind of amalgamated with the student movement and everything. During that time in the film industry they set up these things called the Estates General of Cinema, where they would invent projects that would happen in the new revolutionary France that people fantasized was going to happen, what the cinema would be. There were a series of projects which were more or less revolutionary but some of the ideas in those Simon was very taken with. They were very influential on all our thinking.

Where would you suggest that I begin with researching that?

There's a book that you could find very easily at the BFI by Sylvia Harvey, and its called, I think, *1968 and the Cinema in France*, and that's a very easy to read and straightforward account of the cinema events of 1968 in France. And I think she reproduces the various projects in it.

So Godard's interest in Mozambique would have been coming out of that context...

Yes, well, no... the reason he came to Mozambique the year that I was there, it had something complicated to do with a project he was working on – something to do with communication, but I'm not quite sure what it was.

One of the things I've been trying to think about is the way in which, during the late 1970s, there were a number of different kinds of experiments with video, Super-8 and so on that took Mozambique as their site and where concerned with how cinema could be harnessed to social change. I'm interested in the connections between these and the events of Paris 1968 and of course the experiments with cinema in Portugal after the revolution there.

Yes. You know that Simon was very involved in writing a proposal for a sort of British foundation, a reorganisation of the British film industry, which was taken quite seriously by Michael Meacher, who was

the Secretary of State concerned with cinema just before the last Labour government, before Thatcher, in 1978 or something. This was a visionary proposal whereby, I mean, it was an expansion of what was already happening because at that time Britain had these large counties, big local authorities, and because they were big authorities they had enough money to give some sort of significant support to the arts and culture, and there had also been the workshop movement, and most towns had one or two or more little workshops where people were developing a different way of developing doing films. So the scheme that was put to Michael Meacher by the Independent Film Association, but I happen to know that it was Simon who was pushing most there, suggested expanding this and having regional, a number of regional film centres, which would be both production and exhibition – both show films and make them.

So this was after Simon Hartog had worked in Mozambique?

Yes. This must have been 1978, the year in which I came back from Mozambique.

Do you think this proposal was influenced by his time in Mozambique?

I think not directly. Simon was a person who was very talented. He'd started off in *Panorama*. He was one of those people who could have had a glittering career in orthodox media, but if you're as political a person as Simon was you soon quarrel with an organisation like the BBC. He was very unrecognised and lived most of his life in, to be frank, real considerable poverty, occasionally getting little grants for this and that. So I think that being given a proper job to do, and one that he was good at, he knew a lot. You know, the whole thing about the way you import films and how you could stand up to the MPAA, so I think that must have given him a boost, and that sense that it's possible to do things. When people are marginalised it can become pretty depressing. You have to keep, somehow, renewing your energies.

Why I don't think that it would have been more directly influenced is that because at this time we're still talking about celluloid. It was relatively limited what you could conceive of doing in Mozambique because of the huge costs when you are dealing with celluloid film. And also because of the very low educational level of the public. I mean one of the things that was quite disappointing at the INC was that people were happy just to watch any old film. I mean you could just point a camera at Samora and film one of his long speeches and simply show it unedited in a village and people would love it. I mean by our standards the worst possible kind of film! But if you think that people here watch hour after hour of *Big Brother*, stuff that is really no more interesting. I mean there is a problem that filmmakers and film intellectuals want the relationship between the audience and the film to be much more stimulating and didactic and they want audiences to really concentrate and think about their films, but of course with large swathes of people – not just in Africa!

So in terms of the development of a Mozambican cinema, how was that negotiated?

You mean in what direction? I think you've got no idea really what a struggle it was to do anything. I mean there was a struggle of all sorts. There was a technical struggle because the Lab didn't work at all well – you could wait for months for rushes – months before you could see what you'd shot! And then the capacity was so small. So that was the main problem, really, of shooting and editing was not so bad. We could do that at reasonable speeds, but with a Laboratory working so badly you can imagine that it was an incredible struggle to get anything out at all. So having a theoretical debate about what a film should consist in is a bit difficult because that needs to be based on making a film like that or like this, and seeing how they work. If you're having a struggle getting any sort of film out, you can't really do that. The main sort of argument going on at the time was over the division of resources between training and production, and the training

programme was somewhat starved of resources because there was a lot of pressure from America to go full ahead with production, and there really weren't the resources to do both properly.

I was wanting to ask you about the film As Eleções and its importance in terms of showing elections in a one-party state where you see real differences of opinion being voiced.

Yes, though I haven't seen it for thirty years, and it might, if one looked at it now, not be very interesting. But at the time, and I think now, it is intellectually very interesting when you see what all these negotiations in countries like South Africa and the ex-Soviet republics, I mean when you look at the faults of so-called multi-party democracy it does revive the issues over why some people stuck to a single party concept. The problem is that the single-party system was never developed in a way that actually allowed proper democracy and quickly degenerated into tyranny. But this first election in Mozambique when people were still euphoric with independence and when outside a small party cadre nobody was really involved in national politics yet and didn't quite know what it was about meant that you did actually get a really interesting discussion of local issues at a lot of places. The elections had two roles – one was political education because political leaders did an awful lot of touring around the country and went and talked at different places, so it was a sense of binding the country together and giving people a first taste of what politics could be about. There were also forums where the live issues of the time like how far you move away from traditional practices and that sort of thing, where they could be debated.

How was the filming of those elections done?

I didn't go to any of the film-making. Teams went out to different places at different times and did it.

What was it they were trying to capture? The discussions between different members of communities? Speeches by FRELIMO officials?

It wasn't as sophisticated as that. They pointed their camera at what was going on and tried to get nice steady properly exposed shots! Mainly because what was going on an awful lot was speechification, so there was a lot of speechification in it, but there was also a lot of discussion. There were these village meetings, you see, and a politico would stand up and harague them for rather too long, then they'd all jump up and talk. The thing is that I saw the rushes, and I also saw the finished film, so I can't now remember what I'm remembering from rushes and what I'm remembering from the finished film. But I thought that what one had got there was a very interesting record of the sort of political process happening in Africa and a very interesting example of the degree to which, at least temporarily, a single party doesn't have to be monolithic.

Was FRELIMO still a 'Frente' at that point rather than a 'Party'?

I don't know what they called themselves at that point. There was a big party congress, I think the year before that, where various changes were made institutionally in what they were. A lot of changes were happening all the time, obviously, but I think they must have been a party by then not a front. They were organised as a party before, they may have called themselves a liberation front but they had a standard democratic centralist structure.

FRELIMO was regarded as Marxist before, I mean they were treated as Marxist. I suppose people like the Ford Foundation must have thought they were recuperable in that they would give grants to the civilian side of it but they got much more support from the Communist world than from the Western world. Diplomatic support was almost nil. Britain was an ally of Portugal. For example the British Council refused to have it shown as an entry. I've still got the letter about that, because that gives you a sense of

how, I mean we're in the 1970s, but still... I mean, its very interesting in relation to this law that's coming out now – the law about supporting terrorism. But in the 1970s a violent colonial fascist government was considered by the British government, its alliance with such a government overrode any issues about supposedly supporting democracy and self-determination so that FRELIMO was treated by, and by Labour governments as well... There was a famous incident when George Brown refused to shake hands with Eduardo Mondlane. We're now quite sure whether it was because he was black or because he was Marxist. But Eduardo, although not initially very political I think, was by the time Serge and I were working with him, Eduardo was pretty Marxist, of a very rigid sort. But the broad analytic techniques of Marxism, its broad view of the world, the idea of how you ought to organise things he adhered to, and he wasn't going to be a kind of close-minded Marxist. His anthropological training meant that he did know that things happen on the ground quite differently from any theory.

There was something that Oscar Monteiro explained to me about an ethos of FRELIMO's during the struggle of theory coming out of a practice on the ground rather than an imported theory, and I found it very interesting that your film emphasises that as well

Well that came out of what I was saying about Eduardo, that bit did. Whether it happened as much in practice – I mean it's a difficult thing to do, dealing with a very poorly educated set of cadres. I guess it's a very simple thing to think that you can walk into a village and tell people what they ought to do – to boss them around. That's easy. To think that you can walk into a village and find out how people would like to reorganised themselves and you think what part of that fits with us and what part of that doesn't is much more sophisticated. And I think that it's the latter that Eduardo and one or two of the leaders wanted to happen, but how far you can make it happen when you've got very few really educated people.

And when you're in a situation of war...

Under pressure, yes. I mean they had no idea that Portugal was going to cave in like that.

If you're coming more from theory than from practice you do have to bear in mind that working in 16 mm in many ways isn't nearly as easy. There's much more of a technological barrier to doing what you want to do, particular this thing about not being able to see stuff for a very long time, so when you were asking whether there was an aesthetic of Mozambican cinema at that time it would have been very difficult to develop one and all I can say is that there were some of the classic debates. It was more documentary oriented because the chances were that although lots of people were interested in making fiction the possibility of making fully fledged fiction was really not on the ground. But the kinds of documentary debates that were around in the rest of the world were to some extent reproduced within the institute. But as I said when I was there the staff were still struggling to hold their camera steady and get things in focus, and the editors were struggling not to loose their trims and to cut in continuity and to know how to transfer from one sequence to another so that the people actually making the films weren't really in that position. You have to have a certain mastery of the process before you can start to theorise about how you should be doing it.

One other question I had was about the interaction between those people who had been involved with the armed struggle and those who came from the film clubs at the INC. What was that interaction like?

I don't recall the film clubs. Maybe there was a hiatus as most of their members would have been Portuguese and would have left Mozambique at Independence. I don't recall there being anywhere other than the cinemas where you could see interesting films, and their programmes *were* interesting. One of the

things I insisted upon was that the training course should have a weekly film show where, because the teaching was done in this departmental way, sound and editors and camera were separate, and we had no director's department as it was thought that directors would come out of the technical departments, but for that reason there was no space for theory, and this weekly Friday film showing was a time when all the classes came together and we viewed films.

And what film did you screen?

Well what they had was obviously quite a lot of Soviet films, probably some Chinese ones, but I don't remember them, a number of films that Simon had managed to acquire, so interesting but quite intellectual French or German films. The films that embassies hand out for free, documentaries mainly. And the Central Office for Information used to hand out the old GPO films, the films made by the documentary unit pre-war and directly after the war, which acquired a certain reputation, so we had Humphrey Jennings's *Fires Were Started* and *Listen for Britain*, things like that. And we had quite a lot of Indian films because they was a way of dealing with the MPAA boycott because they wouldn't supply films on the kinds of conditions that Mozambique was prepared to buy them. So for popular cinema, lovely Indian musicals was the main source. So there was a huge mixture of things that we showed, but if you were planning a course on cinema you would be planning a different collection but that was something, actually, that I loved about it. I liked the fact that you had to structure your discussions around what there was – a pretty random hotch-potch of things! There were two very interesting things, because one of the things that I found most interesting partly because of people's reactions to viewings. There are two very interesting anecdotes I must tell you: One is that we showed *Lenin in October*, you know one of those rather awful Soviet Realist films, fiction films depicting moments in the civil war. And this was a film that had trenches in it, and it had Lenin in it, and it's a fully fledged sound black-and-white film, and I suppose this was quite some way into the course, it wasn't right at the beginning, and I'd shown this because I'd shown *Fires Were Started* and a documentary on the Spanish Civil War, which was an actual documentary, the shots were quite boring but they were real shells, and I wanted to provoke a discussion about, if you're filming a war, the relative merits of fiction or documentary. When we set to to discuss *Lenin in October* I realised that they didn't realise that it was fiction, even at this stage of the course they still didn't have that kind of automatic sense that this is probably fiction. But also that they didn't have a kind of grip on the world. I mean they must have know that Lenin had died early before there were films, but they didn't have any sense of historical periods and that this couldn't be a real Lenin in a film made at that film with that degree of technical sophistication. I discovered the same thing with Indian students I was teaching recently, also drawn from relatively non-elite backgrounds. So when people said that people had to learn to watch films I think that that is a huge exaggeration because when we went out with the mobile cinemas people could read the images quite easily, but to read a cultural meaning into films, so you have a sense of when it was made and who it was made by and what the circumstances were takes a lot of learning.

The other things was after we'd shown one of the Indian musicals and we were talking about that and I asked them what they like better, whether they liked popular Indian cinema or popular American cinema (we must have had a few popular American films perhaps which had been in distribution before and that they stored the prints), and they said very firmly Indian. And when I said 'Why?' they said 'Its more realistic'. And this absolutely gob-smacked me for a moment but then of course we're talking 1970s, and Indian cinema was very different then in that a lot of the subjects, and probably those were the ones that

had been chosen more for distribution in Africa, are in rural settings and they are the kinds of classic story, something like, beautiful young girl with very difficult father, wonderful boy of slightly different caste falls in love with her, you know, its cross-caste marriage – can it happen? Can it not happen? So I realised what they meant. These are films that show the rural setting – its countryside and its people who have intense problems with their families and where marriage and money are deeply mixed up, and I think that that's what they meant by saying that these films were more realistic. So the form, the fact of singing, I said, 'but you know, its not realistic when they break into song, is it?'. But it didn't matter – and its true because Hollywood conventions are just as ... I mean people do things in films that they don't in real life in just the same way as people in real life don't sing. And the fact that most of the Hollywood films they'd seen would have been urban and about things that they had no experience of. The Indian films at that time, of course now they've changed and are mainly about Bombay gangsters, at that time a lot of them were about villagers. Its also interesting in the international politics of cinema the fact that one of the effects of structural adjustment across the world and marketisation is that of course America is gaining hugely over Bollywood. I mean Bollywood was very popular across the Soviet Union. If you read Soviet novels you read about people going down to the cinema to see the latest Indian musical, and it being so relaxing. Bollywood had big exports before the global readjustments of the mid- and late-1980s. And I think that for lots of reasons Bollywood was preferred to Hollywood in lots of places. I mean its more relaxing, in that it is musical, and until they went heavily into Bombay they were more the sort of stories that poorer people living in very custom-dominated rural communities could relate to.

Interview with Moira Forjaz, Lisbon, 19 October 2005

How did you get into filmmaking in Mozambique?

The funny thing is that people who you'd least expect, people from the outside, get put into this sponge, they become. It has very strong vibes, Mozambique. It's a country that gets to you in a very strange way, because I've lived in many countries in Africa, and I don't think I have that feeling towards any of the other countries, certainly not South Africa or even Zimbabwe, which I like in a sentimental way. Mozambique is... there is something Machiavellian about it. In my case, I was a photographer first and bit by bit I was drawn in the social and the political side of the country, and I liked the photography, but I wanted to say something. I was a very close friend of Ruth First. She and I were friends from way back even though there was a big age difference between us. Maybe because of research that she was doing that I would photograph, I would listen to some of the interviews and would be fascinated by this or by that. My favourite film – you didn't see it – its called *Minero Moçambicano*. Its here, available at the INC in 16mm, and that's my favourite film. Technically its not good, we always had problems with our mixing and so on, it was difficult. I don't think there was anybody there who wasn't in a learning process – we all were. *Minero Moçambicano* was a film that I made on my own before *Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal*, because I had become obsessed with the whole story of the miners, and how the women stay and the miners go to the mines in South Africa. The mining film was the first, though I made little films before – I don't even

remember the names of them to tell you the truth – they were experiments to learn to use the editing machines. I went to do the Super-8 course with Godard, that was how it all started.

Wasn't that with Eduardo Mondlane University?

Yes, with Godard and Jean Rouch. It was fantastic! Even if we didn't learn very much in that short period it was definitely inspiring. It took me away from just taking photographs – unfortunately and fortunately!

So just to get the chronology straight, you started working as a photographer with Ruth First...

Yes, in South Africa. Before I came to South Africa I already knew her, and when I came to South Africa it was to work as a photographer. Then I was hired as a photographer in Mozambique when I first came. But it was quite tough because although I was quite protected by the President [Samora Machel], he always like having me around, but that was hard in some ways. It wasn't easy. But I had a strange position – on the one side a very single person wanting to be with the *povo*, doing work with the *povo*, but being married to a Secretary of State and having to be told very often that I had to be a '*mulher de...*', you know, that was my most important role. And that would effect the way my colleagues would treat me, because I would have to sometimes *have* to go to some do where they were the photographers and I was 'the wife of...'. These things created problems, so that after I made these films no one even looked at them particularly. There was no protection, no encouragement to continue. I made *Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal* and they sent it to a film festival in Leipzig. The film won first prize, but I wasn't there. I didn't go to the film festival. It was attended by, oh I don't know, maybe Pedro or some other guys, and when it was time to go and get the prize, because that's what they were used to as a Marxist-Leninist country – no one owned anything, it was the country that owned everything, the jury wouldn't give them the prize. It was not a prize given to a country, it was a prize given to a filmmaker, an individual. So the prize – two thousand dollars – remained in Leipzig. So I never got the prize, but some years later I got the notification from the Germans that the film had won the prize. My son is much more of a browser than I am, and he found that it appears on the Internet as one of the great films. I don't think it should be described as that but I know why its there, because of its time it was a really interesting concept – the *aldeias comunais*, the things that the women say and do. I was terribly interested in the sociological side of the country, and I was learning at the time, so I had great ideas, but sometimes, you know, on the editing machine it wasn't as good a cut as it should have been. The sound at the back didn't synchronise or whatever. But they overlooked that.

For me it was one of the films that really stood out in terms of the quality of the shots and so on...

And did you see the part with the animation? It was so funny. We used the animation that was available at the INC. I've still got the transparencies. But after that I became very demoralised. I was with Ruth on many of her trips working as her photographer before 1978. We went all over the country, to the North, all over the place. She was researching with some students working in the Centre for African Studies, and I was there documenting it as a photographer, but very much involved in what was going on. And I picked up a story, which was one that Ruth didn't pick up so I could use it, from a woman about the mines in South Africa. And I wrote a short story, and based on that short story Barney Simon, the South African playwright, wrote a beautiful script. For me the reason why I think that it would have been a very nice film is that I knew absolutely what I wanted to do. I may not have known exactly how to do it at that stage because I wasn't an experienced filmmaker at the time. None of us where, and that was nearly thirty years ago, thirty-five years ago, so that's a long time ago. But I was always interested not in just showing scenes of war. All the projects that I had in my mind were very definitely connected with what was happening

around me. What happened with the miners was that after this last trip that I made with Ruth, Barney Simon and I wrote a wonderful script and it was called *Rosa and the Eagle*. So independently, because now I was beginning to get cheeky, independently I went to France, because by that stage I had quite a few friends, and applied for funding and in the French newspapers at the time appeared articles about the meeting we had with Mitterand and his wife Jacqueline where we 'ching ching-ed', you know, the first co-production with Mozambique and France to make the film. And there was a wonderful DP who was going to come on board, and maybe Barney and I would have co-directed, because Barney was a director of actors, so he wasn't that involved with the cinema side, but he was with the acting side, and a great DP who later on made *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*. It was going to be the first Mozambican fiction film at that stage. We didn't succeed because the war started and the funding by these countries at that time was done in a strange way, they would form a commission from France that would go to Mozambique and all the Heads of Departments and Ministers would state their case – do they want it or don't they want it. And it was rejected by as not being the right thing at the right moment. So there was the money, there was the offer from France and they said it was not opportune, it was not right at the time because there was a war, and where would we make it, and they would prefer to have the money for another project, which is what they did. I never went back to Mozambique after that. That was when I left. It was a very hard thing for me. And so it was never made. Barney died, I have the rights to the script but the film was never made and I stopped making movies. I never tried to do a thing like that after that because we had been actually given the money. It didn't go through CNCF, because in this particular case it was actually through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so it didn't have to pass the test of being the exact film that they wanted at that moment. It's a beautiful story about the miners who leave the country to go to South Africa and the women stay behind. It was to make a fictional feature film out of the two documentary films *Minero Moçambicano* and *Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal*.

Can I ask you about the training you went through?

Certainly. I did the course with Jean Rouch and also with Godard.

And Jean Rouch's course was an ethnographic film project?

Exactly, which I attended. I only remember one thing, perhaps because I was always crazy about the medium, photography or whatever it was, and being with somebody like Jean Rouch who had such a strong ideology for the time. It wasn't just learning the techniques. What did we learn about? Did we learn very much from Super-8? Who was sitting there doing Super-8 montage? I don't know that we did. But what it did was it stimulated you to continue. You wanted to continue saying something with that medium. I wasn't thinking of becoming a filmmaker, I was much more interested in 'What can I say?' I wasn't interested in making arty movies, I was much more interested in making documentaries at that time. But then we had wonderful people – I've forgotten the name of that woman editor who got very frustrated with me. I was much older than the other people training, so I knew what I wanted to do, but I didn't have that kind of attention, so she'd get impatient with me, but she was very good. She was Italian. You must find out from Pedro what her name was. And also we had this amazing French woman – what was her name? She went to Cuba after Mozambique. I was in the first lot of filmmakers.

Was that with Gabriel Mondlane and the others of that generation?

Gabriel was after me – the second block that came in. Gabriel knew he wanted to work on Sound, and he had Beaufonte[?] who I think must have given him a lot of knowledge. And then we had two Danish animators as well.

So what was the relationship between the projects at Eduardo Mondlane University and the INC?

Completely separate. After we did the course at the University, we made up the core of the filmmakers at the INC. I don't know what the INC was before – it was called the Serviço Nacional de Cinema and was a private [sic] production studio. We came in and very often there was no 16mm camera available so you made it in 35mm.

Interview with Polly Gaster, 11 June 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

Can you tell me how you came to Mozambique, and how cinema was seen in relation to the armed struggle?

I started working with Frelimo in Dar-es-Salaam in 1967. I was working in the Mozambique Institute, but a friend of mine called Margaret Dickinson, who you should probably contact in London – if you haven't already, worked in the information department of Frelimo. And one of the reasons why Frelimo was interested in her skills was precisely because they were interested in doing more with cinema. By 1967, Frelimo already had some liberated areas in northern Mozambique, in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, and the main objective at that time, in my opinion, was for external information and propaganda, more than for use inside Mozambique, because the conditions didn't really exist inside Mozambique to set up projectors and energy and show films and so on and so forth. But also at that point in time, Frelimo only had the capacity to film, it didn't have any capacity to edit or produce. And they were filming in, Margaret might remember this better than me, but they were filming in Super 8 or something and they just were piling up these stacks of reels of film without knowing what to do with them. Without really knowing what they were doing.

What were they filming?

Life in the liberated areas, essentially. Activities, the bases, the schools, whatever. I don't really know because in fact most of that, I as far as I remember, was unusable pretty much and was just not much that could be done with it technically and all the costs of converting it into something that would be useful etc. So then what happened was that Frelimo got a film camera, I guess it was 16mm – probably – from the Soviet Union. And Margaret was given three people to train on using it. I remember they had quite a dance because the instructions were all in Russian. Which she conveniently had done a bit at school, but anyway, they managed. Then Frelimo started filming its own material. I am telling you this because I think its important to understand that Frelimo's perspective wasn't to be just dependent on foreign filmmakers coming in and out.

Yes that was really important because, reading the literature, that was my impression. And the more I talk to people here, the more that seems to be far from the truth actually.

Exactly. So, again the footage that was shot by the Frelimo cameraman was more for, served more for, I think, as a sort of documentary archive. I don't know if you have managed to talk to Jorge Ribello about the work? That was his area of work, it is his baby, so he would be the person who could really explain

what they did. And so they were building up a sort of documentation capacity of image, in image, they weren't really producing films themselves. Then, more or less around the same time, 1967, 1968, 1969 maybe, I can't remember, was when the first foreign filmmaker went in to the liberated areas, he was the famous Popovich. The Yugoslav. And he produced a film called, I forget what. And copies were made of it. And this was deliberately made for external information purposes. And it was used by Frelimo people and their solidarity groups and so on, around the world - in film, 16 or 35mm, this was before the days of video, to show at meetings and use as part of the mobilisation. Always, of course, aiming to show that Frelimo wasn't just a military organisation but was a Liberation Movement in all senses. And so it was in the liberated areas how it was trying to build up the alternative society, in fact of course, these films didn't show any military action at all because foreigners weren't allowed to get too close to the army because they might have been spies or you know, it wouldn't have been a good idea, or they might have got killed or something. I mean, as it was, the Portuguese always tried to get camera foreigners when they knew there were people in the liberated areas. And there is one film by Bob van Nierov, which does show an attack, because they got attacked, and you see them all running for cover. And one of his favourite stories was how during that attack he lost the lens cap of a camera and how days later some anonymous guerrilla picked it up with this lens cap. So Popovich was the first, and he had an on-going relationship with Frelimo, I mean, he came and went came and went. But it didn't take very long for things to expand in the sense of getting more people, and of course it in terms of propaganda, it was more credible for Frelimo to have film teams from Western Europe than from Eastern Europe at that time, in terms of political. So, Margaret made a film there, she made a film called *Behind the Lines* in about 1970 or so - 1970 or 1971, I can't quite remember. It was Bob van Lierop from America, he made a couple of films and then some, this solidarity with the Italians started growing up, The Régio Emilia people and Bologna, and they sent in at least one team that I remember. I mean, this is in addition to print journalist obviously, and other kinds of political delegations and so on, but we are just talking about cinema. So that probably by the time of independence, there must have been 9 or 10 films, I should think. Does that fit with what you've found?

I've seen very few of them because they are just so hard to get a hold of. All of these names are part of what is coalescing into a map.

Yes, because Popovich made about four I should think. And there was a Chinese team. I can't remember if the Cubans went. Then there was Margaret. Bob made two I think - or did he do one - during and before, one before and one after independence, I can't remember. Anyway, something like that. And these films I think met their objective. I mean obviously they were solidarity films - they were solidarity filmmakers. I can't remember if an actual TV team went in or not, if so, it would have been right near the end, I can't remember. And the films were shown literally around the world and the solidarity movement was growing in Western Europe and in the States, Canada as well as in Eastern Europe. And I think that the use of image, being able to show images, moving images, interviews with people, did an enormous amount to sort of strengthen Frelimo's support, their credibility, not just among your kind of standard people who would support an anti-colonial struggle anyway, kind-of-people, but also among social democrats, even aid organisations in Nordic countries, Sweden and Norway were giving aid already before Independence to the humanitarian programme of Frelimo liberated areas.

...

Quite a large part but the way they managed to mobilise, for instance, they would do, apart from what the government did, they did these sort of really large scale, they would do things like, some of these Nordic countries they have programs like Blue Peter or something, where every school in the country would collect for 'x' that year, and they chose Mozambique. And there would be a whole load of mobilisation and education and everything around Mozambique for all the school children who are putting all their pennies into this funds and so on. Maybe they still do it. I'm a little bit vague after this long period of time. But I think they also helped another factor in Europe, in Britain anyway, which was where I was working, solidarity work by then, also the Frelimo struggles, the Frelimo films brought optimism to people involved in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, Zimbabwe, all of which were still under minority rule and looking pretty kind of desperate in terms of the possibility of change. And so to see something happening on the ground – really happening – I think was important also for the broader anti-apartheid movement. And of course later on, the Zimbabweans did use Mozambique to go through the liberated areas and start fighting on the borders through the south of Tête, not to mention after independence, that's another story. So I think that's important, and I think that another reason it's a good thing that the films made, thinking about it now, if any of it still exists, and really after independence (I'm jumping – let me finish this idea first) the kind of arms struggle that was taking place in the 1970s in the Portuguese colonies; Vietnam, Nicaragua, and so on, was like another world compared to the world we have today, in terms of these kind of Maoist strategies of being a fish in the water, you know, the guerrillas don't attack civilians, you got to build up – like Hamas is doing in Palestine – building up Military political side, that's why its getting a lot of support because its coming off cross with medical aid as well as shifting Israelis. But mostly today what, where do you see that? Where do you see anything other than a kind of Algerian, terrorist or IRA, you know, it's a different strategy a different tactic. Algeria had already happened and when the struggles in Portuguese colonies began, it was not, anyway, an appropriate, not because an inappropriate tactic and the relation with the colonial power was very different the level of development of France and Portugal, the FNL in Algeria was much more like the Irish in the sense of just wanting to get shot of the settlers and don't care how they do it kind-of-thing, rather than, and the way to do it was to frighten them enough to make them runaway. Whereas Frelimo and MPLMP just sort of took this rather more Chinesy like, like that our war is not with the Portuguese people, it is with the colonial system, we understand that there are conscripts in the army, we will fight the army but if anybody deserts we'll treat them well - which they did, this is a protracted struggle, build-up slowly, build-up the countryside, so on and so forth. I am not saying that people in similar circumstances they should be doing the same thing because the whole world's situations so different but I just think its interesting, just thinking about it now, that to have the documentation in image and sound, what it really was like, because nowadays people who didn't live through the period, of course its most people, its assumed that Frelimo was some terrorist, of course it was on all the Americans terrorist lists, just like Mandela was in the ANC, its quite hard to imagine.

It's so clouded by the Cold War I think, and I think that's part of my fascination with this history and that it hasn't been adequately studied just yet.

So the other use for all these films that were done through the liberation struggle or Independence is of course it had enormous use after Independence in Mozambique. I suspect you might have been told about that, as educational tools to show people in Mozambique how it was. And the heroes of the liberation

struggle, how it had been the rural areas, so these films were shown endlessly not only in cinemas but also in mobile cinema units. Which is why they were all copied, the copies of all of them are at the National Cinema Institute, somewhere, because there was a huge campaign of collecting them in from different countries and so on.

Seems like that kind of work of making sure that those films are preserved can be continued to be seen as so important, its really frustrating part of the research actually just not being able to see them.

There was tremendous kind of endless discussions about how to preserve it, converting it, this was still pre-digital in '75, and copying it onto video. I would think that the Brazilian who did *Estas são as Armas*, he projected the films onto a wall or a screen or something and re-filmed the bits he was using for his film, because of not having negatives and so on and so forth. They would have particular festivals around the 25 June and so on, tried to get 16 copies for the mobile cinema. Zé Cardoso used to run mobile cinema when he was in Sofala, when he was the delegate of the Cinema Institute in Sofala. So did Carasco, who is now the Head of the National Election Unit – he used to be a delegate of the Cinema Institute in Nampula, for ages after independence. They did a lot of stuff with mobile cinema.

After Independence those films were then used again to educate people about the arms struggle and presumably there was a sort of bigger ambition behind that as well, which was to do with nation building and building a sense of being Mozambican.

Definitely. National unity. And showing *Do Rovuma ao Maputo*, this whole thing about *Do Rovuma ao Maputo* is one country, because the war had taken place in the North primarily and the southern underground had been, which it still existed, but it pretty much smashed still early on, in the early 60's, and all these people like Malangatana were in jail, Luis Bemado, and so on. And so after, now this I could easily be wrong on, the main option then became running away to join Frelimo on the other side. More than building up bigger active - it was never like this sabotage and stuff. But the people who used to hide, listened to Frelimo on the radio, down here, the radio was another thing, you are not doing a thesis on that. We used to listen to the Frelimo radio, in the south, sort of hiding under the blankets. So those films mostly presented a fairly simple version of events, but they presented documentaries with Mozambican voices, showing what had contributed to this independence.

In relation to the aim of social transformation as well, this move, people having to be dislocated from their environments, from their homes and move North, in order to be able to participate in the arms struggle must have been a kind of contributing factor.

Yes. Although then you get into huge weans of other kinds of political analysis because most of the leadership was from the South, because people in the South had been better educated and so on, but Frelimo always had a very strong line of within itself, I imagine, that everybody is part of the nation. In Dar-es-Salaam people spoke Portuguese, people didn't speak their national languages, you didn't talk much about your past, where you came from, because people had sad pasts. But, of course, can't always pretend that things don't exist, like regional concerns and its usually the way people choose to try to create problems... Portuguese, cause spilts and so on, its natural. But yes, why does Chissano have a Makonde wife, its because they met in Dar-es-Salaam, Guebuza is married to somebody from Manica, Maria de Luz, and so on and so forth. All that I think is important. And at the same time, quite a lot of the Frelimo soldiers then came down south after independence, because they were what it was, the nucleus of the new army, and some of the veterans were given land round here, Inhamabane, and Gaza and so on, so its

another whole story. So it was good that people knew what there was. So that brings us up to independence probably, so now we can move onto post-independence.

Were you working at the Institute from the outset, first in 1975?

No. The person – if he wasn't dead – who would be able to speak would be Simon, because he was one of the first cooperantes to come after independence in 1976, and he helped to create the Cinema Institute. The Cinema Institute didn't exist. What existed on the colonial side, you could talk to Luis Simão, that's another person who has a very different view on things. He was cameraman, but he now works in the Polana Casino. He was a cameraman even in colonial times one of the colonial filmmakers. So after Independence, the Ministry of Information was created by the new government, from scratch, there hadn't been anything before of that kind, not like education or health where there had been some kind of structure, but obviously there had been various censorships type structures. So the Ministry of Information some how created some kind of cinema service, I wasn't here then, I came in 1977, and there was these hands full of Mozambican cinema people like Simão and De Silva. And there had been during the colonial period two or three small film laboratories, producing news reels, and stuff like that. Another strange feature of Mozambique, which may not have been pointed out to you, was that we had a lot of very large cinemas, particularly in Maputo, Beira and Nampula and this is because of the military, Portuguese military, the soldiers, a lot of clientele to go to these vast cinemas, one of which was turned into the parliament building, the others like Scala and The Africa is now the university's Cultural Centre and the Continuadores. The Africa has now been turned over to the National Song and Dance Company; they were all cinemas, straight plain-old cinemas. And down town where the Gungo theatre is now, that was a cinema with a little cinema studio beside it. Down near the harbour. So you can see how many cinemas there were, its quite remarkable.

Very different from Dar-es Salaam, for instance. There you just don't see cinemas at all – I mean they did used to have them.

They did yes. They had a drive-in; I went to a drive-in cinema. We had a film society as well, that the Frelimo intellectuals used to go to. So there was a culture of cinema in the big urban areas, a consequence of this large population of young men who were in the army.

Why do think it was that Frelimo went so strongly for cinema rather than television?

Because cinema you could show in *cinema movel*. For accessing people And television at that time - I don't know how many countries had television in 1975. Angola had lots of money and they went for television straight away, I remember visiting there, but they have enough money to put up satellite dishes, reach and bounce over to the next cities and so on and so forth. But we weren't very likely to be able to do that and a television was considered a luxury. And also individualising.

That is something that seems very important in the way that cinema was so crucial: it's a collective experience.

The cinemas in Maputo in the late 1970s and early 1980s were social centres. You couldn't go to the cinemas without meeting somebody you knew. There always had this interval in the middle of the film for people to go out and smoke and so on, it was all very jolly. So I think that's the reasons why, think costs and access in terms of priorities. Given that cinema already existed – there was this culture of cinema – the first priority was to decolonise the cinema. And after all even when television came in, which was still very contentious in '81, or whenever it was, a lot of people argued against it. Saying it was just going to drain money away from the radio which needed it much more, just to serve an urban elite, and it was sort of true because it did only serve, not an urban elite, that bit was unfair and people didn't, people like myself, didn't

predict the rapidity with which the idea of having moving images in your own home would catch on, of course we moved towards capitalism at the time, maybe that has something to do with it, from '84 onwards, also you couldn't go out because power cuts and you couldn't go to the cinema so much, transport and all those things were getting complicated. So there were reasons. And there were reasons, and there were a lot of sort of specific reasons like, that fact that the miners would come back and bring TV's, so for the lower income people/families, and within the bairros they would have collective viewing anyway. Anybody who had a TV, all the neighbours would come in, or they would put it in the back yard and start charging. Or whatever. There is an article in today's paper, this week's Cultural supplement, about the dismantling of pirate cinemas in the bairros. There are a lot of pro's and cons, and I know that from my experience, and from what I've heard, which is that the films that are shown are horrible, they are all karate, kung-fu, terror, even pornographic.

So people do go there to watch TV?

Well they do, yes, I think they still do. But this article is about people showing films, whether I suspect they are mostly meaning videos – films on video. Rather than, they are not films projected, but they are talking of video, and that's what's shown. And they are shown in drinking places and so on, so that the police are firmly saying this is what leads to violence against women, people come out of these film shows and also the groups of thieves have somewhere to go on while they are waiting for the kids to come out of night school. This is one particular bairro in Maputo. Anyway, wasn't like that then - there was no crime then! It was all community policing and what not, and there wasn't much to steal. Now I've lost my thread...

You were saying about when the Institute first got set up and how they used the films from the struggle...

And then they moved seriously into the idea of, and this was already in 1976, very soon after independence, of decolonising the cinema. The Institute was created then and it was set up in an old Portuguese Club. That's where it is now. It was a club for people from a certain region of Portugal (Alentejo). So that was the Instituto Nacional de Cinema. It had the responsibility for production, distribution and exhibition, the whole works. So one of the first things it did was to nationalize, on one hand it nationalized the cinemas, which had mostly been abandoned then. It had to intervene to keep them running because they were abandoned. It did nationalise the small Portuguese production companies. And grab the equipment – such as it was. Which was only, anyway, black and white, mostly 35mm for cinema use, these newsreels and so on. And of course it got all the archives as well, the colonial archives, these newsreels, two or three attempts at feature films made by these Portuguese - so those were some quite dramatic moments.

Interview with Manuel Malo, 18 May 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

Pode descrever como o Manuel começou a trabalhar na cinema em Moçambique?

Comecei a trabalhar em cinema aqui em Moçambique muito novo, eu tinha 15 anos de idade a 4 de Setembro 1969 no estúdio laboratório de um proprietário Português, António de Melo Pereira, que tinha a sua firma em seu nome: António de Melo Pereira. Ele era produtor de cinema desde muito tempo, segundo ele disse, ate um dia ele contava para mi que ele chegou a Moçambique antes de eu nascer, é

verdade, e então eu tinha a penas a quarta classe, na altura a quarta classe era o ensino primário. Por motivos sociais não pode continuar a estudar mais é o que eu desejava, comecei a trabalhar com essa idade muito novo e muito sedo, talvez porque era tão novo, mereci a confiança do senhor António de Melo Pereira para logo ser um assistente de câmara de todas as filmagens que ele fazia. E ele produzia filmes documentário, um jornal titulado *Actualidades de Moçambique* que era para o estado para o governo colonial. Quer dizer, filmava tudo que era de interesse do governo colonial. E havia um instituição que era tipo a secretaria do estado de informação na altura que era o Centro de Informação e Turismo que ficava no mesmo edifício em que ficava o estúdio laboratório do Melo Pereira. Ficava no terceiro andar e o laboratório de Melo Pereira ficava no decimo andar e o terraço. E então Melo Pereira produzia documentário – documentários de 10 minutos – que eram lhe informado pelo Centro de Informação e Turismo dos acontecimentos que haveriam de acontecer no governo geral o era chegada do visitante governante Português , por exemplo; o Ministro de Ultra Mar, Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Ministro da Defesa , Ministro da Educação, essas todas pessoas eu conheci. Então todas essas programas de visita e outros programas que era do interesse do governo colonial, o Melo Pereira era que filmava e depois esse documentário era mandado para Portugal. Era um documentário de 10 minutos, uma mensalidade, quer dizer era mensal de 30 em 30 dias, e era pago pelo o Centro de Informação e Turismo que era um organismo do estado.

Estes filmes foram amostradas em cinemas em Moçambique ou em Portugal ou em todos os países da colónia?

Era o seguinte, todos documentários do António de Melo Pereira era amostrado mesmo aqui em Moçambique no cinema Gil Vicente, uma copia, e outras duas copias eram mandadas para Angola e Portugal. Portanto o documentário era mostrado mesmo aqui em Moçambique, mais no cinema aqui na capital, Lorenço Marques na altura. Agora em Maputo, a maioria da população moçambicana, daqueles que não frequentavam os cinemas poucos conheceram esses documentários. Melo Pereira segundo ele conto, começo a realizar filmes cá não documentário propriamente dito, actualidades Moçambique para o governo colonial, mais documentários que eram de interesse de algumas associações, como por exemplo o Clube Naval, o Clube de Pesca, as organizações desportivas, mais principalmente quando começaram as mudanças políticas com a luta de libertação nacional então o estado contratou Melo Pereira para fazer os documentários para o estado. Não era o único realizador de cinema, António de Melo Pereira, aqui em Moçambique. Também não era o único laboratório, havia apenas dois laboratórios. Havia um outro senhor produtor de filmes também com laboratório, também de nome António Corrinha Ramos que tinha a sua empresa chamada 'Filme Lab'. E depois António de Melo Pereira que também tinha o seu estúdio laboratório em seu nome. E havia um outro cineasta, o senhor Augusto Santos, mais um também o senhor Luís Béja , mais um senhor Erico Ferreira. Então eram os cineastas que haviam na altura. E portanto uns faziam trabalhos diferentes mas havia concorrência, por exemplo quando houvesse acontecimentos bastante importantes, havia concorrência porque, quase todos não, dois, Melo Pereira mais o Corrinha Ramos cobijava o trabalho para o estado. Então as vezes o Corrinha Ramos ia fazer uma. filmagem para tirar mais rápido do que o Melo Pereira para ver se o estado podia mudar o contracto para ele, mais isso não foi possível, não aconteceu. E portanto, na minha historia pessoal do trabalho em cinema tenho muito a contar sobre o que eu vi no tempo colonial e as produções que também, conforme eu disse, havia muitos cineastas que faziam medias metragens e longas metragens – outros cineastas/realizadores também.

O Manuel trabalhava sobre esses tipos de filmes também ou só com documentários?

Trabalhei principalmente sobre os documentários do Melo de Pereira, mas trabalhei também para algumas longas metragens realizada por outros cineastas na altura porque o laboratório e estúdios do António de Melo Pereira era o mais completo e modernizado na altura e estava bem equipado. Então os outros cineastas que realizassem outros filmes de longa metragem o media metragem, pediam o alugavam os estúdios de Melo Pereira para finalizarem os seus filmes. Por isso trabalhei também para esses filmes na finalização nos estúdios de António de Melo Pereira, por exemplo uma das longas metragens foi o filme *O Zé do Burro* esse filme foi finalizado mesmo e foi apresentado aqui em Maputo, em Lorenço Marques na altura. E um outro que não chegou a ser finalizado mas quase que ia ser finalizado, do realizador Jorge de Souza era intitulado *Limpopo* falava da caça da zona sul do Limpopo e Bela Vista. Caça do elefante. Mas tudo isso era histórico, contava mais a caça que se realizou desde a ocupação de Moçambique como colónia, por um explorador do nome Lorenço Marques o Segundo reza a historia esta cidade teve o nome de Lorenço Marques. Porque esse Lorenço Marques foi o explorador desta zona Sul principalmente a Bela Vista, mais ao Sul de Maputo, na caça do elefante, para a extracção do marfim, mais esse filme não chegou a ser finalizado. Mas o filme de um outro realizador também particular o Senhor Lopes Barbosa que realizou o filme *Deixe-me pelo menos subir as Palmeiras*. Portanto esses filmes todos trabalhei neles, na finalização, nos estúdio do Melo Pereira, porque era projectado em sequências e gravado pelos actores lá dentro do estúdio porque na altura não havia condições de se fazer o som directo durante a filmagem. Portanto o som era feito mais tarde dentro dos estúdios e era muitas vezes preferidos os estúdios e o laboratórios de António de Melo Pereira. Portanto trabalhei não só nos documentários de Melo Pereira mas também em outras produções na finalização devidas as condições que eram as melhores lá.

Como descreverias esses filmes que foram feitos nessa altura?

Por exemplo falei primeiramente dos documentários que era do estado, esses filmes não tinham grande – eram mais políticos – e ainda existem guardados aqui no arquivo do Instituto Nacional de Cinema, porque eles são histórico e eram políticos, com forme eu disse eram visitas dos governantes portugueses para cá e outros programas do governo colonial cá em Moçambique; os governadores gerais e alguns noticias como desporto, moto náutica, jogos luso-brasileiros, organizações de visitas turísticas, conferências regionais, tudo isso era um assunto que parecia particular mas que também em parte interessava o estado e tudo isso era reportado por António de Melo Pereira. Os outros filmes de media e longa metragem realizados, por exemplo o filme *O Zé do Burro*, o actor principal de nome é o senhor José Bandeira, daí o nome *Zé do Burro* é um filme que era político também. Esse filme eu vi por mais do máximo de três vezes mesmo aqui, que não sei se ainda existe guardado mais devia estar guardado, é um filme político que falava contra a luta de libertação nacional. Trata-se de um Português que parte de Portugal na zona também rural, penso eu, lá de Portugal e vem até Moçambique de navio, pelo mar, com um animal o burro. E chega cá, é descarregado o burro no porto, e a ele é atribuído um campo de cultivo fora da cidade de Lorenço Marques - lá para o campo. E chegado ali, antes de começar a cultivar a trabalhar o seu campo, então procura entender-se com a população que vive ali, Moçambicanos - e as Moçambicanas - também. Então porque muitos não sabiam falar português, também nunca tinham visto alguns instrumentos musicais que existiam na Europa e noutros sítios, por exemplo a gaita, do sítio aonde ele estava, na casa aonde ele estava, então toca a gaita. Uma melodia bastante bonita e naquele silêncio, lá do campo, o som da gaita é ouvido a um raio bastante longo. Então as pessoas a ouvirem aproximam-se a querer ver o que estava a tocar o que estavam ouvir. Viram que era um senhor branco, português, que estava tocar aquela gaita e a dançar. Aparece umas

meninas, também dançam com ele e então desta maneira aquela população passou a gostar daquela musica e desta dança - como se chama essa dança? – ‘Ouvira’ ou o fado Português, que é o que ele sabia dançar. Então apreenderam também dançar com ele, então gostaram pronto, e assim passaram também aprenderam a língua, e deste modo era a forma daquele Português civilizar aquelas pessoas. Segundo dá entender o filme, conseguiu. Nisto assim, algumas pessoas sabiam que existiam a guerra de resistência, mas então converteram-se á civilização portuguesa e desistiram das ideias revolucionarias e aliaram-se ao regime colonial, aquela civilização. E nisto assim, a mobilização a guerra continuava lá no norte e ao longo do tempo, segundo deu entender o filme, alguns guerrilheiros também dirigente que estava ao lado do primeiro presidente da frente da libertação de Moçambique Frelimo; Eduardo Mondlane, começaram a desistir, e amostrava numa outra parte também, Eduardo Mondlane com um Chinês que lhe mobilizava e dava azar mas para lutar mais, então ele estava ser abandonado e todos estavam a desistir para a parte colonial e o filme basicamente mostra principalmente isso. Isto é, enquanto uns lutavam para libertar Moçambique os outros cá, civilizado pela cultura portuguesa, não tinha nada a ver com a guerra de libertação. Próprios guerrilheiros então desistiam e viam para o lado colonial. E assim acabo por Portugal ficar com Moçambique e toda gente com a nacionalidade Portuguesa e desistido da luta de libertação de Moçambique. É principalmente a historia que dá entender o filme *O Zé do Burro*. E eu vi um outro filme que é contrario a esse, aquele que eu falei o *Deixe-me ao menos Subir as Palmeiras* do realizador Lopes Barbosa. Esse filme foi estriado nos cinemas daqui de Maputo, mais logo foi proibido porque tinha sentido contrario ao do *O Zé do Burro*, que mostra um Português que tem também uma machamba - a machamba é o campo o seja é uma quinta fora da cidade - que tem trabalhadores moçambicanos a trabalhar na sua machamba pela manga, chá e ao calor e ao vento, nas condições impróprias para o homem, e sem descanso e a receber muito mal - tipo escravatura. E entre aqueles trabalhadores estava lá um senhor que já era velho, tinha sua casa na redondeza perto daquela machamba, tinha sua família e tinha uma filha muito nova ainda. E enquanto o pai e os restantes trabalhadores estava lá na machamba a trabalhar, apareceu a filha para ir visitar o pai, aí na machamba, e aquele branco Português aproxima-se daquela menina e fala com ela e parado assim lado-ao-lado mostra-lhe uma coisa lá de muito longe, e ela só trazia uma pequenina capulana muito curta - daqui assim - quando ela distraída querer o ver que lhe mostrava a frente, com a mão direita tira-lhe a capulana e então começa as agressões de relações a força . Os trabalhadores que estavam mais a frente a trabalhar aperceberam-se de isso, os mais novos e os mais fortes, antes de isso então, aquele velho quando se apercebeu, que o patrão, o dono da machamba, estava a violentar e violar a sua filha, de tensão e de desgosto. Parado com a enxada ali então pronto caio e morreu, que os outros trabalhadores revoltaram-se vieram ter com o branco bateram-lhe e mataram-lhe ali mesmo. E esse filme por causa, principalmente, de essa parte de cena, foi proibido porque era a escravatura e a revolta contra a escravatura

Foi proibido em Moçambique, mas também em Portugal e outros países? Ninguém viu?

Não ninguém o viu. Eu conheço esse filme porque foi finalizado nos estúdios de Melo Pereira. E foi estriado num dos cinemas, mas não foi visto por muitas pessoas. São poucas pessoas que terão visto o filme. O realizador, uma vez, ouvi dizer que ele foi para Portugal na altura, depois volto para cá. Ouvi dizer que estava cá mas parece que já não trabalha em cinema terá fazer um outro trabalho. E o filme não foi conhecido por muitas pessoas, não, assim como *Limpopo* que não chegou a ser finalizado, não chegou a estrear, mas eu vi porque esses filmes eram finalizados nos laboratório estúdios do António Melo Pereira.

Nessa altura os filmes que deram nas cinemas moçambicanas foram filmes portugueses do estado só? Ou outros também?

Não, muitos cinemas que existem até hoje aqui em Maputo, em Lorenço Marques na altura, eram cinemas dos privados, casas de cinema e teatro, privados que projectavam filmes comerciais. Não era só filmes do tempo colonial que eram vistos nos cinemas. Havia filmes comerciais que vinham da Europa, acho que da Ásia também na parte de Japão, da Inglaterra, dos Estados Unidos, por exemplo os filmes 007.

Sobre condições de censura?

Exactamente, os filmes eram censurados antes de serem estreados nos cinemas e havia a Comissão de Censura que censurava os filmes, e autorizava e estipulava as idades que deviam ir ao cinemas e sempre havia censura.

E o que aconteceu depois, mais tarde no período da descolonização de independência o que aconteceu com seu emprego?

Na empresa onde eu trabalhava do Melo Pereira, tudo parou quando se deu o golpe de estado em Portugal em 25 de Abril de 1974. Essa é a, que eu antes chamei, viragem de página política. Que dito outro tipo de vidas para as colónias portuguesas entre elas, então Moçambique. Parou as produções de António de Melo Pereira porque acabou o estado colonial. Portanto de 1974 até 1976 não se fazia nada, o Melo Pereira não fazia nada, mas ele não tinha regressado a Portugal. Ele tinha ficado aqui e falou para mi que esperava assinar um novo contracto com o governo de Moçambique independente para continuar a fazer o mesmo trabalho que fazia de antes. Mas de '74 até '76 aconteceu uma supressa que fez com que ele, aborrecido, teve que regressar a Portugal. Aconteceu o que na altura se chamou de Nacionalizações, que foi a tomada de algumas empresas abandonadas. Mas no caso do laboratório de Melo Pereira, não tinha sido abandonado ele estava cá, ele só regresso a Portugal depois da tomada do seu laboratório e equipamento. E na sua empresa do Melo de Pereira, o único moçambicano que lá trabalhava era eu, até 1976. Antes trabalhavam alguns, mas que eram mais velhos que eu na altura e foram cumprir a vida militar. Mas então até ao 25 de Abril o único moçambicano que lá trabalhava era eu. Então os restantes eram Portugueses, e eram três, esses logo regressarem a Portugal, porque Melo Pereira disse que ele não tinha dinheiro para continuar lhos pagar. Mas que, pronto, podia continuar a pagar a mi - eu era quem recebia muito pouco em relação aos outros. Mas então, quando eu fico a espera de 1974 até fevereiro de 1976, de 1974 para 1976 eu até tinha a chave comigo dos estúdios, todos os dias eu chegava lá abria, limpava o equipamento, pronto ficava a espera. Ele as vezes até viajava até Portugal, ia até Zimbabwe, ate África do Sul e deixava-me sozinho confiava-me, de facto também não lhe trai por nada , merecia a confiança que ele me confio. Portanto, um dia numa segunda-feira de manhã quando eu saio de casa e chego lá, na porta estava um senhor vestido ao civil eu não conhecia quem era. Tiro as chaves no bolso, meto na porta para abrir a porta, é quando aquele senhor manda-me esperar. Ele diga, 'Não, não abre a porta', fiquei admirado. Perguntei, 'Quem é o senhor?' Ele disse que, 'Tenho a ordem para não deixar ninguém entrar aqui nesta casa.' 'Sim, ta bem, mais diga, quem é o senhor?' E identificou-se, disse que era da Polícia de Investigação Criminal (PIC). Eu disse, 'Bem, eu trabalho aqui, sou trabalhador daqui, e eu tenho a chave daqui e o proprietário desta casa também esta cá - ta em casa dele. Portanto, ele não informou nada de que a casa estava tomada, e por outro lado eu tenho lá dentro as minhas coisas pessoais, não tem nada a ver com a casa , já á dois anos que esto a trabalhar aqui sozinho.' Por causa de isso então ele me deixo entrar. Tiro as poucas coisas que eu lá tinha pessoais, e ele tomo a chave, bem eu tive medo eu entreguei lhe a chave e eu descí do décimo andar para o terceiro andar ao Centro de Informação e Turismo, que era a instituição do estado que pagava os documentários do Melo Pereira, para informar que lá encima está uma pessoa que diz

tem a ordem da Investigação Criminal para não deixar lá ninguém entrar, eu abri a porta para tirar as minhas coisas pessoais e ele fico com a chave, informei ao Director do Centro de Informação e Turismo. Então, por sua vez o Director do centro de Informação e Turismo deu-me o telefone para eu ligar para o Melo Pereira, liguei para casa dele, ele estava deitado aquele manha das 8 horas da manha, e ele fico bastante admirado, imagino eu que até poderá ter saltado da cama quando teve essa informação, e pergunto-me 'O que?'. Eu repeti. Disse, 'É verdade?' Eu disse, 'É verdade, é isso que aconteceu.' Pergunto-me 'Onde que estas?', 'Estou aqui no terceiro andar ao Centro de Informação e Turismo.' 'Então pronto espera-me lá em baixo, vou já daqui um pouco.' Preparo-se e minutos depois chegou. Falou comigo, eu expliquei, e ele entendeu. Ele fez contactos, penso que terá falado com Director da Polícia de Investigação Criminal, porque depois eu vi essa pessoa e até conheci de nome - já faleceu ouvi dizer o ano passado parece. Era o senhor na altura, era o senhor Raposo Pereira. E pronto, e assim foi tomado o laboratório e estúdios do António de Melo Pereira. Não tinha sido abandonado, ele estava cá, que ele foi tomado nas mãos dele, e afinal nessa altura tinha sido criado o instituto Nacional de Cinema, não sei se ele sabia, mais pelo menos eu não sabia. E pronto, passado duas semanas ele preparo-se e fez a sua mala e mais a sua esposa regresso a Portugal, mas foi via a África do Sul com sua esposa que era uma Inglesa, uma senhora Patrícia. E pronto eu fui lhe despedir a ida, entrar no comboio, ele, não para ela, era a primeira vez, uma pessoa de 60 anos na altura. Mais então pronto, ele teve que deitar lagrimas a minha frente mesmo, chorou. A esposa dele, a senhora Patrícia, não consegui olhar para mi, pronto regressou a Portugal - já tinha sido tomado o laboratório. E passado pouco tempo - alias - passado uma semana eu fui me apresentar ao instituto Nacional de Cinema. E fui recebido. Continuo a trabalhar no Instituto Nacional de Cinema e de lá foram transferidas as maquinas para aqui, para este edificio mesmo.

As mesmas máquinas?

As mesmas máquinas. As mesmas pessoas. Sim. Então passei assim do tempo colonial da minha profissão de cinema de essa maneira para cá. Até a vez que o próprio Instituto também resolveu desvincularmos, eu e muitos outros. E pronto neste momento estou desvinculado, esto a fazer nada. E foi a passagem da empresa do Melo Pereira para o Instituto Nacional de Cinema, foi o seu equipamento e o próprio pessoal que era unicamente eu, aqueles outros senhores, que eram Portugueses, já viam regressado a Portugal. Fui eu que aquelas maquinas que asseguramos as primeiras produções que se produziram aqui no Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Devido a experiência que já tinha ao longo do tempo do trabalho com as mesmas máquinas e a sorte também não foi tão fácil porque o que se inicio a produzir aqui no Instituto Nacional de Cinema também era quase a mesma coisa que fazia o Melo Pereira. Que era produção de um documentário de dez minutos um jornal titulado *Kuxa Kanema*. Só que a *Actualidades de Moçambique* era mensal, o *Kuxa Kanema* era semanal, era todas semanas, mas eram documentários de dez minutos que fosse produzindo mesmo até a paralisação total das produções aqui.

E a forma e tudo foi muito similar o muito diferente, podes descrever um pouco?

Não, não foi muito diferente. A única diferença que criando o Instituto Nacional de Cinema foi ampliado em varias secções de actividades. A câmara, montagem, som e o laboratório. Eram principalmente estas secções da rotina da produção de filmes. No Melo Pereira era um pequeno estúdio e laboratório onde as 4 o 5 pessoas faziam quase tudo; filmagem, montagem, sonorização e finalização. Aqui já eram secções bastante grandes mais o processo de trabalho e técnica era a mesma coisa. Então pronto, foi da minha nível vontade que aqui escolhei uma secção: o laboratório. Fiquei a trabalhar no laboratório, não por

motivos pessoais, não quis pegar na câmara para andar a filmar porque também sabia filmar e montagem, quase tudo que era da produção de filme nas condições que havia na altura, eu sabia fazer. Mas pronto, uma vez aqui dividida em secções grandes escolhi a única que era o laboratório. Mas quase que um pouco de tudo, eu sabia fazer.

Qual foi os tipos dos outros filmes, porque não foi só Kuxa Kanema que foi feito, não é?

Sim, aqui também de facto para além do *Kuxa Kanema* que era um jornal mensal, realizaram-se vários outros documentários de media, alguns de longa metragem. Passaram por aqui também realizadores de renome internacional, por exemplo o senhor Ruy Guerra, um Português que estava radicado no Brasil. Nos finais da década 70, ele esteve aqui que realizou um filme de longa metragem intitulado *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*. Era um cena que retratava de um massacre da moeda que a tropa colonial fez no norte em Cabo Delegado em moeda. Massacrando a população que se apresentou na administração de lá para pedir a independência de Moçambique. Foram anos de inicio da luta de Libertação. Então em resposta, o governo colonial massacrrou todas aquelas pessoas. O senhor Ruy Guerra realizou cá esse filme de longa metragem outros filmes também depois da independência como o *Vozes Livres* era o sistema de voto e de escolhe de dirigentes que, como por exemplo, era uma espécie de eleições de deputados na assembleia, mas essa escolha era feita numa reunião com as populações de toda parte das províncias para votar a favor o contra uma pessoa implicada para representar aquele distrito o senão aquela província na assembleia. Também foi um filme de longa metragem. Um outro de media metragem foi realizado pelo um Brasileiro senhor Murilo Sales, intitulado *Estas são as Armas* é um filme de 60 minutos, que fala do inicio da guerra ate á independência. Esse filme foi muito aceite pela população. Passava nos cinemas cerca de um mês e todas as pessoas enchiam o cinema para ver esse filme. E muitos outros que também eram relacionados com a guerra, principalmente a guerra recente esta terminada da resistência nacional perpetrado pela Renamo, era por exemplo, isso acontecia em simultâneo antes da independência do Zimbabwe, também antes do fim do apartheid África do Sul e os guemilheiros da libertação do Zimbabwe estavam a seriados aqui em Moçambique assim como ANC também tinha sua representação cá em Moçambique. Então Moçambique era vitima de ataques e principalmente Rhodesianos na altura, e havia muitos estragos eram comboios que eram queimados, eram machimbombos, eram campos de concentração dos Zimbabweanos em Mapaz, Qualaquala, Enhazonia. Portanto esses acontecimentos foram reportados e feito documentários, foram especiais que não era *Kuxa Kanema*. De 20 minutos, 30 minutos o mesmo 60 minutos. São filmes de grande rolo, por exemplo em Enhazonia vês muitos corpos espalhados dos Zimbabweanos mortos atacados pelas tropas Rhodesianos .

Esses filmes foram feito para distribuição em Moçambique mais também em outros países?

Não. O Instituto Nacional de Cinema tinha quase tudo aqui concentrado, era a produção e a distribuição. A distribuição era principalmente nacional e era feito só em Moçambique e em quase todas províncias. Também estava cá o cinema móvel que tinha comissão levar essas informações para mostrar a população rural. Portanto não tenho conhecimento de esses filmes terem sido distribuídos para fora do país. Mas claro alguns de esses filmes participaram em festivais internacionais, por exemplo o *Estas são as Armas* foi conhecido, não sei aonde, mas fora do país e foi premiado. Portanto nos festivais internacionais em que o Instituto Nacional de Cinema participava escolhia alguns filmes e apresentava mas em termos de realização e distribuição não era político do Instituto Nacional de Cinema distribuir para fora do país. Talvez porque na altura, logo após a independência Moçambique seguia uma linha política diferente da aquela que alguns

outros países seguiam, por exemplo na altura ainda existia a União Soviética, que era o bloco comunista e o outro era o bloco capitalista então pronto havia esses limites, essas fronteiras que fazia com que o filme não fossem para além, mas em festivais internacionais muitos de esses filmes foram lá apresentados porque eram principalmente as realidades que cá aconteciam que fora daqui muitas pessoas não tinham o acesso de reportar esses acontecimentos. Tinham oportunidade de ver esses acontecimentos na realidade dos filmes feitos aqui em Moçambique.

Pode descrever um pouco mais a organização e também o ambiente do Instituto Nacional nessa altura?

O Instituto Nacional de Cinema surgiu com a principal missão de produzir filmes. E fez de facto, produziu muitos filmes. E o Instituto Nacional de Cinema também era prioritário de todos os cinemas em Moçambique. Porque muito de esses cinemas após a independência foram abandonados pelos proprietários que eram maioritariamente portugueses - regressaram ao Portugal. Portanto o Instituto Nacional de Cinema, tinha a parte da direcção do Instituto Nacional de Cinema cá, a direcção geral e a administração dos cinemas que tinha como missão a manutenção dos cinemas e a continuação de exibição de filmes comerciais, como lugares de passa tempo dos cidadãos que estavam habituados a irem assistir filmes no cinemas. E tinha também a distribuição de filmes comerciais que eram distribuído por todos os cinemas do país para serem estreados e exibidos durante algum tempo. E cá neste edifício do Instituto Nacional de Cinema a principal missão era coordenar todos esses trabalhos. A distribuição, exibição e a produção, e a distribuição da mesma produção, e exibição também, em todos os cinemas porque Moçambique ficou independente e a única diversão nocturna que, única não, mais principal era o cinema. Porque não havia televisão e portanto a organização do Instituto principalmente estava assim feita. E cá dentro, o Instituto tinha a produção de filmes com a sua direcção que subordinava-se a direcção geral mas tinha sua direcção de produção de filmes, que tinha com missão importar o material e material virgem, filmes virgens, produtos químicos e equipamento: gravadores, camarás de filmar, e todo equipamento para produção, e manter a produção mesmo em dia. Tinha direcção para isso, o financiamento para custear a produção era o dinheiro que vinha da receita da exibição de filmes nos cinemas. É que custeava das despesas da produção. Mas a produção de filme de facto é muito caro portanto o dinheiro vinha de lá e a grande parte era consumido cá através da produção, vencimento das pessoas, deslocações, tudo isso assim. Portanto talvez resumindo o Instituto Nacional de Cinema estava dividido pela produção, distribuição e exibição de filmes.

Todos os outros filmes que foram feitos nesta altura foram filmes mais o menos escolar para o Instituto e o estado não é? Não havia equipamento e dinheiro para fazer filmes pessoais e outros tipos de filmes?

Não, não havia. De facto o Instituto Nacional de Cinema surge com poucos técnicos. Um deles, dos poucos, era eu. Mas poucos outros, meus colegas também que trabalhavam no outro laboratório, agora um deles mesmo esta na TVM. E também o Instituto Nacional de Cinema serviu de escola porque todos os cineastas, que hoje são cineastas e continuam ser cineastas, apreenderam a produzir filmes e realizar filmes aqui no Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Vieram da escola, sem nunca ter visto uma câmara, qualquer coisa qualquer máquina que fosse de produção de filme, e apreenderão aqui a produzir filmes. E realizações pessoais, particulares, logo depois da independência, não existiam. Totalmente nula. Muitos cineastas que ainda hoje existem aqui em Moçambique, se é que alguns tinham alguma experiência anterior, muito bem, mas muito mais também profissionalizaram-se aqui com o Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Quando tivesse iniciativas de produzirem um filme, tinham que fazer o guião, e apresentar a direcção do Instituto Nacional

de Cinema, e com o colectivo dos técnicos da produção era aprovado e realizava. E todo equipamento filme: máquinas, o laboratório, estúdio de som era tudo aqui. Era um trabalhador do Instituto Nacional de Cinema que estava livre de ter iniciativa de fazer, de realizar, um filme que ele penso desde que fosse aprovado.

E o que aconteceu depois no momento de fogo?

Foi para mi, na vida, não é, foi mais uma surpresa. Talvez para muitos também . A primeira surpresa foi quando se esperava continuar a trabalhar para o Melo Pereira então fui surpreendido pela nacionalização, muito bem, não tem nada a ver porque o laboratório era meu. E aqui em, se minha memória não me traiçoa, em fevereiro em 1991, numa sexta-feira de manhã sobe surpreendido porque um incêndio. Aqui estava o armazém principal de filmes comerciais que ficava na parte lá de baixo, filmes que eram de distribuição comercial e outros filmes para o cinemas lá projectar esses filmes. Pensa-se que o fogo partiu do armazém de filmes comerciais que estava lá em baixo. E o fogo alastro-se até cá em cima, neste departamento. Precisamente aqui aonde estamos, era o laboratório de fotografia e na parede a seguir era o estúdio de som. E não é explicação correcta de como surgiu o incêndio, mas o fogo propago-se de tal maneira, tão rápida, que não foi possível socorrer quase nada em todos os departamentos e secciones que o fogo atingiu. Foram chamados os bombeiros na altura . Os bombeiros chegaram cá, começavam a deitar a agua sobre o fogo, mas a maior parte do equipamento que havia nas secções atingidas pelo fogo, já havia sido consumido. Até hoje ainda repito que a explicação de como surgiu o fogo não esta clara para mi, não tenho conhecimento daquilo que será de facto entendido claramente de que o fogo partiu de isto mais daquilo. Pensa-se que o fogo terá partido do curto circuito da corrente eléctrica, porque na noite anterior havia chovido, e por algum sitio da parede escória a agua que ia ter algumas tomadas aonde ficava o armazém de filmes. O chover a noite o de dia isso havia acontecido muitas vezes antes mas nunca tinha provocado curto circuite e do r/c para estas secções todas, como o fogo passo também é uma coisa que não sabemos. Estivemos todos envolvidos na tentativa de apagar e remover certo equipamento para salvar mas quase que não conseguimos salvar nada. A maior parte, principalmente a parte que foi, era da produção, o som, a montagem, principalmente esses perderão todo o equipamento e acho que terá visto as paredes aqui não cobertas, todo o equipamento que estava ali ardeu e a penas só fico o laboratório. O laboratório que escapo com todo o seu equipamento. Mais o laboratório não tinha trabalho nenhum sem que houvesse outras secções para fazerem as filmagens mas também a secção de câmara perdeu todas as câmaras que lá tinha, pronto e dai paro a produção e dai ficamos todos sem nada fazer a espera que um dia talvez o estado podia-se dar a mão de ajuda para de novo continuar a se produzir porque as produções que aqui eram do estado da instituto de cinema do estado todo que se fez foi para o estado. Até hoje que eu saiba não há quem diz, o não há quem disse, o não há quem fez alguma coisa sobre o Instituto depois do incêndio e pronto.

Mas antes do incêndio também havia mudanças na produção? Depois da morte de Samora Machel, por exemplo, isso teve um grande efeito no Instituto, como foi?

Sim. Também antes mesmo de acontecer o incêndio, principalmente a partir dai mesmo, depois da morte de Samora Machel, o Instituto quase que fico sem nada a fazer porque já não acompanhava as visitas do presidente que fazia nas províncias o que fazia fora do pais o que um outro visitante um outro presidente vinha para cá o instituto nacional de Cinema já não acompanhava essas reportagens, já não fazia. Também eram poucas, mas aconteciam. Só que o Instituto já não reportava, não fazia *Kuxa Kanema*, não fazia nada.

Veio o incêndio quando de facto alguns anos que seguiram depois da morte de Samora Machel. Alias, até foi feito um documentário de media metragem, era uma retrospectiva da vida de Samora, suas visitas, seus comícios até mesmo a morte, os estilhaços do avião lá em Mbuzini e o que me lembro tido feito nessa época foi a independência de Namíbia. Isso foi filmado e foi feito. Fora de isso não se fez mais nada. E a seguir então aconteceu o incêndio milagroso, e não sabemos como surgiu aquele incêndio... Talvez isso é um pouco um acordar umas passagens interiores, porque só quando eu estive aqui ao Instituto Nacional de Cinema é que me apercebi que eu terei estado em lugares que são históricos que esses lugares então escreve-se com muito interesse na historia de Moçambique principalmente na libertação. Nessa andança de filmagens, eu, como assistente de câmara, no laboratório de Melo Pereira, eu lembro ter estado por duas vezes numa casa que é chamada, que era o que se chama ainda hoje 'Vila Algarve'. Só mais tarde eu soube que na aquela casa, Vila Algarve, era a sede da policia política colonial aonde muitos moçambicanos perderam a vida.

Essa grande casa perto daqui? Vila Algarve?

Exactamente. Toda embelezada com azulejos por fora. Agora esta vedado com uma chapa de zinco. Eu tinha estado lá de serviço a fazer filmagens já não sabia o que era Vila Algarve. Sabia que chamava-se Vila Algarve, o que era aquilo? Não sabia. Portanto, pronto agora, isto assim, a recordar que conheci lugares históricos que talvez alguns moçambicanos dirigentes, nenhum deles nunca quis saber de mi, qual foi meu passado de trabalho, o que eu vi, aonde e que eu andei, que pessoas conheci, tudo isso, e são pessoas que fazem alguma parte de esta historia do passado que umas conheci. Por exemplo, comecei a trabalhar em 1969, e conheci 3 governadores gerais. Comecei a trabalhar na véspera do regresso, mas antes de regressar para Portugal, o governador, aquele que foi governador geral na altura, o Dr. Baltazar Ribeiro de Souza, esse Baltazar Ribeiro de Souza teve uma certa historia que é bem recordada por muitos aqui em Moçambique, principalmente pelos dirigentes do país, e a seguida o Eng. Erantes Oliveira, esse ficou pouco tempo, dois anos e meio, e o ultimo o Eng. Pimenteu dos Santos. Para alem de outros que vinham de visita cá como o Ministro de Ultra Mar - aqueles com contei antes - Ministro de Ultra mar, dos Negócios Estrangeiros, essas pessoas todas que até alguns tinham nomes de alguns bairros que esse nomes mudaram depois da Independência, por exemplo o bairro da Liberdade, na altura, era chamado bairro Silva e Cunha. Silva e Cunha foi ministro da Ultra Mar, que véu cá muitas vezes, e aquele bairro foi inaugurado pelo ele, e eu estive lá a reportar, como assistente de câmara, a filmar a inauguração de aquele bairro. Há um outro bairro também, esses dois bairros que ficam na Matola, esse outro chamava-se Rui Patrício, esse era Ministro de Negócios Estrangeiros, de nome completo Rui Manuel de Mandeira Patrício. E muitas outras coisas que ha um interesse de quem gostaria de adquirir focos históricos para escrever algum sitio, eu posso contar as realidades que vi. Mas fora de estrangeiros confesso, fora de estrangeiros que tenham-me contactado aqui, mesmo no Instituto Nacional de Cinema aqui em Moçambique, não há ninguém que tem se interessado em saber o que eu sei, o que eu vi.

Eu esto surpreendida. E o que aconteceu com Vila Algarve no momento de independência?

Não sei o que aconteceu depois da independência mas aquela casa foi abandonada e quase destruída porque já não tem portas, nem janelas, e acho que foi aquele ódio do aquilo que se sabia que aconteceu lá e desmantelou-se aquela casa por saber que através da aquela casa muitos moçambicanos - bons moçambicanos - perderam a vida. E aquela casa não esta feito nada, depois de estar demolido no estado que ele esta, e o estado em que ele apresenta até agora, por muitos anos quando ainda decorria a guerra esta

terminada de 16 anos, muitos moçambicanos que refugiam do campo para cá, alguns ficaram viver ali durante muito tempo mas também alguns anos para cá foram tirados e vedados e parece que aquela casa esta tomada para ser alguma coisa histórica mas depois de remodelada, renovada mas só que passa muito tempo também ainda não esta feito nada .

Tenho um o dois o três questões sobre as maquinas. A maior parte das maquinas no Instituto foram deixados pelos Portugueses? Foram da Rússia? De onde todas elas vieram?

Sabe-se que depois de independência a linha política era orientada na parte socialista, mas o equipamento que existia aqui de produção de facto não era equipamento da Rússia o da Republica Democrática Alemã, não - apenas os filmes, ultimamente utilizávamos os filmes da Republica Democrática de Marés, Republica Democrática Alemã, que eram filmes da 'Orvo' mas também eram filmes de boa qualidade, eu reconheço, porque conheci filmes 'Kodak' e 'Fuji', e pronto mais tarde da 'Orvo'. Mas comparando uns e outros ambas são da boa qualidade, muito boa qualidade. Portanto, apenas os filmes que eram da 'Orvo' daqueles que utilizávamos ultimamente. Mas o equipamento não. Utilizávamos mesas de montagem 'Steinbeck', máquinas camarás de filmar 'Ariflex', o equipamento do laboratório, as copiadoras, eram da 'Debenhau', a máquina, aquela que veio comigo de revelar que era melhor - ainda esta lá montada - era Italiana mas já ultrapassada a mais ao 'Mac' e pronto. Os produtos químicos eram da 'Kodak', e mesmo da Inglaterra, sim vinha de Inglaterra muitos 'Methol', 'Sofito', 'Hydrocinon', 'Carbonato', todos eles vinham da Inglaterra. . Então o equipamento e produtos químicos a excepção de filmes era tudo dos países Ocidentais - na altura do bloco capitalista. Eu não sei comparar, o quanto são melhor as máquinas Soviéticas o de um outro pais em relação as maquinas da Inglaterra de França, Itália, Estados Unidos, não sei comparar mas esse equipamento que nos tínhamos aqui era um bom equipamento até que o que eu saiba em termos de equipamento de câmaras e mesas e tudo mais, essas marcas todas eu sei que são bom equipamento, muito bom equipamento. E as máquinas que estavam na secção de som, que era de Gabriel Mondlane, 'Nagra', tínhamos três 'Nagras' muito boas, e o que mais? E outro equipamento de som de transferencia de som magnético para som óptico era tudo de Inglaterra e Estados Unidos e França.

Havia pessoas que vieram dos outro países durante essa época para ajudar em cinema? Pode descrever isso um pouco?

Havia de facto. Conforme eu antes descrevi umes dos filmes realizados houve esse português o senhor Rui Hiera, já falecido, mas estava radicado no Brasil, grande realizador. O realizador um outro Brasileiro Murilo Salves. E antes logo mesmo no inicio cá no Instituto Nacional de Cinema estava cá um senhor que muito ajudou na formação do Instituto Nacional de Cinema, já faleceu também , e era um Inglês Simon Hartog.

O que é que eles faziam?

Esses dois outros eram realizador e realizaram muitos filmes. O Simon Hartog era um conselheiro administrativo. Alias eu trabalhei muito tempo e tive muitos conhecimentos técnicos - modernas na altura - com um senhor Canadiano com a esposa dele também estiveram aqui muito tempo e muito ajudaram na formação então o objectivo eles ajudavam-nos na formação de moçambicanos na tecnologia moderna daquele momento. O Canadiano, o senhor Ron Hardes, e sua esposa também, muito tempo cá trabalhavam connosco, a mulher trabalhava na montagem foi uma das montadores, e o Ron Hardes era no laboratório. Então aqui Ingleses, Canadianos, Brasileiros , Portugueses, mais alguns que também passavam por algum tempo e ajudaram-nos muito a missão de esses era de formar melhorar cada vez mais o trabalho técnico de moçambicano na produção e realização de filmes.

Eu não sabia que o Instituto fez um filme sobre Namíbia, isso é interessante. Não foi só assuntos sobre Moçambique mas também as outras lutas africanas?

É. O Instituto Nacional de Cinema, nesta região da África desde que surgiu o Instituto Nacional de Cinema, excepto o ano talvez a África do Sul e o Zimbabwe era um país que estava muito avançado na produção de filmes por possuir equipamento e o pessoal técnico para isso. De facto o Instituto Nacional de Cinema não registou apenas a história referente a Moçambique, apenas não. Também sobre Zimbabwe, conforme eu disse, os Zimbabwuanos estavam cá refugiados. O Robert Mugabe uma vez veio aqui mesmo para ver alguns filmes dos ataques dos Rhodesianos aos campos de refugiados de Zimbabwuanos. A independência de Namíbia também foi reportado o filme está aqui, mas dos outros éramos – Moçambique alias – era inimigo dele por exemplo, da Rhodesia e da África do Sul esses atacavam. E há muita coisa dessa por exemplo em que nos ataques Sul Africanos, nas bases do ANC na Matola, Moçambique reportou e mostra um soldado Sul Africano branco morto ainda com seu rádio a funcionar. De outra vez atacaram entrando pela fronteira de Ponta de Ouro. Também foi morto um Sul Africano lá. E por outro lado, para além de fazer reportagem dos acontecimentos regionais e dos países vizinhos, também alguns países vizinhos não tinham a capacidade e as condições técnicas como Moçambique vinham finalizar os seus filmes aqui. Tanzânia já veio finalizar dois filmes de longa metragem, e seu realizador louvou me bastante de ter visto feito o trabalho que foi feito que ele não imaginava, senhor Martin Handred. Veio finalizar o filme ‘Super League’ que era um campeonato de futebol e ‘Challenge Cup’ estava para finalizar um outro um que não chegou a se finalizar, não sei porque. A independência do Zimbabwe não recorde ter sido filmado a independência do Zimbabwe. Mas então em termos regionais, por exemplo da África do Sul, aqui acho que a comunidade internacional teve conhecimento que houve um ataque bombista e uma activista Inglesa do ANC, Ruth First, e isto foi filmado. Está aqui mesmo. Aconteceu em Moçambique mas é parte da história da África do Sul. Um destacado dirigente do ANC também faleceu aqui, morreu por doença. O senhor Moses Mabida, foi filmado a seu enterro ali no cemitério, se a memória não me falha parece que o corpo já foi trasladado para África do Sul e pronto tem uma parte de história de Moçambique e da região. O Instituto Nacional de Cinema guarda no seu arquivo, bem infelizmente eu acho que o arquivo de filme não está em condições e pode estar-se estragar o material mas é uma história bastante importante. Não só aquilo que acontecia aqui em Moçambique mas principalmente aqui na região.

Pode me dizer que o premiere do filme do Instituto foi 25?

Não o filme 25 foi uma realização, parece que foram dos dois irmãos Brasileiros [sic]. Celsos. Mas claro fala de Moçambique. O premiado filme feito aqui, é o *Estas são as Armas*. Um filme bastante interessante.

Quais são os outros filmes mais importante na sua opinião?

Bem, *Estas São as Armas* já foi dito. *Mueda, Memória e Massacre, O Vento Sopre do Norte* – acho que já ouviste falar de esse filme é de um realizador Moçambicano José Cardoso. Eu trabalhei muito para esse filme. Foi a minha primeira experiência um filme de longa metragem. Porque nas condições em que se trabalhava, nas condições em que existiam, havia contradições de opiniões entre os realizadores. Alguns pensavam que não seria possível realizar-se e produzir-se um filme de longa metragem daquela envergadura nas condições do laboratório que havia aqui que era chefiado por mim principal técnico era eu do laboratório, mas o realizador sem acreditar nisso veio ter comigo. Pergunto-me se seria possível feitura de todo o trabalho para um filme de longa metragem. *O Vento Sopre do Norte* eu garanti-lhe que eu lhe garanto que é possível. E foi possível. Isso custou-me muito sacrifício para isso eu tive que me desligar dos restos dos trabalhos que

eram considerados pequenos como o *Kuxa Kanma* e outros documentários que era para trabalhar no filme *O Vento Sopra do Norte* e foi possível tira-se o filme em 35mm e em 16mm.

O dia que esse filme estreio tinha que ser um dia bastante importante.

Foi bastante importante. Foi convidado o presidente da Republica e infelizmente eu nesse dia estive doente de cansaço de trabalho de esse filme. Toda a equipa técnica foi apresentado ali no palco do Ciné África e aplaudido, eu fui chamada mas não estive lá, estive gravemente doente. Trabalhei muito. Porque também as condições do meu laboratório não eram as melhores. Era um sitio bastante fechado, e respirava-se os produtos químicos diretamente, mas pronto isso tinha que dar de mal-estar de saúde , por sacrificio eu entrava de manhã talvez saia as 22 o 23 horas a noite. É grande sacrificio.

Nessa altura Ciné África foi a cinema mais importante, mais bonita?

Ciné África é tido – até hoje – como um cinema que deve pertencer ao estado para aquilo que os dirigentes do estado quiserem ver, por exemplo um teatro, ou estreia de um filme ou qualquer outra coisa. É um caso que a opinião de muitos e por bem pensa que é melhor que fique um cinema para o estado, para aquilo que o estado quiser. Claro que pode exhibir filmes comerciais mas para alguns interessou do estado tem que ser apresentado em cinema que seja no Ciné África, o melhor tem sido sempre no Ciné África. Há outros cinemas, sala de cinema, tem, com melhor condições, mas pronto entre eles tinha que se escolher um e nisto assim escolheu se o Ciné África.

Foi construído em na altura da independência ou antes?

Não, foi construído muito antes da independência. Era um grupo de três cinemas que era pertencia de um proprietário o senhor Cezar Rodrigues, um português. Que era o proprietário do cinema Gil Vicente, Ciné África e Cinema Charlo. Esses cinema a excepção de Gil Vicente, os outros mudaram de nome. Os nomes antigos de esses cinema era: Gil Vicente continua ser Gil Vicente, Manuel Rodrigues é o Ciné África e o Cinema Infante que é o cinema Charlo. Estes três cinemas eram de um proprietário Cezar Rodrigues. Também enquanto me lembro do Cezar Rodrigues, ele era também a pessoa que recebia os documentários de Melo Pereira e mandava para Lisboa. E eu levava o documentário entregava mesmo no gabinete dele para ele mandar para Lisboa. Acho que era para garantia de que não devia desviar aquele documentário, porque o documentário de Melo Pereira era mais prostrado em frente do governo geral, os secretários provinciais a assembleia legislativa era um espécie de assembleia da Republica que era realizado ali, ainda tenho algumas fotografias em casa onde esta o Melo Pereira e muitas jornalistas incluso alguns jornalistas da BBC de Londres que estiveram cá depois do 25 de Abril a fazer uma conferência de imprensa ao governador geral, na altura o Pimenteu dos Santos, sobre o golpe de estado em Portugal. E tenho algumas fotografias lá em casa, interessante, assim grandes, com Melo Pereira e outros jornalistas, e alguns da BBC e outros da África do Sul, todos ali juntos. E o equipamento e o laboratório de Melo Pereira propriamente eu tenho fotografias em casa – tudo bonito.

Interview with Oscar Monteiro, 13 August 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

Quero compreender como os filmes que foram feitos durante a luta armada eram precursores ao trabalho de decolonizar a cinema na Instituto Nacional de Cinema, e sobre tudo o ideia de criar um arquivo da vida quotidiana nas zonas libertadas

que me parece uma tarefa que foi muito importante e muito ligado ao cinema moçambicano. Mas talvez para iniciar, o senhor pode descrever a sua papel nesse período na Argélia e em Tanzânia?

Nesta área? Ok. Eu fui o representante de Frelimo na Argélia... Eu vou começar por dizer o seguinte, eu, quando era estudante em Portugal, sai daqui em 1958, para estudar direito em Portugal. E a partir de '59 comecei-me interessar primeiro por as questões pedagógicas, eu vivia, ou estudava na universidade muito antiquada, que é a Universidade de Coimbra, e para essa razão, comecei-me a preocupar um pouco em '59/'60 sobre a metodologia pedagógica. E começámos a pôr em causa a metodologia pedagogia e gradualmente foi entrando no movimento estudantil. O movimento estudantil tinha uma característica que era o movimento em geral antifascista, anti – salazarista. Evidente também tinha uma corrente conservador. E quando nos começámos a trabalhar uma das coisas que fazíamos era editar muitos textos. Eu fui redactor de um jornal académico que chamava 'Via Latina'. E foi a minha primeira experiência com informação vamos dizer a escrever artigos para jornais, ir fazer impressão. Mais tarde também aprendi um pouco de fotografia. Editei jornais académicos na Casa de Estudantes Império que era uma associação de estudantes anti-colónias. Portanto quando eu chego a FRELIMO, já tem alguma experiência de trabalho de fazer artigos, e a FRELIMO já tinha um tradição de publicar boletins. Eu estava na Argélia produziam-se boletins e fazia-se muito informação, aquela era informação dirigida ao exterior, exposições etc. – ate tenho fotos de isso tudo. Muitas coisas. E nos editamos um boletim em Francês. Como eu estava sozinho a maior parte do tempo, não consegui fazer um boletim igual ao de que se fazia em Dar-es-Salam, eu tinha que traduzir primeiro, e depois sozinho dactilografar. Dar-es-Salam foi avançando depois começou a ser impresso em offset, eu só mais tarde comecei a imprimir em offset em 1973, imprimindo na Itália. Em offset por solidariedade eram um...vale a pena falar no pacto de 'Jumelaje' com 'Steb', era uma cooperativa gráfica em Bologna. Então eles passaram a imprimir o nosso boletim, ate temos um ou dois exemplares ai. Então, também imprimíamos nesse lugar capas a cores para Mocambique Revolution, que era nosso boletim, já sabes, para a parte imprensa escrita. Em 1967, 1968, parece nessa altura, eu fiz um pequeno curso, e fiz um pequeno livro, que depois ficou com maquinas, não sei se ainda existe, sobre o que era fotografia, porque depois me interessei com fotografia e comecei a escrever...escrevi noções o que era abertura de lente, o que era tempo de exposição, o que era película, a distancia focal, a maior focais, o menor focais, os desenhos, essas coisas, eu tinha – também eu próprio apreendi. Porque era um curioso e li uns livrinhos de fotografia, etc. Ah, preciso de dizer que na França quando eu estive, eu fugi de Portugal, e tive que ficar algum tempo em França, então um dos empregos que eu tive foi num atelier fotográfico. Em que a gente fazia foto industrial, fotos para exposições, grandes, ainda com metros antigos em que se rolava. Havia uma cuba comprida com revelador e a gente rolava, imprimia na parede, tínhamos um maquina enorme em cariz, imprimíamos para ai 5 metros, empresionavamos o papel, que vinha em rolos, e depois passávamos – assim rolávamo-lo dentro de uma cuba de revelador de agua, de fixador, etc. então isso fazíamos fotos de maquetas, ampliávamos. Então ganhei um certo gosto, e um certo profissionalismo em fotografia. Então a partir dai depois dei algumas explicações sobre fotografias aos primeiros nossos camaradas. Mas sempre na área da fotografia. Eu tinha feito um bocadinho de 8mm, mas francamente nunca fui assim um pessoa que tivesse assim envolvido muito no cinema. Gostei sempre muito mais da fotografia. E depois, quando desenvolve o nosso departamento fotográfico, com maquinas, com um elemento que vem montar a nossa imprensa, eu não tenho certeza se é o mesmo que depois deu um curso e monto nosso fotográfico, e monto nosso departamento de fotografia. Mas havia uma pessoa que precisa

procurar, que é o José Soares Alcuette, que esta aqui, ainda esta vivo. E que filmo muita coisa. E por vezes nós víamos os filmes deles. Não tenho a certeza se vimos o filme. Portanto, há muito filme em Super 8 feito aí. Não sei aonde estão. Portanto há muita coisa que era o registo que se dizia-se que registo é a luta. Mais tarde também o Truarte também apreendeu fazer filmagem. Maquinas sempre fico na foto, mas o Truarte apreendeu filmar. Em 1973 eu comprei, em Addis Abbaba, um dos primeiros vídeos. Sim em 1973. Uns dos primeiros vídeos. Espera lá. Sim acho que sim, foi em Addis Abbaba. Não, não, em '76 é que eu comprei. Não me consigo lembrar, mas si eu comprei ainda era um Akai com bobines que depois dei ao Truarte. 1973 ou 1976? Tenho que pensar melhor ver as referencias. Mas eu acho que foi depois da independência – ta certo. Mas isso foi uma coisa que eu depois ofereci. O que mais posso dizer? Bom, agora parte de cinema, isto é minha parte, e o meu envolvimento é publicar boletins e utilizar todos meios de informação. Agora, já não como especialista do cinema, mas como realizador de esse meio, os meus contactos com cinema são os seguintes: 1967 faz o filme 'Venceremos', filma-se, vai o interior o Dragotin Popovic, que era o cameraman, das actualidades Jugoslavas que se chamam o filme Stonogroski. Eu vou para, em Fevereiro de 1968 visito a Jugoslávia para acompanhar o Presidente Eduardo Mondlane. E durante esse periodo nos vamos visionar o filme, e depois eu faço o comentário em Português, porque havia um comentário em Francês. E em Inglês e em Francês, nessa parte do comentário em Inglês e Francês, eu, em certos momentos, para criar quebra, falo a voz de Samora Machel. Dizendo que Samora Machel terá a dizendo no filme em mudo. Então eu faço de Samora Machel nesse filme, quer dizer lei e tal. Samora Machel a falar e eu, a minha voz a dizer qualquer coisa. As palavras que eu presumi que ele estaria a dizer. Eu tinha acabado trabalhar muito intensivamente alguns meses com Samora no ano 1977, portanto estava mais ou menos dentro do espírito dessa viagem de conteúdo.

Pode descrever um pouco os temas e os conteúdos de esse filme Venceremos?

Bom o filme *Venceremos* era essencialmente a documentação do trabalho que fazia-se nas zonas libertadas, não era um filme sobre a guerra. É um filme e sobre tudo sobre as zonas libertadas, sobre as escolas, sobre as vidas nas bases. Não me recordo se havia qualquer coisa sobre a saúde, mas é sobre tudo mulheres, de certamente feminino, a vida nas bases, as crianças nas escolas. Lembro-me das crianças a fazer os exercícios e tal nas escolas.

E porque foi tão importante para FRELIMO para informar o mundo sobre esse lado da luta?

Falava-se na aquela altura da cortina de ferro e falava-se na cortina de bambu, quando queria se falar da China. Nós falávamos da cortina de silencio. O que tinha acontecido é colonialismo Português, tinha-se mantido relativamente discreto. Durante a guerra namoraram os Alemães Nazis e os Italianos, do que inspiravam na filosofia do estado novo, filosofia de um estado cooperativo muito Musoliniano, mais fascista do que Nazi no estado Português, na teoria, pois na pratica não era assim tão real...(interruption phone)...Então, mas por outro lado, por causa das relações históricas com Inglaterra, Portugal fico na aquela posição de pais neutro. Portanto, nunca entro abertamente no lado dos Nazis na guerra. E permitiu o uso da base dos Açores, como parte da estratégia Americana. Na altura dos aliados, e depois na estratégia da E ficou ali um aliado incomodo, mas tão menos incomodo quanto menos fala-se dele. Então ninguém falava de Portugal. Por outro lado começou-se a difundir o mito de Luso-tropicalismo. 'Portugueses são diferentes, os Portugueses casam com as negras, fazem filhos, é um pais de mulatos, o mito do Brasil. É um pais mulatto.' Não era nada de isso. Para além disso havia o problema da língua, ninguém conhecia, ninguém visitava, e era preciso explicar a muitas pessoas, primeiro não era que não

havia colonialismo em moçambique, é que havia Mocambique. Eu recordo que muitas das minhas explicações, eu costumava andar com um mapa, então levantava o mapa e começava a mostrar onde é que ficava Moçambique. Quando não tinha mapa dizia 'Olha, vocês estão ver Madagáscar...' por exemplo em Francês, eu trabalhava muito em países de expressão Francesa, 'Estão a ver Madagáscar?', eles sabiam, 'Estão a ver Africa do Sul? Sim. Depois, estão a ver Suazilândia? Tem a Rodésia, tem a Zâmbia e o Malawi, tem a Tanzânia, olha Mocambique é a aquela parte que fica entre esses países e o mar.' Era assim. Então era preciso romper a cortina de silencio, é por isso que era importante os filmes como forma de informar. Primeiro sobre existência de colonialismo, segundo sobre o que a luta de libertação estava fazer. Terceira, sobre o que era já e reconstrução de isso que começava. Por FRELIMO tem esse típico como movimento de libertação, FRELIMO não fazia movimentos, fazia acções armadas e saia. Não fazia incursões armadas. A FRELIMO foi sempre mais um movimento político, do que um movimento militar. E digamos, e mesmo o mérito da FRELIMO sai das suas qualidades politicas, de consistia na colaboração com a população mais do que habilidade militar, da táctica militar propriamente dita. E se falar com antigo combatente, um comandante daquela época, dá-lhe três minutos que ele começa falar da guerra - falar da relação com a população. Eu tive essa experiência semana passada. 'Olha, fala-la da operação do ...', começo a falar, 'Bom, os Portugueses fizeram isso, nos dividimos dessa maneira em sectores etc...'. Em três minutos já estava falar da população, papel que teve a população, '...porque a população fazia isso, transportava...', era realmente uma guerra com o povo. A guerra do povo. Então era preciso mostrar esse carácter diferente da luta armada na nossos países, e a reconstrução e preocupações sociais, que eram naturais porque nós não estávamos a fazer a guerra por a guerra, estamos a fazer a guerra para libertar onde tínhamos possibilidades já de fazer o que queríamos fazer como moçambicanos começámos a fazer. Portanto esta é a razão da propaganda. Mas sobre tudo porque ninguém imaginava. O filme no nosso caso impacto enorme porque ninguém imaginava que podia acontecer aquilo. Eu já tinha visitado essa zona, já tinha estado nessas zonas, mas realmente nos dizíamos, 'Épál Se nos conseguíamos levar alguém a compreender essas coisas', eu disse isso. Já a FRELIMO tinha pensado em isso, já estava-se a preparar o primeiro filme. Mas portanto muita gente tinha essa reacção, 'Se as pessoas podiam ver!' Então foi por isso que, de todos os meios, cinema, e a seguir a foto, jogaram um grande papel. Porque o resto são palavras, você pode dizer sempre que faz isto, faz aquilo, e era um testemunho mas ou menos objectivo. E segundo, importava o que fosse, um testemunho de alguém que vinha de esses países, então primeiro vieram os Jugoslavos, depois em 1968 o Basil Davidson, esteve em nosso congresso, tem umas fotos excelentes que ele publico ate. Acho que as fotos não saíram no mesmo artigo mas, num artigo no *Monde Diplomatique*, o artigo central e por volta de Setembro/ Outubro de 1978, ocupava as paginas centrais de 'Mundo Diplomatique', que era sobre a luta de libertação em Mocambique. E fez umas fotos belíssimas, devo dizer. E depois começamos a convidar, e aqui é o problema, nos não interessávamos a fazer filme, o filme só era um testemunho, no filme contava muito – embora não apareçam - quem fez o filme? Nenhum outro filme apareciam. Nos outros apreciam nos créditos, então fizemos aqueles filmes, 'Behind the Lines'. Depois um negro americano, do movimento negro americano, ele que viu, e o Robert van Lierop, viu também fez um filme que ele passava no Estados Unidos, bom foi eu, era um filme testemunho do que tinham visto. Era um filme sim, mas era um filme testemunho. Eu diria que os filmes jogaram muito esse papel de informação – mas filme testemunho. Eu estive lá e vi, vocês podem ver o que eu vi. Portanto é isso que eu posso dizer sobre a parte do cinema e porque ele era importante. Agora, nos tivemos logo nesse primeiro

filme a preocupação de fazer versões - nesse caso foi possível fazer, não posso dizer nos outros, nesse caso foi possível fazer uma versão em Português. Que eu li. A primeira vez, até que eu fiz, não sei se ainda hoje se há essa técnica, o filme passava - era assim: passava o filme em 35mm numa máquina, e passava uma banda magnética também de 35mm do outro lado, onde se gravava o que a gente dizia, e depois que era fundido e transformado naquele grafismo que depois ponha na banda, no filme propriamente dito, que depois a máquina lia. Eu estive lá, aprendi, ensinavam-me como é que se faz isso na cabine, ponha aqueles sinais de quando estava andar devagar demais, eles acentuavam para eu andar mais depressa, carregava...o realizador estava mesmo ao lado, dava-me sinais por luz, se eu estava andar depressa ele começava a dar um sinal, 'anda devagar', para eu andar devagar, para eu cobrir os espaços aonde eu devia falar segundo o plano do filme. Porque eu tinha que terminar um comentário dentro daquela imagem. Isto e um comentário não pode estragar a perspectiva imagem. Então eu aprendi isso fiz essa parte também, fizemos vários ensaios, mas acabo por não ser assim tão difícil. Um dia e meio acho que terminamos isso, e depois eu carreguei esses mesmos filmes a versão Inglesa e a versão Portuguesa para Dar-es-Salam. Por exemplo, Mondlane continua não sei por aonde, e eu depois voltei com os filmes para Dar-es-Salam, fiquei uns dias a espera. E depois os filmes foram projectado no interior. No interior não, nos nossos campos, já não sei se no interior foi projectado ou não. Porque havia um problema de câmara. E não sei se fez uma versão de 16mm, tenho impressão que se falo de fazer uma versão em 16mm para ser mais fácil a projecção.

Então esse filme foi ambos para o mundo fora de Mocambique, mas também para informar a população...

Para imobilizar a nós próprios, porque nós próprios quando viemos a imagem, cada um vê coisas que não são só usado pelos actores que vêm, todos nós da organização começámos a ver o que nos estamos a fazer nos vários campos, isso é uma grande força para organização para você, 'ah, mas quando você...afinal estamos a fazer isto...olha a escola', porque não toda gente pode estar em tudo lado, mas então isso ajuda a criar uma visão, palavra um pouco complicada, sincrética - holística, como se diz hoje, não é? Of the whole of the organisation. Depois temos mais filmes, a lista dos filmes conheces não é? Temos olha aí um, *Dez dias com os guerrilheiros em Mocambique Livre*. Italiano, do Franco Cigarini....Eles fizeram uma recuperação em Itália e eu fui lá para essa, não para a operação de recuperação mas para uma certa relançamento da cooperação com Regio Emilia.

Sim, porque essa organização Italiano, é ainda esta a dar apoio.

Aquela organização naquela altura desapareceu, mudou completamente a geração, houve uma mudança do quadro político, e agora é um movimento cooperativo, cujo presidente é o filho do Giuseppe Sontini. Pessoas importantes fundamental na cooperação na região de Regio Emilia. Então o filho que é um gestor de empresa que tem esta evocação internacional, resolveu retomar esse discurso cooperação com Mocambique. Ele já tem agora aqui de novos moldes estavam a dar apoio tecnológico as escolas etc., varias coisas.

As ligações com as equipas do filme estrangeiro, foram estabelecidas - como foi arranjado, que tipo de ligações foram? Foram com pessoas individuais? Foram movimentos?

Em geral foram através de comités de solidariedade. Por exemplo, com a causa Jugoslávia devia ser com a aliança socialista. E portanto o colega dos comunistas Jugoslavos já não me lembro com uma de essas organizações, mas políticas, através dos partidos políticos e depois com a agencia de informação, que era uma agencia governamental. Nos outros casos, casa de Inglaterra foi através da Community For Freedom, na

Inglaterra através de um comité também de apoio que existia nos Estados Unidos, apoiavam a luta libertação. Na Itália através da Comité de Apoio, que é da organizações que vinham comunistas, socialistas, católicos. Havia um bocado desta particularidade Italiana, um Comités Ampulo, é esse Comité que faz. Eu vou participar na organização de varias de essas actividades na Itália, de a partir de meu ponto de Argélia, então isso desenvolve-se em nesse momento, mas depois camarada Jorge Rebelo que trata do filme com a equipa de Regio Emilia directamente, eu não intervi nessa parte. Portanto FRELIMO com os diversos Comités, e as vezes havia um jornalista que queria manifestar, portanto, 'Sim senhor', e vinha.

Parece-me importante que FRELIMO começo a filmar e fazer fotografias muito antes de equipas estrangeiros...

Sim nos já tínhamos a nossa equipa , e temos fotos, deixe me ver, ate tenho foto que eu fiz em 1967, deixe me ver se trouxe aqui. Eu queria amostrar uma foto que eu fiz com um colega meu... Mas isto é em 1970. Só eu numa zona lá, mas eu quero amostrar uma outra, não era esta em que eu estou, uma que eu faço em 1967 também. Nessa altura os países socialistas davam muita maquina fotografica. Muita. Davam-nos muitas maquinas fotograficas, toda gente fazia fotos. Então as primeiras fotos que temos no inicio da luta armada são fotos... era isto...queria amostrar umas mais antigas...

Aquela foto, quais são as pessoas na foto?

As pessoas naquela foto?... este só eu... já fui jovem e este foi um colega, este era um comandante local, isto é uma pessoa da população que esta oferecer-me uma bengala. Mas isto já - havia uma foto que eu fiz mais antiga em 1967 que eu... Esta aqui. Pronto. Estas a ver, isto é e no começo da luta armada. Isto é em 1967, eu fui com Samora e este é um camarada Raimundo Pashinope, nosso dirigente, e ele estava aqui a falar com as pessoas. Estava a traduzir o alguma coisa, a falara mesmo, ele era um combatente de toda a provincia era dirigente politico.

E essa foto é aonde?

Fui eu que fiz. Em Cabo Delegado.

Essas fotos foram publicado?

Essa foto estava comigo porque como tido eu que feito, eu tinha , eu tenho alguns dos meus das minhas copias, então guardei. Mas em geral todas as minhas fotos estão no arquivo do FRELIMO. Nos deixamos as fotos nos faziamos no arquivos da FRELIMO.

São de uma arquivo nacional...

Não ainda não, esta a tentar-se a recuperar isso. Mesmo evitar que se estrague.

Eu tenho um pergunta que é ligado a essa questão de o que FRELIMO queria amostrar, o que era a noção de independência durante a luta armada? E a ideia de independência?

Bom, a noção de independência tem duas fazes. Primeiro, independência no sentido de acabar com colonialismo e ser independente. E nesse conteúdo, nessa faz, conteúdos de independência, tem alguma variação de pessoa para pessoa, para alguns era por fora os brancos, para alguns é vingar-se das humilhações sofridas da parte do colono, portanto, certa raiva contra a humilhação e o sofrimento, e aos poucos, e outros, bom, fazemos sem raiva para mudar e acabar com o dominação estrangeira. E aos poucos em parte graça as zonas libertadas, é um bocado também pensamento afinal , o que vai ser o nosso pais amanha. Começámos evoluir para ideia que nosso pais deve ser um pais totalmente independente. Isto é, não queremos nem o colonialismo, não queremos que a potencia colonial vem a continuar a mandar, por exemplo, de alguma antigas colónias, nomeadamente Francesas em que era um vergonha em que de facto os países estavam completamente dominados; e os chefes eram fantoches que envergonhavam toda Africa.

Porque eram, digamos aquela elite – era uma elite muito subserviente antiga metrópole. Portanto digamos assim, a faz de independência completa. E depois começa-se mais tarde para desenvolver a ideia que tem que ser uma independência que serve ao povo e que não seja uma simples substituição de um tipo de dominadores, por outro tipo de dominadores. Portanto é esta fase que se vai desenvolvendo e que digamos encontra seu momento mais forte por os anos 1973, 1974, 1975. Que depois da a ideia, interpretação, uma independência que serve o povo, vamos lá chamar as coisas pelos seus nomes, é uma independência com pais socialista. Base popular e política socialista é por isso que a Republica que nasce é a Republica Popular. Até ai nos tivemos controlando os acontecimentos, a partir de 1982, 1983, o que nos contávamos, o que nós pensávamos não contávamos já não contava muito, a destruição já era muito grande e portanto já não são opções determinadas só por nos próprios...

Estava a falar sobre ideia de independência.

Ok. A evolução do conceito de independência. Já tinha terminado.

Duas perguntas em particular. Um sobre – porque acho que é ligado com o papel de cinema na luta armada – a formação política dos combatentes e a formação política na zonas libertadas.

Ok. O que eu posso dizer? Olhando assim a distancia, a coisa mais interessante da formação politica na FRELIMO foi que na foi tanto no aspecto de cursos e acções formais. Ainda lembro-me de um a discussão Comité central – eu nem era membro estava assistir – e havia varias problemas, e uma pessoa estava sempre a insistir, ele tinha ido estudar fora, tinha feito um curso politico, discurso políticos num pais socialista, ‘Ah, eu sempre disse que nos temos problemas, porque é preciso fazer cursos políticos, cursos políticos.’ E na realidade a nossa experiência não é essa. Sim senhor, nos fazemos cursos políticos, é necessário elevar a cultura politica, mas o grosso da formação politica, é na discussão dos problemas que nós enfrentámos. No fundo e uma pedagogia, podemos chamar isso uma escola, e sabemos que hoje, as escolas estão procurar reconstituir esse ambiente através dos case studies, das role playing, simulações, etc, mas a melhor formação é aquele em que todas as pessoas dão formação constantemente. Pode ficar ate com defeito, tinha esse defeito é uma coisa que esta mal, porque que vocês não fazem assim etc...não tem nada que andar a dizer isso. Não só pai da Pátria, agora falar a dar conselhos às pessoas. Era um bocado nosso atitude de constantemente avaliar as situações. Agora, os grandes cursos políticos, eu diria, foram a reuniões. As reuniões foram os grandes cursos políticos que nos fizemos. Que nas reuniões depois da explicações do que passava, pela interpretação do que se passava, a propósito dos comportamentos, a FRELIMO é um organização muito dos comportamentos, em que tu podes falar bem mas se teu comportamento não é bom, é chamada a atenção. Não é como a vida politica naqueles países. Fulano faz bons discursos, toda gente bate palmas, apoiamos fulano...(interruption)...Então estamos a falar de que? Estamos a falar de como é que se faz a formação, a educação politica, a formação politica. Os nossos grandes cursos foram as nossas reuniões em que se discute, eu estava a dizer que a FRELIMO é uma organização muito comportamental, não conta muito o discurso oral, no sentido que fala bem, analisa... ‘mas não, o teu comportamento...estas a falar, mas o que estas a fazer? Estas a ser consequente.’ Isto é de que maneira o teu discurso esta incorporado na sua palavras. Portanto há uma integração da expressão do pensamento com a aplicação. Então verdadeiro – estou a fazer um bocado de teoria agora - o teu verdadeiro pensamento não está na expressão do pensamento, não está na acção da expressão do pensamento, as duas têm que ir. Isto tem que ver, acho eu, um bocado com a ideia de sincrasia nacional com fome como as pessoas discutam os problemas na sociedade moçambicana. E de esse ponto de vista,

acho eu, que o FRELIMO não é o inventor de esta forma de analisar as coisas, ele é um recreador em outro contexto com mais margem, isto é envolvendo jovens, envolvendo mulheres, que nunca falavam. Utilizando uma metodologia de trabalho da sociedade e alargando-lha e dando um conteúdo mais amplo, mais democrático, e mais revolucionário. Portanto esta forma eu direi é a forma principal da acção da FRELIMO – de educação política da FRELIMO. E era uma educação interactiva porque as pessoas respondiam, discutiram, varias pessoas chamavam atenção, e assim faziam-se duas coisas, fazia-se educação política, mas fazia-se também elaboração do pensamento político. É por isso que pensamento político na FRELIMO sempre foi muito colado as pessoas e as realidades. Quando eu digo colado a realidades quer dizer colada as pessoas, isto é gerado as pessoas, não era um grupo que pensava, ‘agora como é que eu vou fazer um curso para explicar isso para os outros’ estas a compreender? Depois tem discursos etc, a teoria, as pessoas temem uma grande fascínio pela teoria, para ser um Marxista, ‘Epá, quero estudar Marxismo’, mas francamente eu acho que a verdadeira, o verdadeiro marxismo é aquele que remonta o próprio Karl Marx. Isto é, o pensamento que sai das pessoas da sua condição social, não é uma doutrina elaborada que explico as coisas no certo momento e pegas naquilo e começa explicar a força a meter nas cabeças das pessoas. Eu acho que nos sempre íamos ter muito mais sucesso na outra forma do que na forma tradicional da escola. Embora eles gostam muito da escola etc. Agora há uma chance de sucesso é de fazer da escola uma escola que recia um pouco isso. Fazer da escola um escola que vai ter com as pessoas. Eu estou dirigir um Instituto agora, uma coisa que faço pro-bono agora para o governo, que é o Instituto Nacional de Administração Publica. Civil-service College for the top civil servants in university level. Já começámos a trabalhar, mas a próxima faz que eu vou me dedicar mais, porque as outras já estão preparadas, os módulos, tudo já esta preparado, é que os docentes sejam capazes de te fazer passar a prova mais importante. Que a gente faz os alunos passar a nossa prova, e nós passámos a prova própria? Não nos temos que ir sentarmos nos locais de trabalho. E há universidades, eu sei que Durham, eu li num artigo que eu tenho ai ate, sobre a universidade de Durham sobre essa matéria, que é um dos modelos do docente ir trabalhar com... no serviço observar as pessoas e aconselhar como se deve fazer. Não tomar as decisões em nomes deles, mas olha, que elementos...estou agora desenvolver da minha cabeça, isso não vinha no artigo mas, por exemplo, tu estas a tomar essa decisão, mas que elementos é que tu chamaste para tomar essa decisão? ‘Ah, é que eu acho que...’, achas porque? ‘É que isso é...’. Já foste buscar estes dados? Tiveste em conta estes factores? Consultaste, se é necessário consultar? Ou esta é uma matéria discutiva. Qual é a base? Fundamentaste? Estas seguro? Mediste o impacto? Por exemplo isto é uma coisa que um docente pode fazer. O outro modelo é o docente dizer, ‘Olha, quando vocês tomar uma decisão tem que consultar o stake holders. Tem que medir o impacto. Tem que buscar sustentação legal, político, social, corresponde as politicas.’ A pessoa houve e fico sempre 30% no melhor dos casos. Mas se tu estas lá, estas a ensinar concretamente. Eu fiz uma experiência de esse género, fazer as pessoas fazer as coisas e fazer ao contrario. Porque eu sou professor de Public Management, alem de direito de Public Management. Então na licenciatura, que eu também contribui para montar, notei que uma das áreas, quando eu fui trabalhar com Planificação Estratégias, eles não tinham compreendido, porque não é fácil compreender, porque é uma noção muito sofisticada, porque não é a planificação operacional detalhada, não é? Não é um plano por 10 anos. Por ser 10 anos não é estratégia. Então o que eu estava a falar com as pessoas, tinha diplomados de essa escola que estavam a trabalhar comigo, eu depois disse, ‘...invés de estar a dar um aula de teórica, vou começar fazer o seguinte, vou começar a fazer planificação com eles’, e no fim fiz aula em De-briefing.

Não sei se estavas a ver? Afinal o que é que a gente estava a fazer? É isso? Então eu penso que essas pessoas não vão esquecer talvez se sentam 60%. Mas nunca transmito dito. Também talvez seja bom. Ok portanto. Eu acho que sobre a formação política, a formação política fazia-se essencialmente de esta maneira. E fazia-se através de fotos, eu lembro-me de cartazes, folhetos pequenos. Então não é só cursos políticos. Folhetos pequenos. Eu lembro nos fizemos uns cartazes, talvez posso encontrar aí no museu, chamavam-se três cartazes que foram feitos em várias línguas, três grupos de cartazes, era assim um formato grande, e que um dizia, 'Invasão, Opressão, Resistência'. Segundo dizia, 'A Luta Armada'. E o terceiro dizia 'A reconstrução das zonas libertadas'. E cada um tinha fotos, textos, fotos, estas a ver não é? Fizemos isso em várias línguas. Então isso também contribuía para um bocado educação política por via de informação, mas estou a voltar aquele tema. Quando tu sabes estas numa organização, que as outras pessoas fazem, isso dá-te uma capacidade para organização muito grande. E como digamos o momento mais alto e eu ultimamente estou a chamar atenção sobre isso porque acho que vale a pena ser relevado, é uma reunião que tivemos, uma reunião de Comité Central que durou 26 dias. Em cada um de nós, inclusive eu não era membro de Comité Central, falamos do que fazíamos. Então quem dirigia uma escola: conto, quem dirigia um centro de saúde: conto, quem dirigia uma frente político militar: conto, quem era responsável com comunicações com a população, trabalho político: falo, toda a gente falo. Eu estava relações exteriores também falei, contei com quantos países falava, contactava. Uma coisa muito detalhada. E isso permitiu que todos nós conhecemos o que é a organização. Então isso e hoje que toda a gente sabe nas teorias da organização é todas as pessoas se identificarem com os objectivos da organização. Quando toda a gente sabe o que está a fazer, falo mais conscientemente, e falo tendo em conta que a sua acção tem implicações e pode ajudar uns dos outros, e se não vou por aqui, outro vai do outro lado. Isto é um grande conquista da teoria da organização de agora. Mas nós fizemos aquilo antes, foi Presidente Samora que disse, 'Cada um vai contar, mas quer conteúdo detalhe, o tanto que se for necessário.' E eu concluí daí que a palavra de ordem saía, agora vamos, já falamos, vamos agora todos para as nossas frentes e cada um empurrar as coisas. Quer dizer, fazer andar com força. E que isso permitiu que de facto a reunião tem lugar '72 e conjuntamente com outros factores nada isolado, que depois tivéssemos este movimento, este grande impulso que nos fez chegar à independência. Mas estava tudo dentro da cabeça das pessoas – a motivação. Mais não da leitura política, preciso de distinguir que a cultura política, evidente que alguns de nós somos ou tomamos em cientistas políticos, eu sou jornalista de informação, daquela formação clássica. Eu só mais um jornalista sociólogo, já compreendi que o direito sem compreensão da sociedade não é nada, e as pessoas muito brilhantes têm sido precursoras neste caminho, eu chego a ele mais tarde. E isso permitiu que todos nós crescêssemos conjuntamente. Mas como administrador público, estava dizer eu, do meu pensamento como um especialista, um estudioso que estudei administração pública, eu vejo este momento como um momento muito importante, no desenvolvimento organizacional da FRELIMO. Portanto, política - formação política sim, mas de uma outra forma. Eu acho que essa lesão é verdadeira de nossos países. Para Europa pode ser um bocado diferente em que o nível de pensamento abstracto pesa muito não esta opção, aqui é mais como fazemos bem as coisas, como fazemos com coração, com motivação, com uma conduta adequada. Acho que é mais isto para nós. Portanto, a formação política é muito diferente. Mas estamos a sair um bocado do tema dos meios de informação. Estamos um bocado na ciência política, etc.

Muito realizadores, sobre tudo, eu falei com, falou da importância do apoio de Samora Machel por cinema, e parece me que houve uma fascinação recíproca entre cinema e Samora Machel...

Com jornalista eu diria mais. Mais com jornalistas em geral e com pode haver um grupo ao outro em particular. Com cinema sim, ele sempre se preocupava. Em convense de documentação. Samora Machel foi muito preocupado com documentar as coisas, isso é o que eu diria. As atas, sempre obrigava as pessoas fazer as atas. A registar. A gravar. A levar pessoas para filmar. Leva jornalistas contigo, leva fotógrafos no tempo da luta, e pois diria, é isso. Portanto, a preocupação de documentar de ver as coisas feitas.

A figura de Samora Machel esta muito ligado essa questão de comportamento, não é?

É muito isso. Por um lado é uma recordação de uma época da nossa vida. Isto é por uma parte da nossa geração, e por uma parte da nossa vida, da nossa historia. Do entusiasmo, que infelizmente não volta mais. Isso posso dizer, é um bocado... porque as coisas nunca são como foram. Mas as pessoas precisam de sonho mesmo se tenham que trazer o sonho no passado, mas só serve se for para utilizar no futuro, como é hoje. O passado como inspiração ao futuro. Segundo, é também um Political Statement, ouvir coisas de Samora, coisas de Samora é um Political Statement local. Durante uma época em que a corrupção, a falta de rigor, imperavam, cada um fazia como queriam etc...Uma forma de dizer, isto não pode andar nesta maneira, era ouvir as cassetes de Samora Machel, que ouvia-se, parece-me, no chapa 100. Eu não costumo andar no chapa 100, portanto não sei, mas parece que passavam o discurso e as pessoas pediam e pediam, e discursos etc. E sempre hoje quando aparece Samora Machel num... é um entusiasmo, das antigas gerações, mas também das novas gerações. Inspiram assim um momento glorioso na historia. Quer dizer, assim como nos vivemos, eu acho também os jovens, uma parte dos jovens inspiram a isso, a essa simpatia do o povo com o seu dirigente. Bom que também era a personalidade, que era um momento politico a personalidade de Samora, e era um momento histórico. Politico e histórico são diferente. Histórico da independência, um momento particular. Momento politico, é porque era um momento de grande mobilização popular, que pode acontecer na independência ou depois, naquele caso coincidiu. E era também a descompressão de fazer politica, eu acho que todo isso junta, e todos nós nos emocionamos com esses momentos. E a cinema é a forma provavelmente mais directa de recordar esse momentos, eu tenho estado em momentos em que parece Samora, basta aparecer uma foto, as pessoas, muito entusiasmo e emoção – uma saudade.

Acho que foi Polly Gastor que disse me que Jorge Rebelo foi um das pessoas, que começou a filmar muito cedo na luta armada.

Eu nunca vi rebelo com uma maquina, para dizer a verdade, mas é possível. Não conheço toda a vida de Jorge Rebelo. Na luta armada, eu sei que a pessoa que nos tínhamos para filmar é José Soares.

E ele esta ainda em Maputo?

Ele esta aqui em Maputo sim. É preciso procurar José Soares. Procurar saber aonde estão os arquivos dele também. É sem som – mas é muito bom. É muita coisa em todo causo.

Interview with Pedro Pimenta, 30, July 2005, Johannesburg, South Africa

I really think it's a crucial point of the process, that one has to study more carefully, what created that need of a liberation movement to think that they could use cinema as a medium of, obviously dissemination, of what was going on to the outside world, but also as a way of starting building a collective memory. There's another person crucial here, American guy called Robert van Lierop, he made some very interesting documentaries during those years.

Where is he based now?

Last time I heard of him he was the diplomatic representative of the United Nations. I don't know if he is still doing that. He was originally a lawyer based in New York, and involved in the support movement against colonisation and he got involved with Frelimo, I'm not sure exactly through which connection, and he became a filmmaker and he made great stuff. And these are, as far as I know, is the only thing that he has made. And after that he moved back to being a lawyer and did whatever.

So he didn't start to make films until it was part of the struggle?

Yes. And he just made those three films, I think, around Mozambique. Two during the liberation struggle and one at the moment of Independence. I think it's quite interesting. But I think one aspect that has been overlooked of the origin of that is that there were films being made on the Portuguese side – on the colonial side – for propaganda reasons, to boost the moral and within that set up there was some voices were trying to do something different. And I think it's a factor that we cannot, with a historical distance, we cannot just ignore. We need to consider that. I mean people like Manuel Malo are coming from that, others who later got involved into setting up the film Institute etc. So I think this is a combination of these two factors that create a very specific...

So there's a number of different modes of filmmaking, there is José Cardoso and his involvement with the amateur, more expressive mode of filmmaking, and then there is the documentary archiving of daily life, and those seem to be very different kinds of filmmaking that come together at the Institute.

There were also other voices. A guy who passed away now called Fernando Silva, started making film, he obviously was because of his background, I think he was trained in London or something, was trying to express himself outside and the colonial views of the day, was trying to make his own films in a different way. And some, how should I call that, open-minded Portuguese filmmakers also came to Mozambique and made some films before independence. And it was part of the colonial contradiction. There is a film I can't remember the title, made during those years, a film on Lorenzo Marques' life and all this, which was obviously giving some evidence to the absurdity of colonialism. It was portraying a society where different political set ups people could be living together nicely, and get together and get to be well, but colonialism wouldn't allow that. I remember a particular sequence shot on the beach of Maputo, where discrimination was obvious, and I want to think that guy who made that film was obviously making a statement there, even if, for him to be able to make the film he certainly had to go through the colonial system to get his authorisation, his permit or whatever. So the combination of this two movements created I think something very unique when it comes to Mozambique, which after independence with the strong vision of Samora Machel, who was, as far as I am concerned, the chief executive of the studio.

So he was really that crucial?

I am convinced, and Jorge Rebelo will obviously clarify you on that, that he must have been the one who told those guys around him, 'We need to set up something to build the cinema', the film Institute was the first cultural Institution established in Mozambique after Independence. Why? I mean there are other forms of culture, which are much more immediate, much more known and manageable, like dance or theatre or music, why film? At some point somewhere, somebody must have said, 'Listen, lets do film', because film is crucial, because the level of illiteracy in the country, because we need to project an image of the country etc. And I am convinced that Samora Machel must have been crucial on that decision. From what I know of Jorge Ribeiro, and because of his very close relation and connection with this British people, like Polly, Margaret Dickinson, Simon Hartog, he must have been a fan of film as well. Because it started before Independence, those connections. And at the beginning they relied very heavily on these people to assist in setting it up everything. But, knowing the way Frelimo operated on those years, I am sure Samora Machel said. 'Ok, see what we are doing, this is more important than anything else, the rest will happen naturally and organically. It's about structuring it. But when it comes to film we need to be pro-active.' I am sure – I am convinced – I've got no evidence but its kind of clear in my mind. So your interview with Jorge Rebelo can be crucial on that period of things, how did things happen. Personally I credit Samora Machel to that attitude, because what I have seen after that was strong interest, strong commitment, presence always, sorting out and helping these things to happen. And to a certain extent it was extremely successful. And it went to the point where probably two years after independence, probably the first ever, no I shouldn't be that radical, but one of the first conferences in African cinema took place in Maputo. I cant remember how it was called but they had a publication, which is very interesting, this is a vision that was there already, and they were certain issues discussed by them in the kind of phraseology that was used in those days, I have read very much the same issues that are still being discussed today: how do our films relate to an audience to a market; all the distribution issues; and how do we relate with all the products coming from the products coming from the rest of the world; who was somehow shaping our understanding of who we are, and what the world is, and what kind of balance can we find there.

It seems there are two parts to the archive that the Institute was making: the production side, the Kuxa Kanema news reel and so on, and the documentaries that were made, but also the films that were bought, as I understand it from Polly, the foreign films that were also part of the archive that was built up and what I am trying to understand is, what was the criteria for this decolonised cinema?

Well you are talking with the person who was in charge of that shit. Because basically when the decision was made to nationalise distribution in Mozambique, it was in reaction to the fact that the Mozambican government wanted to establish commercial links with the majors from America, but also, sources from Europe etc, in order to be able to select what kind of films are we going to see in this country. And for a lot of people this vision is related to censorship, obviously it was expected that the government would exercise some kind of censorship. I beg to differ because, many controversial films were screened, even if they were about cheap violence, nudity, pomography and what was defined as reactionary films, which would promote racism, which would undermine the role of women and stuff like that, these films clearly establish as non-accessible to a Mozambican audience - but decided that the opera was great. So it allowed us to establish, I think by then, a very clear-cut policy of balance between different sources of filmmaking. The world is too big for us to restrict ourselves to only one source of culture and knowledge and information. One has to understand that on those years what you had access to in Mozambique, was

essentially coming from Portugal sources, Portuguese sources, meaning you had access to bad American movies, not even the best one – the WORST American movies, the worst European cinema, and then marginal to that you had some local operators that would bring Indian films and kung-fu films. And that was it. For us it was clear that there was much more to be accessed so that's when we started looking at, for instance, independent American movies, more arty, more solid European movies, movies from the Eastern block that were totally denied access to Mozambique. Indian movies were not only the commercial stuff but the expression of the culture and art, in an attempt to diversify the sources and the access to different materials. And it created I think something which still today is, even if ignored, during the number of years, huge degree of film education for a certain generation in Mozambique, because people had access to a lot. In 1978 probably, an Italian film, who had just won the Canne film festival was premiered in Mozambique one week later. The Caviani brothers' film: *Padre Padrone*. That was the kind of attitude we were trying to establish with an audience, providing them with options, with different style, but always keeping in mind that films can help to shape the way you understand the world. I was in charge of that thing for a number of years.

And so you're in charge in which years?

I joined the Institute in 1977, and I must have started in 1978.

Was that from a filmmaking background?

Not really. My relationship with film was coming from a number of years, but more like an activist in film societies, film clubs, where they screened films that we made and discuss. It started in Portugal where I was a student and then after independence in Mozambique. So, the Film Institute was set up in Mozambique in '76, I joined '77, for a number of time I was in charge of what we'd call today the documentation and resource centre. Which was part of building a film culture as well, and then I moved on to dealing with acquisition basically. After nationalisation of distribution there was a huge need of supplying the country with films. So basically I had to, on a yearly basis, select and negotiate the acquisition of around 250 titles. Which was a good enough number to allow you to provide the right kind of diverse sources.

At that point, how difficult was that in terms of negotiating with a globalised cinema industry?

Nothing was difficult because it was totally new for the rest of the world. The rest of the world was totally surprised by the attitude. And they were very supportive of that attitude. I mean, I remember managing to get, for free, a number of titles where filmmakers were just very happy to give it away because this country recently independent, coming up into the international market, and saying 'We want to change something, we want to look at cinema in a different way and we are offering you a platform and a potential audience for your film, which is struggling anyway'. So you know, Barbara Kopple to Mira Nair, to Med Hondo to Haile Gerima were very happily giving away their films or giving it for peanuts. 'I'll give you my film if you'll invite me I want to come'. There was this huge interest about what was going on and filmmakers wanted to come to discover what is this reality, where is it coming from and where are these people coming from, are they mad or what, because obviously it was going against all the trends, much like today, nothing has changed that much - things have worsened. Having a country telling independent filmmakers, we are interested by your film, we think there is an audience, we will work to create an audience for your film, was very exciting to them. By then things had worsened in the relationship with the majors, on the sense that due to the insistence of Mozambique, of giving them directly, not going through Portugal, their point was, 'Well for Mozambique to be an interesting market enough for us per year, you have to take

numbers like 300 titles a year, and we'll decide what you are taking, so you take the good and you take the bad as well.' Which we refused, it was unacceptable for us, so by then there was a decrease of American stuff being shown, which we replaced quite easily with cinema from Europe, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa etc. Over the year with the economical crisis, at the beginning it was all very easy because the money was there, I was on a plane going around the world and signing contracts. With the economical crises and the lack of resources, we had to establish a different kind of relationship with suppliers from the Socialist Bloc. Russia, Cuba, Bulgaria, East Germany and all.

What dates?

Probably early 1980s, the war, Rhodesia – the dream is over guys, we're in shit. We had to establish different deals with the suppliers whereby our start of the socialist solidarity etc, we would have access to much more film from them for less money. And eventually the same thing that we are trying to avoid with the stuff repeating itself with the Eastern block, ok, we make a deal for less money, obviously we understand your problem you don't have the money etc but you are taking 30 films of which probably we would have loved to only have 5, so we had to screen the others as well as part of the package. So, yeah, very quickly we realized that economical relations are based on other interests. What we are trying to avoid the American majors was repeating itself with other sources of supply according to their own interest and to our weakness and bargaining and negotiations.

So it seems like an important part of what you were doing was trying to resist the block booking system and to have a more repertory style of thing and that was an important part of decolonisation.

Exactly, trying to establish criteria's whereby the film that we would screen for the Mozambican audience would be diversified enough as far as the origin is concerned, but also would establish a relationship with the specific alls of society, whereby each film would be a tool for advancement. Each film would help to understand something, either related to your own society or to the rest of the world. But very quickly we had to face the harsh reality of the lack of bargaining power, the imposition of bulk dealing, but for a number of years it was crucial to create a vast interest in film. I remember we, being sure that for the most difficult film, like Fassbinder films, which were in Europe in the rest of the world considered art films in a little cinema somewhere in Paris, I mean, we would reach an audience in Mozambique, people would come and see them, obviously, lets face it, it was also because a lack of alternative in terms of entertainment etc. A lot of emphasis was being put on film and there was much less of other things on offer. But still, the end result was that there was an audience interested to discover even very very difficult films. And there was a great conscious decision to initiate debate and discussion around films, so it was always present.

To what extent was that developed then into discussion groups or journals, to what extent was that developed in terms of a critical cinema culture at that point?

The most interesting feature on what we are talking about is the relationship with schools. At least in Maputo, practically all schools, high schools were somehow involved with the film industry, whereby part of their regular activities were to come to a cinema and have a film for free and then it was up to the teachers to develop a number of activities around them, that involve debating, writing essays, whatever. That was certainly a very important feature. Some other segments of society used that facility as well, there was under the Film Institute a unit who was – and there is somebody you should meet in Maputo: Maria Delurdes Tocato – she is, I think, operating as a journalist now in Maputo, this fax sheet call 'Vertical' and for some reason she is always side-lined when it comes to discussing those years. But she played a crucial

role during those years. We used to work together on the same unit, acquisition, and she was also in charge of all the publication of reviews, write-ups, providing information to, for instance, the schools about the film, the filmmakers, the countries they are from, and she did an excellent job, it was extremely useful. And you should speak to her she will have some interesting stuff to tell you I'm sure. She is still in Maputo. Yeah, interesting years but obviously based on a big utopia, about our ability to change fundamentals in the way the world of film was operating, and parallel to that was the entire notion of 'Lets do our do our own cinema', and these two policies were very close to each other, it was part of the same philosophy. By providing the elements of a film culture we are also assisting in building that culture in terms of our films by providing the future filmmakers a good references in terms of film and story-telling.

One thing that strikes me, it seems like there was this incredibly rich film culture that was being developed, but then in terms of production the really overwhelming predominance of the documentary, and still you are seeing it today, its documentaries that get made.

Well first thing one has to remember is that on those years documentary was very present overall in the world. It was a very good time for documentary making. America had come out of Vietnam, all this independences in Africa, May '68 in Europe was not that far away, social and political movements in Europe, Latin American turmoil trying to find their way, where documentary was really strong in those years. So that was obviously one of the influences. Second, in the building of local skills and capacities we had access to people from different places which was obviously strongly influenced by the world of documentary filmmaking. Which is what they were also passing onto future filmmakers in Mozambique. And last but not least, it was perceived that documentary was a good way to start your mastering of the craft of filmmaking. Which by today I disagree, but then it was the very clear conviction to everybody that that's the best way to start, this is where you cut your cake, mastering the craft and then you can move onto other dimensions. On the other hand, lets not ignore it, this entire set up, this entire interest of the government, and I should the party Frelimo, because the same very much the same, was inputting those resources and everything at our disposal at obviously political and ideological interest. Which was by showing ourselves on the screen, lets reaffirm some elements, which are crucial for the national unity for people to understand that they are part of bigger space, richer country. A useful medium to pass on some of our messages etc, so the combination of all those elements made it quite natural and organic for the documentary to be considered like the way to go forward. I think that is the reason that explains why, but quite quickly there were some desire to move beyond it and to look at fiction and drama, but this timing coincided with the beginning of the question, 'Do we have resources for that? How do we do it if there is less and less money for us to play around?', because it was obviously a time when we are playing around. You wanted the last camera, you would call the right office and the right person and you knew you would have the last camera, the last days we were really playing around. It was a fantastic time. But when people evolved to the point when it felt that they had the desire to tell stories using the fiction as a genre, this is when the reality hit us in the face. Do we have any resources? I mean, it is expensive, how do we do it?

And at that point the Institute was relying on the receipts from the cinema takings?

Yes. And the quality of the films, there was a decrease. The cinema tenders because this is a time when we had to compromise in terms of socialist cinema in bulk so the films on offer in the market went up weren't as attractive as they used to be, we started screening, because we needed stuff to screen, the worst of the worst. I remember brilliant where people would pay the full ticket to look at *Kuxa Kanema* 10 minutes,

because the other film was probably a German, a Soviet or Bulgarian stupid films that we would never have selected if we had the resources to decide on our own, it wasn't us like 50 films, you want the deal? Take 50 films. You will have the 5 that you want and the rest just comes with it.

By that stage had the sort of new generation, people like Gabriel Mondlane, who had been trained through the Institute, were they active by that stage?

Yes, at the same time the notion of training people was very practically oriented, so very quickly people would get into practice and started doing their films and learning through the process, that was the option. So probably three months after joining the Institute they were in the field shooting something.

What sort of age would people like Gabriel Mondlane be?

Young kids. Probably my age, we are all from the same generation, 22 or 23 by that time. I joined when I was 22. At 23 I was running the entire film acquisition of the country. I had a budget of 1.5 million US dollars to play with and I never ran away with my budget – so stupid! I never made a deal with some crook. I remember being in India, because when you come to Indian cinema we decided to compromise a little bit, we were aware that there was a tradition of Indian cinema which was extremely popular in Mozambique. We were aware, as well, there was some kind of different Indian cinema, but we thought, they are third-world, first, either we like it or not their cinema is a pure expression of their culture. And there is a strong following base in this country and tradition. So let's not antagonize the entire world, let's compromise when it comes to Indian cinema. We will continue importing some Indian film, commercial ones, we'll be more careful in the selection, so that they are not totally stupid. But we'll keep those entertainment values that people seem to like. Meanwhile, we brought different films from India, which dealt more deeply with real issues, social, cultural etc. So I was sent to India with Maria Delurdes Tocato, for us to go and find the good stuff, both commercial and arty. And we spent like two weeks, we must have seen like 300 something films. So there was this guy who was trying to make deals with us, so his thing was: you buy the film from me, from my company, there was huge competition because people were in town buying so we are wined and dined by all this Indian distributors, so this guy was proposing a deal, that you buy from me I give you a commission, we make a deal. I was so stupid I said no.

That seems to be very much characteristic of that whole environment, where people are really motivated and believed in what they were doing.

Yes they believed in what they were doing and there was no way you were going compromise based on stupid material thing because you had a plan you had a vision. You wanted to achieve something. So all these people Gabriel and the others joined probably around the same time when I joined '77. And very quickly they were making films, obviously starting to work on movies with more experienced people, always trying to establish a dynamic whereby after sometime of experience they would come back and have some training because on a regular basis we used to organise training, people were coming from all over the place, offering their services. 'We love what you guys are doing, I am a director from Canada, I would love to come and work with you guys in training people.'

That's seems to be that sort of international solidarity to be a really crucial part of the history of cinema as well...

Definitely. From all quarters, with all kind of different motivations from Godard, who had his own utopic plans, I don't know who thought this would be a good base for him to experiment, to people who were more politically motivated, who believe in the possibility in the possibility of the transformation of a society, would come and work for free, for different kind of periods to something which was totally we

were totally in control of which was hiring the services of people, being paid to come as what we used to call cooperntes for one year, two years, different areas.

So what do you think were the most interesting experiments that were done at that time?

Around all these people coming and going? I think there is something quite relevant to what happened and, you know, what subsides which is our relationship with Brazilian filmmakers and with Cuban filmmakers. I mean, we had very good people coming from France, England, Canada, Poland, you name it, but were punctual and all this. The Brazilian and Cuban was more structured because some agreement was signed at government level which would allow us to look at it in kind of a medium long term. So there was plan with the Brazilian and Cubans coming and training people and make changes and that had a good influence I think. What we were doing was the ability to somehow marry the social and political strong message with the Latin American way of putting it across, which is much more reliant, more romantic moments and more poetic as well. I remember at some point, by then I was in charge of production, much later in 1984 probably, and part of the entire thing was to invite film crews from different places to come and make films in Mozambique. And we would provide facilities, local facilities etc, sometimes even our equipment and stuff like that. So to a certain extent these were co-productions and we would attach local filmmakers to the film crews for them to learn. But some point at the same time, I was managing a Cuban film crew and a North Korean film crew. And it was very interesting because everybody wanted to work with the Cubans, so we really had to insist to find a voluntary to work with the North Koreans. And then, you know, they were basically doing exactly the same thing, what was interesting at that point, whatever it was.

What were the films they made?

Yeah this was the interesting part of it, eventually the films were made, were ready and they came out more or less at the same time. So the Cuban film, just the title was called *The New Symphony* or something like that, and it was structured around the ability of Samora Machel to think in public, on his rallies and all this. He would always sing. At the rally or even in the minister's council of the government he would start by singing, 'What's your problem? You are not singing – sing!', so it was called *The New Symphony*. Through the singing exercise they were looking at how society was being transformed etc. It was a very creative approach etc. And then we had the North Korean film which title was something like *The People of Mozambique advance courageously under the leadership of comrade Samora Machel*, so that gives you a sense of the kind of exposure that we were dealing with and how our choices were being influenced and how very quickly view towards our nature, our culture, in our minds were clear that this is not what we want. We want something that can deal with serious issues, political issues in a much more attractive way, much more poetic way. And I think its reflected to a larger extent to what you see was made all those years. Have you seen that documentary made by that Portuguese woman?

Margarita Cardoso?

I don't like that documentary. I think its not properly researched and its very limited in scope because it avoids totally the bigger picture which what was happening there was a reflection of something which was happening outside with an audience. So it transform into something like a club of people, beside the fact that some of the interrenient, in my mind are very opportunistically saying, 'This was kind of imposed on us...', which was totally wrong I think.

It also seemed to be extremely nostalgic in a way that wasn't very critical.

Yes it doesn't create links with the bigger picture, it doesn't create links with any future, but people are still trying to make their films and what is Mozambican cinema today is certainly a result of all this period as well and there are new problems the biggest of one being, in my mind, that I cannot sense a new generation of filmmakers, and for me it is a disaster. I am sick and tired of us. I mean, we have been around for too long, repeating the same discos, which is totally exhausted. Where is the new blood? Where are the new ideas? Where are they?

I am also very struck in Mozambique by the lack of cross-over between people working in plastic arts and people working in film, in painting and sculpture and so on, and that seems to be something that's different from Angola.

Because with people like Antonio Olé and others there was more integration. The thing is in Mozambique because of these political decisions about filmmaking. We were perceived as the good boys of Frelimo. And it created quite a certain degree of animosity from other quarters. Why these people they are getting everything? We are struggling. Very quickly we became very arrogant. We were the ultimate expression of any culture in Mozambique. We were the beautiful boys with all the machines, all the technology, we had five people around us and this no less created an arrogance in the relationship with other forces, which in turn became a weakness when at a later stage, the condition not being the same, we found ourselves pretty isolated in the terms of the possibility of creating synergies with literature, plastic arts, music or whatever.

So do you mean after the government change in policy away from cinema?

We found ourselves in the same club as the poor boys, its like 'Ha ha! Welcome to the club. Its pay back time!' But for me its really a big problem the fact that from the moment that the entire thing started to collapse there was total incapacity to think of a plan B, loosing the disintegration of things and all these layers of frustration, I consider that we should have at least had the moral duty to think of a plan B, 'Ok, its not working, what do we do?' Many opportunities have been lost like that, like just in training, for instance. I remember the Cuban film school inviting people from Mozambique to attend and nobody would go. To the point where we got tired and said, 'OK we see that you are not interested we stop insisting!'

When was this, later on?

Yeah, later on in the 1990s. By then everything had shifted to television from government. Television was a medium, and its where all the energy, and where everything was going. Which makes probably sense in their own understanding of things, in terms of accessing more people and reaching more people etc. And also in terms of opportunities being presented to them by external forces who were just too happy to tell them 'Don't worry we will set up a TV station for you'. It was Italy who came up with that. 'And you don't need to worry, we will pay for it. You will reimburse us one day but don't worry.' So they were too happy to take the opportunity. They had no alternative from the government's views. But we failed, totally, I think, on the sense that we never looked at other options and we never tried and influence and kind of saying, 'OK, at least get people trained even if at the end of the day they will end up working in television or whatever, but at least they come with a certain universe of training and certain criteria's where by their motivation will be about making relevant stuff.' Much more solid stuff than the ephemeris television, which is what is happening. It's all very ephemeral, it's for today, and lets say it has nothing that stands.

The only person that I've heard of who moved from cinema to television is Ismael Vuvo. Or were there others as well?

There are others as well, but lets put it this way, their move was essentially motivated by survival needs, and within television they have not been able to create something different, they have just moulded themselves into the dominant television aesthetics whatever, which is ephemeris quick, blah blah blah

don't worry, it's a sausage factory. So, when you look at the situation to them its, I find myself as a producer questioning myself, who could I work with in Mozambique? ... Without detailing one by one, these are all people with whom we've done a long work together. The relationship is exhausted. There is nothing else, there is no surprise anymore.

And it seems like the resources of Amocine aren't getting to younger filmmakers either.

Amocine, for a start, its very little resources, lets not fool ourselves. Obviously its important and relevant in Mozambican terms, where you've got nothing else, but it also an agenda which is not always generated from within Amocine. Its an agenda also from donors or whatever. According to their own priorities and interest and in front of them I don't think Amocine has managed to establish themselves as a strong organisation with a clear vision who is able to discuss, they are too happy to take whatever there for them to take. And then you take and then you have to distribute, when it comes to distribution typical Mozambican recent ways, it's the mafia. So it becomes very petty, and whenever there is an attempt to open up to a new generation or whatever its always wrongly done, because there is no well established criteria's, its more based on who do I know, who do I want to favour, creating a little entourage of people who buy a certain degree of loyalty to the boss, its not professionally dealt with. I am very critical like very many other people in Mozambique. And I think worst things are, the catalyst of this contradiction in the fact that the French have decided to create a little financial fund to support production, which is very little, but still its relevant, it could help some people to make their stuff and all this. And the way it was conducted from the very beginning by Amocine was just outrageous. Because some people had access to information, some people had no access to the right information. People were dealt with according to very petty interest. And at the end the result of access to this fund were reflective of the kind of petty non-professional attitudes, so, problems.

Was that part of the reason why you chose to move to South Africa, a new context?

No. I moved to South Africa basically because I made a mistake. Basically some two years and a half ago, I thought, I was coming from Zimbabwe by then, had left Mozambique already in 1997, I thought it would be a good place to develop the new strategies and new synergies with other sectors here, of the possibility of looking at cinema in a more interesting way. And then I found myself, very quickly, in a situation where the forces that exist here are interested in a certain way of making cinema only, which is a pale copy of what world-cinema is doing. Of course because of the arrogance of this country who has got resources, obviously its much more easier trying to copy than to create your own way. And they desperately need international recognition as a country, so what is being structured in terms of the film industry here is very much motivated by the huge need of bringing in foreign project ideas to be shot here, with South Africa financial participation or whatever system with them. And even if there is room and space for some input towards the local industry I do think it's still badly conducted because periferical questions related to a number of issues, to pretend to the history of this country, like black empowerment, well, it's a little mafia again. Project are not supported really based on their merit but are based on the political arrangements, so its creating some kind of a vicious attitude towards filmmaking, where many filmmakers are opportunistically just buying into, without questioning themselves about the fundamentals to this kind of policies, and its reaffirming the notion that film is essentially about money, it's a deal. If I've got something profound to say or not has become irrelevant. So more and more you will see people dealing with their first feature with, what is in my mind, huge budgets -- doesn't make sense. The contradiction of this

country is that it's probably much easier here to finance your film than if you are in Europe or in America. Because there are resources, there is a huge need, criteria's are not necessarily solidly established and all that professional criteria's, has to do with; are you black , are you a woman, very ferric things. And there is a huge interest from the rest of the world towards South Africa, this will disappear after a number of years like any other country, so what? So the way I see it is that in the short/medium term something will have to break somewhere here. Already there are signs that it's not working. Those structures here which have been set up to finance films are looking at their balance sheet. You spend that much money, from the stupid capitalistic perspective, it doesn't mean anything if it can't return. So from just a strictly capitalistic it's a failure, because wrong choices, wrong amount of money etc. And from a development perspective, it doesn't necessarily mean that we have developed the kind of skill, the kind of capacities which are required for local content, so there are certain signs of one of the big intervenient in film which was a bank here, set up a special unit to deal with film, has already stopped. There is another institution which is a government of distribution, they have been involved in many films from *Hotel Rwanda* to *In my Country*, to ..., like *Zulu Love Letter*, etc, they are worried because they have put up something like half a billion Rand to movies and some board are telling them, 'Listen guys, fine but when do we see some money?', so its starting to be... And then you've got the government statutory bodies NFF (National Film/video Foundation) which continues giving some interesting grants, local content. So, the entire set up makes it quite relatively easy to finance a film here. Certainly, much easier than the young filmmaker in Europe or in America, so this has created the wrong perception of the film economy to peoples minds, so they come out with their first feature film, no track record whatsoever, with a 4 million dollar budget! Start more cheap, prove that you got something strong to sell, how you've got the skill to say it, and then maybe you'll move up. You might even have the chance to finance your film at that level, but people are waiting for you, you know, if its not good enough and you have got a big problem here. The way distribution is structured, still, it just ignores a majority of the potential audience, so cinemas are in shopping malls, in town, if you go to Soweto there is not a single cinema. So if you live in Soweto, for you to see whatever film, including South African film, you have to come from Soweto to town, pay for your ticket, buy the popcorn and the Coca-cola, then, well, it's a long way, you need a meal probably, its expensive for people.

Are there video club places in somenbers like Soweto?

Plenty. So people have to make choices and go for video, and when, and if, they decide to make the movie it will be the blockbuster of course. The big one. I can afford once a month, lets say, with my family etc- that is a big outing, so obviously I will go for Tom Cruise - hey and Angelina Jolie! Why should I go for some local story? Which I will see in my video shop or on television anyway. So it's a big problem, because all these films which have been coming out over the past few years, are quite a relevant amount - I mean a real effort, you know? A number of people were able to make their first film or their second film, you speak easily 15 to 20 new titles, its quite relevant from 1 or 2, some two years ago. And they do what? 20,000 entries, maximum, all over South Africa. It doesn't even pay for your prints and publicity. I went the other day to look at this South African film that is Carmen the opera, in Xhosa, and set in a town-ship in Cape Town. Huge international recognition, the big prize in Berlin film festival, you know, there were probably seven people in that cinema. And it just had been released. And this is a film that people talked about it, because it was the first big award for South Africa, its Carmen. And of the seven people in that cinema the only non-white were myself and my friend. And we see a film with black people. Can people

afford 35 Rands to go and see a movie? Plus transport, plus this and that, its too expensive. At the same time just next door, you've got all the big American blockbusters at 14 Rands. Because a film like Carmen is considered 'art', so it will go here in the mall, they've got a number of cinemas for art films, they call it 'Cinema Ivo'. So there is no attempt to make it accessible to your potential market, in terms of infrastructure building cinemas where the people is, making it a bit more accessible.

That was one thing that was really amazing about Fespaco, and I realised that it only happens during Fespaco, the rest of the year it's a different story but actually seeing African cinema full of people watching African films, it was the first time I had seen that and just the response as a crowd, that was really wonderful to see...

This used to be the case in Mozambique during the years we're talking about. African cinema was extremely successful, we were making vast amounts of money out of those African films and the audience was pouring. The same film stayed three months easy. And people from the provinces calling, 'When are you starting the fucking film? We need the print here! It's always Maputo, everything in Maputo...' There is something wrong with capitalism in Africa. Because you would expect anywhere else in the world, that capitalism would immediately react to that, the essence of capitalism is 'I go where the money is', right? And I take that money for me! I am rich and I can drive a Mercedes. Doesn't seem to work like this in Africa. Because, where is your market? This is Soweto, you have got, I do not know how many millions people there, there would be a market base for 20 cinemas easy. Why on Earth it's not happening? I mean this is a capitalist society, the distributors taking a call captivated by capitol, they have got a board, they have got all these things related to capitol, they look at their balance sheet, 'We need more money'. Why on earth is it not working? I don't understand... Now let me tell you a story, Mozambican story. I approached the bank, and I told them - this is what happened in this country some years back, where in those years there was less money was available to people. 'This is the plan', I mean all those cinemas have been transformed into something else, there are very few cinemas in Mozambique, five maybe, 'So this is the plan, based on new technology, network digital screen screening, we start small and we keep growing, in 5 years/10 years we've got 50 cinemas all over the country. You get your money back - plus profit, I'm happy because I am rich and showing film, which is something I love doing, and this is a feasibility study'. You don't understand that business now. I mean its obvious to get into that, and I've looked at the figure of your investment, your running costs, you know that shit, your capitol expenditures etc. I went out of my way and paid a lot of money for some qualified people to do all the figures and all this. 'Bank, this is an investment plan that should interest you, because it clearly establishes over a certain period of time you are making vast amounts of money, I am making money as well, people have access to entertainment, which is quite important in society to culture to information, your government is making taxes, because on something like this you have to pay taxes on this, isn't it what we call economical development? You've got the money, your bank. We wont touch it, no, we don't understand it, it will happen, but it will happen from some Portuguese interest capitol, instead of doing it organically from within.' They don't seem to understand. There is a fundamental contradiction between capital and Africa. We are not made to be capitalists. It's genetic. We are destined to be poor and dependant of some foreign forces all our lives. If you tell them about some stupid other business they will buy into it immediately, and this society here which is much more developed, they've got much more resources, who has used big investment deals, doesn't seem to see there is no cinema in Soweto. And they are struggling to keep the cinemas open in the shopping malls... I look at it from a strictly capitalist point view, beside all the romantic things about

building a new audience, these are spin-offs. I really do an effort to just look at it in capitalist terms, there is no reason why it should not work and create huge wealth to whoever is involved. And my understanding of a capitalist is that I put my money so that I get a lot of money back, simple. Straight. So what do we do? Well, continue going to Tom Cruise. Anyway, it will eventually get to that, you understand. In South Africa its so obvious because you may think that people in a place like Mozambique there is no experience of dealing with cinema, so it makes sense that the capitalist concerns are not experienced in terms of the risk they are taking and etc. But here it is pretty well structured, pretty well organised, pretty well in place. South Africa is one of the biggest markets for the American majors. So they look at it very carefully, they really give South Africa very special terms, you've got I believe, six hundred cinemas in this country, which are basically under two majors chains, which are totally part of the majors philosophy and business etc. It would make common sense to expand that network of cinemas, but if I start building cinemas where the audiences is, and where the audience is prepared to spend some of the money for their own entertainment. I'm not even talking the radical views of *Lets bring different films to them* – no! I think the same old film that you will see here, the film we know people will go and pay for it. It's strange. At some point they, after some ten years ago, the majors started disinvesting here, they were concerned about the future of this country, they started looking at Eastern Europe, buying cinemas there, putting all the energy and it was a flop. It was a flop, it wasn't working as well as would here, so that should be a indicator to them that there is potential here let's make it role now. And earn more money. When you think of it it's very strange why its not working. Some people explain it by straight racism... So you should definitely try and meet in Portugal a guy called Americo Soares, he was the first director of the Film Institute. He was crucial in the establishment of all these policies and all this debate and then he fall out of breath and he decided to leave the country totally frustrated and for now in Mozambique, this is something I don't like about Mozambique, his name is not mentioned at all. When it come the history of things people are just side lined as if they never existed, what a lack of respect. This is something I cannot stand with these people.

I want to get as many different perspectives as possible...

Yeah. From the perspective of what you are doing, it is an advantage. From the perspective of the historical truth you need to respect that, this guy was crucial, all these guys you have spoken to are bullshit including me, this guy was the guy who implemented the things, first years with all his contradictions, with all his problems with all his views that were not always the accepted views, or the right views or whatever. But he was the guy who did it. You can get hold of him through Patriaquim. I mean it is so easy, its very Stalinist just wipe out some of the characters of history; you pretend they don't exist, give it a break. I mean, all the people you spoke to, if there was a little bit of intellectual honesty in them, they should have mentioned Americo Soares.

Interview with Camilo De Sousa, 8 July 2005, Maputo, Mozambique

O Camilo pode descrever a vossa formacao cinematografico e politico?

Eu nasci em Mocambique, vivi em Mocambique, e quando durante a colonializacao, e foi para...quando comecei a ser perseguido pela PIDE quando tinha 17, 18 anos, sai de Mocambique e foi para Bruxellas.

Aonde pedi ao alto comissariado das Nações Unidas pelos refugiados pedi estatuto de refugiado político. Fiquei em Bruxelas algum tempo e depois fui para Argélia, e depois para Tanzânia, aonde fui para o campo de guerrilheiros em Nshingweira. E quando terminei o meu treino de bariga voltei para Moçambique, mas nas áreas libertadas da província de Cabo Delgado. E foi lá aonde eu trabalhei. Mas ainda era muito jovem, e ainda não fazia cinema, fazia fotografia, tinha trabalhado em arte gráfica, mas a minha intenção quando fui para Bélgica era também para estudar cinema. Mas a bolsa que eu tinha era muito pequena. E então acabei por ir para o instituto de filosofia, em Leuven, e depois parei de estudar porque na altura consideravam que era mais importante irmos para guerra do que estarmos ali. Então foi isso que aconteceu. Depois trabalhei em diversos programas de carácter social e económico na província de Cabo Delgado, no norte de Moçambique, depois do acordo de Lusaka, não é? E depois eu fui lá e durante um tempo fiz algumas coisas. E iniciei lá também a minha carreira através do filme de Rui Guerra, que eu sugeri ao Rui Guerra para ir fazer em Cabo Delgado, um coisa que chama *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*, não sei se conheces, eu sou produtor executivo do filme.

Então esse foi o vosso primeiro filme?

Foi a minha primeira coisa que eu fiz como produtor executivo. Depois vim para Maputo e aqui neste edifício foi aonde foi feita a minha formação. Eu já tinha, já tinha visto tudo que era filmes pelo mundo. Eu quando estava na Bélgica, via quatro filmes por dia.

Que tipos de filmes?

Os mais variados, do Berman ou do Rui Guerra, ou as coisas Americanas, na altura víamos pouca cinema Americano, mas via de tudo. Eu ia, era sócio de todas aquelas coisas como livraria Americana, que passava filmes. A associação Alemã, Belga, ia lá também ver filmes. Vi de tudo, desde documentários. Via como vi sempre desde de cinco anos de idade. Que via, aos cinco anos de idade, todos sábados e domingos eu ia ao cinema.

E nesse contexto colonial, qual foi a essas primeiras experiências do cinema? O que foi os filmes que foram mostradas?

Deixe-me dizer-te, tem algumas coisas que foram importantes na minha vida para... já quando era... antes eu via filmes para crianças, mas depois quando comecei olhar para a imagem, para o cinema, e para o movimento, interessei-me muito o Bergman. O Bergman para mim era o início da neo-locura pelo cinema foi com o Ingmar Bergman. Mais tarde vi uma coisa que não posso esquecer do Rui Guerra. Que também me deixou espantado, e disse a este é o meu caminho. E então coisas de Roberto Rocha também, eu tenho coisas dos Alemães, do cinema novo Alemão também, que me marcou bastante. E o cinema Francês evidente também, não é?

Isso foi em Moçambique?

Isso mistura-se um pouco. Em Moçambique vi algumas coisas do Ingmar Bergman, mas eu pretencia ao Cine-Clube, eu até não podia ainda ver aqueles filmes, mas eles deixavam-me entrar, porque eu era muito miúdo. Mas vi uma boa parte durante o tempo colonial, dos Vertov, as do Eisenstein. Porque a PIDE aqui não era como em Portugal, nós víamos filmes que em Portugal eram proibidos. Mas que aqui a PIDE não conhecia. Nós víamos aqui, por exemplo, um filme que se chama *A Mãe*, e as pessoas diziam '*A Mãe!*', deixa passar. Também era político, quer dizer, quando passam as segundas, foi político mas passavam aqui porque a PIDE ainda era muito atrasado, próprio não conhecia as coisas, e nós acabávamos por ver. E vi grande parte do cinema...do cinema, digamos, socialista daqueles anos e sei lá, depois víamos muita coisa

do neo-realismo Italiano, não é? Pronto, foi um pouco de tudo. Foi pois pronto. Também tinha uma família que gostava de cinema que achava que cinema era um caminho para abrir a cabeça.

E quando foi que o Camilo foi na Argélia, isso foi um caminho que outros também...

Sim, sim foi. Um caminho que nos usávamos para Argélia, depois fomos para Tanzânia. Porque eu fiz contactos na Bruxelas. Em Bruxelas havia algumas pessoas ligadas aos movimentos de libertação, LMPA da Angola e a FRELIMO, Mocambique, e Cabo Verde. E então em contactos com eles, conheci o Presidente Chissano, quando foi lá uma vez ainda era representante da FRELIMO na Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzânia. Conheci Marcelino dos Santos que era responsável pelas relações dos exteriores da FRELIMO, foi conhecendo as pessoas naquele momento em que disseram então agora vais para guerra.

E o cinema de Argélia, foi isso...

Não, eu nunca...eu passei por Argélia, não, nem vi filmes Argelinos, nem conheço cinema Argelino. Eu já aqui em Mocambique, depois da independência. Mocambique depois da independência criou uma esquema para nós passarmos de ver cinema Africano. Aqui dentro de este instituto, nós organizávamos mostras, semanas de cinema Africana e nos cinemas distribuíamos por todo o país, comprávamos pelos Africanos e distribuíamos.

No Instituto?

O Instituto Nacional de Cinema era era distribuidor e exibidor, e produtor. E então o Instituto comprava filmes Africanos, nós somos dos países Africanos, não só Africano, dos países do mundo que compravam filmes Africanos, e que pagavam o valor real do filme, não pagávamos como os outros países faziam, porque era um filme Africano, tinha que ser um filme pago mais baixo. Nós pagávamos como pagávamos um filme do Goddard. Era cinema.

Se nos podemos falar um pouco sobre esse tempo em Tanzânia, qual foi o vosso papel nesse altura?

Eu nessa altura não trabalhava em cinema. Havia na verdade pessoas que filmavam vídeo que projectavam filme nas áreas libertadas. Mas eu na altura fazia, fundamentalmente fotografia e trabalho político.

Que tipo de trabalho político?

Explicar as pessoas o que era os objectivos da luta de independência, criava e tal, era mais nessa linha. E depois quando fui para Cabo Delegado quando acabou a guerra, não é? Também trabalhei em várias coisas de carácter social, económico, principalmente mobilizando as pessoas na agricultura, produção. Pronto, várias coisas de carácter político. Até que durante um tempo trabalhei nisso, e depois nisso...depois quero fazer cinema. E então vim para aqui, com o Instituto de Cinema, e comecei a fazer algumas coisas. Eu tinha um experiência muito grande do país, eu conheci o país todo. Quando acabou a guerra eu andei por todo o país, dei a volta por todo o país, e pronto, eu conheci as coisas, conheci as pessoas, conheci os hábitos, e foi a minha vontade fazer a cinema nasceu nessa volta que dei para o país. E então..e percebi que era preciso começar a transmitir a imagem em movimento as pessoas. Em 1975, de qualquer modo eu já fiz, em Cabo Delegado, que é uma oportunidade, conheces não é? Uma província lá na Norte, fiz em Cabo Delegado projecções em pela primeira vez, as pessoas estavam a ver, imagem e movimento.

E como foi essa experiência?

Foi uma loucura, não é, completa. E depois andei, eu andava sempre com... no meu carro, quando eu ia para qualquer sítio, o meu carro tinha um projectador, e um filme, e um gerador. Qualquer sítio que eu chegava, quando acabava-lá a fazer os meus trabalhos, convidavas as pessoas para a noite, porque não tínhamos sala, então a noite quando ficava escuro, projectava um filme. Toda a gente apercebia sabiam que a noite iam ver

um filme. E era interessante que a vezes eu ficava estrunhado porque tinha que repetir o filme, porque as pessoas queriam ver novamente o mesmo filme.

O que foi os tipos de reações au cinema?

Tinha de tudo. Pronto, depois faziamos sempre debates também sobre os filmes e então, algumas as pessoas apreendiam o meio, outros compreendiam da maneira mais distorcida, mas pronto era a maneira dessas pessoas, que tinham razão porque eram pessoas que viviam em sítios aonde tinham visto um carro uma vez na vida. Uma sensação assim.

Quando Camilo começou a fazer filmes, essas experiências de mostrar filmes, foram importante para criar...

Foram fundamentais por causa da linguagem, por causa da gramática cinematográfica, foram fundamentais. E penso que se não tivessem essas experiências, essas relações, não conseguiria transmitir as coisas da maneira como...

Pode descrever a linguagem?

A experiência que eu tinha era que só mostram com o ritmo de montagem muito, muito acelerado. As pessoas não vão entender. As pessoas têm um determinado ritmo, então a minha montagem tem que ser para aquele ritmo. Para as pessoas entenderem e perceberem as diversas mensagens. Pronto, isto foi uma coisa que eu aprendei, percebi, logo, as pessoas diziam, 'Temos que ver o filme uma outra vez'. Era exactamente porque eram montagens muito rápidas. As pessoas não estavam habituados a linguagem cinematográfica, e não conseguiam, e eu assumiram um produto que estava ali. Isso só no nível da montagem, no nível da imagem, uma coisa que aprendei é que aquilo que para ti não é importante, é para essas pessoas, para esses camponeses, muito importante. Eu dou-te um exemplo de um filme em que nós tínhamos uma... filmamos uma aldeia, e depois fizemos um grande plano do galo, ali a comer no chão, e montamos aquele plano no filme porque tínhamos algum problema, precisávamos de um plano neutro, e montamos aquilo. Era o melhor plano que nós tínhamos montado. Quando aparecia um galo, naquela aldeia, as pessoas conheciam e batiam palmas – batiam palmas quando viram aquele galo. Era uma coisa que para mim - eu até zangei-me com o camera man para gastar película para filmar um galo, para o que serve e tal. Então era a imagem mais importante do filme, era um galo. Que as pessoas percebiam que eles, as pessoas, serem filmadas é normal, agora o galo da aldeia aparecer – era uma festa. Impersonante. Portanto, esses são vários exemplos para tu conseguires entender essa linguagem, essa linguagem do... não só de cinema, mas também do papel. Eu lembro-me quando se fizeram umas campanhas de saúde, em que utilizavam um símbolo, que era assim uma cruz vermelha, desta maneira não deve fazer, então mostravam uma outra maneira como se devia fazer. As pessoas entendiam ao contrário, porque ali aonde estava marcado 'Infermeira' era como deviam fazer. E sim, teve que alargar todas as cartazes. Tudo. As pessoas não entendiam aquela maneira. São símbolos que foram importados que as pessoas entendiam numa outra maneira completamente diferente. E isso ajuda muito, não é? Encontrar uma linguagem, encontrar...e depois ajuda bastante na construção do docu-drama, que na realidade, o documentário, é o próprio não é suficiente transmitir as imagens, tu tens que usar o documentário, as pessoas, a verdade, mas digamos dramatizar um pouco esta verdade.

E quando foi o início do começo do docu-drama? Como foi o desenvolvimento desse tipo de cinema?

Acho que sempre fizemos um pouco a partir do Ruy Guerra, por exemplo, quando ele faz *Mueda, Memória e Massacre*, era um docu-drama aquilo. Como ele mistura as coisas. Pronto, uma coisa belíssima a partir daí e a gente começou um pouco a entrar dentro de isso, dessa linha.

E podemos falar sobre um pouco do Instituto, os objectivos, e tambem a organizacao do instituto, e como era parte do processo decolonializacao?

Pronto o Instituto Nacional...antes da independencia nao existia...existia apenas empresas privadas sobre cinema. Pequenas empresas que eram empresas de colonos Portugueses, e que fundamentalmente uso a propaganda au governo colonial. Mas em 1971, penso, 1971, 1972, nao tenho a certeza, comecaram a surgir alguns Portugueses a produzir em Mocambique, mas a produzir filmes que nao eram pelo governo colonial, pelo contrario tinham forte cumprimente que punha causa o poder colonial. Tem um caso muito claro que é um dos melhores filmes que se fez antes da independencia que é o *Deixem-me Pelo Menos Subir as Palmeiras* do Lopes Barbosa. Vive aqui. Agora Vive aqui em Mocambique. Ele nao tem em Portugal durante muito tempo, depois veu para ca. E depois tem o...ainda antes do Lopes Barbosa havia tambem o outro Portugues, hoje é Mocambicano, o José Cardoso, que na cidade da Beira, ali no centro de Mocambique, produzia tambem filmes que punham em questao a organizacao de facismo . Alguns de esses filmes foram apreendidos pela pide, com a *Deixem-me Pelo Menos Subir as Palmeiras* era proibido aqui. E pronto, isso foi o que se passo antes da independencia. Com a independencia, um dos primeiros actos do governo saído da independencia, foi a criacao do Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Porque na altura nao havia televisao em Mocambique. Mocambique so teve televisao em 1983 ou 1984, e era preciso transmitir aos Mocambicanos esta mensagem da independencia, dos ideias da independencia. Agora como fazer, em 1975, 97% dos mocambicanos eram inalfabetos, distribuuir jornais, nao funcionava, nao tinhamos televisao. E foi uma visao extraordinaria para criar um Instituto Nacional de Cinema. Nao havia quadros, nao havia Mocambicanos que sabiam fazer cinema. E era preciso decidir; ou mandamos pessoas para o estrangeiro, para depois virem aqui produzir, ou vamos fazer apreendendo. E foi esta segunda decisao que foi tomada. Vamos fazer cinema ca dentro. Entao vamos mandar vir tecnicos de fora, vamos comprar os equipamentos, vamos montar o laboratorio, e vamos apreender fazer a cinema, enquanto nos estamos a fazer, mal mas vai saindo material para ser distribuido no pais, pelo sistema do cinema movel. Havia um sistema de cinema movel que amostravam os filmes pelas as aldeias, pelo pais todo. E assim que aparece entao o Instituto Nacional de Cinema, fomos todos aqui a apreender, apreender a montar, apreender a laboratorio, apreender a camera, apreender o som, apreender tudo. E fomos fazendo. Fomos melhorhando. A medida que o tempo passava, e hoje somos nos que mantemos - este Instituto ja nao existe, nao é? Mas mantemos esta coisa do cinema vivo, que é Amocine, e as empresas privadas de cinemas sao todos resultado destas pessoas que foram formados aqui desta casa. Eu foi formado nesta sala que esta aqui ao lado. Que é montagem. Apreendei montagem, com uma editora Italiana, Crisalda.

Quem foi a forca, quem foi as pessoas que tiveram essa concepciao? De aonde fosse? Do governo?

Foi fundamentalmente foi Samora Machel. Que percebeu que foi um fundamental criar o... gente que fizes, que olhace para o pais e que, por outro lado, tambem fizes tambem uma olhada ao pais. Eu costume dizer que existiu de '75 ate '76 que é quando ele morreu, e depois apartir dai nos ficamos todos a tentar a fazer. Faziamos com dinheiro do estado. Agora temos que percurar para dinheiro.

Que foi os objectivos do Kuxa Kanema?

Era assim, nao havia televisao, nao é? E o *Kuxa Kanema* ia substituir essa televisao, e tal como qualquer projecto de televisao ligado au estado, evidente que o *Kuxa Kanema* tambem tinha um componente politica muito forte, nao é? Nao podemos esconder. Mas eram que nos tambem pesavamos que era importante, querer transmitir essa ideia que, 'Somos independentes, vamos trabalhar, vamos fazer isso,

vamos fazer aquilo' quer dizer, mas dentro de um esquema de uma disseminação de uma mensagem bastante importante. Eu até não diria que era uma mensagem política, era uma mensagem cultural fundamentalmente. Para dizer às pessoas que, 'Epa, nós somos independentes, o país é nosso, temos que evoluir o nosso. Vamos lá fazer. Mostrar às pessoas, aos Moçambicanos o seu próprio país' que não conheciam.

O que foi a cultura de independência, se é possível descrever?

Principalmente as pessoas terem uma grande altitude e perceberem que o que faziam era para si próprias. E que, pronto, estes ideais alguns foram a ser deturpados, mas essa era a ideia básica. Era, 'Vamos fazer um país, à nossa medida. Um país aonde nós queremos. Havemos de ter tudo o que nós queremos e precisamos.' Mas pronto mas depois isto tudo foi diluído em outras coisas.

E como foi a experiência de trabalhar com os realizadores e os técnicos, que vieram?

Foi bastante boa. O que que nós queríamos de esses técnicos, queríamos o seu know-how técnico, dos realizadores, e passaram bastante coisa para nós. Era gente boa, era gente com vontade de estar aqui e fazer. Veio gente da Inglaterra, veio gente de França, veio gente de Brasil, de Cuba. E vieram alguns Africanos também, como o Med Hondo, Hali Gerima... Até que não era muito fácil. Mas nos das primeiras coisas, como eu disse a um pouquinho, umas das primeiras que nós queríamos ver foi cinema Africano. E trouxemos aqui cinema Africano de alta qualidade, e veio gente da África para vir aqui. Tivemos uma grande relação com Angola, a primeira co-produção, que foi feita em Moçambique, e foi depois da independência, foi entre Angola e Moçambique. Sobre um filme que se chama *Pamberre em Zimbabwe*, que nem é sobre Moçambique, nem sobre Angola, sobre a independência do Zimbabwe. Mas era esta coisa que nós tínhamos, nós fizemos aqui em Maputo, eu pessoalmente era responsável pela organização de essa mostra, fizemos aqui um festival de cinema da guerra de Angola. Sim fizemos aqui durante uma semana. Vieram Angolanos, mostramos aqui filmes. Havia um grupo Angolano, que fazia só filmes sobre a guerra. Fizemos aqui uma mostra.

E quando foi isso?

Foi em 1982. Passamos filmes de António Olé, mostrávamos os filmes do Carlos José Henriques, do Rui Duarte Carvalho, do Chico Henriques. Pronto, enviaram cá esses realizadores convidados por nós, com tudo pago por nós. Era uma relação muito forte que havia aqui – quer dizer, que estava a iniciar, mas tudo isso depois foi destruído pelas estas guerras. Mas nós fizemos aquilo que... pois nós íamos a Angola. Nós filmávamos aqui neste Instituto pessoas de Angola e de São Tomé. E montagem, som, e câmara. Nós formávamos aqui, nós queríamos transformar isto no centro de formação regional de cinema. O que vinham as pessoas dos vários países, da África. Eu lembro-me numa altura o Med Hondo não tinha dinheiro para terminar um filme e precisava de montagem, de mesa – de uma Steinbeck, mas ele não tinha dinheiro – ele veio aqui porque nós tínhamos. O Steinbeck, não é problema, somos Africanos vamos fazer. Mas houve assim uma relação de solidariedade muito forte. Muito, muito, muito forte. E queríamos transformar isso num grande centro aonde os Africanos pudessem vir aqui fazer os seus filmes. Mas pronto as guerras e o... e a economia do mercado não permitiu, e pronto estamos assim abandonado.

A relação entre o Instituto e Samora Machel continuava a ser muito forte, não é?

Sim nós tínhamos uma forte relação. Ele apoiava nossas iniciativas, dos primeiros filmes de ficção que nós fizemos, muito apoiado por ele e não tinha nada de especial de ponto de vista político, mas de ponto de vista histórico e cultural.

Tambem na criacao do Kuxa Kanema, a grande parte de isso foi com Samora Machel e o entourage dele nao é?

A *Kuxa Kanema* fomos nos que criamos *Kuxa Kanema*. O governo deu para nos avancamos com um projecto qualquer. E depois nos fomos procurando. Fizemos *Kuxa Kanema*, fizemos outros documentarios, filmes, meus que sao prohibidos, estam ai ainda. Ninguem pode ver. Sim, mas fiz.

Que tipos de filmes?

A isso ai é mais complicado. Uns do charactero politico, mas com historias muito complicadas.

E isso foi durante os anos 1980?

Sim em 1981.

E o que aconteceu com esses filmes?

Estao no arquivo. Estao ai. Existe.

Ab sim? E possivel ver los?

Nao depende de me ja. Mas foi isso. Pronto, estas a ver, nao houve nada, nao houve nenhum problema. Pronto fez-se neste momento isso pode criar um grande conflito no pais. Ainda agora nao se ve porque poderia, no partidatismo, o conflito ainda seria maior.

Pode explicar um pouco?

Nao. Seria um conflito muito grande. Mas pronto, nos fizemos. E temos, esta ali, nunca ninguem tiro dali. Esta la, e daqui um dia, alguns anos, algumas pessoas adem ver. Como foi sua historia, como foi seu processo politico. Tem muito coisa ali, que nem nunca ninguem viu. Sim, no arquivo tem muita coisa que muita gente nunca viu. Que nos iamos, filmavamos e depois havia umas coisas que iamos guardando. Vamos utilizar isto, tudo em 16mm.

E os filmes que foram feito durante a luta armada, como foram eles importante para os objectivos do Instituto?

Foram porque... é assim, nos filmes feito durante a luta armada eram feitos normalmente por pessoas que vinham de fora. Quando acabo a guerra, era a unica coisa que nos tinhamos, eram esses filmes feitos por Bob Van Lierop, pelo, como é que se chama o Jugoslavio, nao o Jugoslavo mas... Popovic. Tem um dos Italianos, que fizeram ai uma serie de filmes. Evidente que esse era a unica material que nos tinhamos da a luta de libertacao. Nos nao tinhamos capacidades durante a luta de libertacao de fazer filmes. Faziamos algumas coisas ai em video, mas era um sistema de video que ja nem hoje existe, e aquilo perdi-se tudo, nao servia para nada. Mas essas pessoas que vinham de fora, pronto, troceram uma muito importante para iniciar parte dos filmes que eu amostrava em Cabo Delegado, como eu disse, eram exactamente copias desse filmes feito por estrangeiros aqui nas zonas libertadas.

E como foi o ambiente - a vida - nas zonas libertadas? A minha pergunta, esto a pensar o papel de cinema na transformacoes social e o que FRELIMO tentava fazer antes da independencia e depois o...

O grande parte de esses filmes eram na verdade sobre o desenvolvimento da luta de libertacao. Os filmes foram feitos em Cabo Delegado, Niassa, e Tete, essas pessoas nao se conheciam. Essas populacoes de Cabo Delegado, de Niassa e de Tete, nao se conheciam entre se. E era importante uma coisa, era mostrar que todo os Mocambicanos estavam a fazer a luta de libertacao, que nao era so Cabo Delegado, nao era so Niassa, que nao era so Tete. Entao as pessoas viam gente de Tete a falar uma lingua diferente delas, estamos todos juntos nesta luta. Isso foi um grande, teve um grande papel para as pessoas se uniram cada vez mais para luta de libertacao. Esses filmes foram fundamentais. Esses filmes feito pelos varios estrangeiros.

Esto a pensar os outros organizacoes dessa altura, como por exemplo, FESPACI e o festival de filme FESPACO, havia uma relacao, uma ligacao?

Era muito complicado nessa altura. Nao durante a altura de liberatacao, mais depois da independencia, Mocambique alio-se logo como o FESPACO. Sim isso ai sempre houve uma relacao. Ainda continuamos a ter uma relacaocom a FESPACO. Desde do inicio. Desde o inicio.

Mas antes da independencia?

Nao, depois da independencia. Antes da independencia nao havia, era muito complicado ainda essas relacoes todas. Era muito dificil. Mas logo depois em 1975, comeco logo uma relacao institucional com a FESPACO, inclusivamente o Presidente da FESPACO esteve aqui em Maputo logo depois de independencia.

Ah, sim? Quem foi?

Era o Gaston Kabore. E ele veu aqui varias vezes. Vinha muitas vezes aqui por nosso convido, por exemplo, quando foi o primeiro mostra de cinema Africano por nos para vir ca, para abertura para as pessoas verem quem sao esses realizadores Africanos - afinal fazem cinema. Aqui nao havia nada, antes de 1975 nunca tinha pasado um filme Africano aqui. E o maximo que as pessoas tinham visto, as pesosas da cidade, era o filme dos Americanos que foram com actores negros, com Sidney Pottier, um preto, e tal, como é possive? Mas cinema Africano nunca tinham visto.

E que foi a a reacciao?

As salas estavam sempre cheias, tivemos que fazer seccoos...a gente fazia isto em uma semana, tivemos comecar uma seccao por dia, tivemos que pasar a fazer tres por dia. E aumentar o numero de semanas. Porque as pessoas queriam ver, queriam ver quem sao esses. Como é que é? Como é que se vive nos outros paises Africanos? Isto que é um sitio muito fechado. O fascismo nao permitia que a gente conhecesse outras coisas. Muito, muito, mutio apertado. E ate, sei la, o cinema Europeu, nos viamos, havia uma censura aqui. Pronto, viamos os filmes todos cortados. So quando a pide nao percebiam o que era, entao deixavam pasar.

Com a fin da guerra, e tambem foi a altura quando o teve o incendio no Instituto, foi um periodo mutio mal cinemas, mas tambem talvez de outros oportunidades?

Sim na ha duvida que depois de tudo, nos comecamos a relacionar mais com os estrangeiros, porque ja estvamos a ter um suporte aqui , nao é? Passavamos a percurar dinheiro pelo luto, mandar historias, para tentar conseguir dinheiro, para poder continuar, nos nunca paramos de fazer cinema. O unico pais destes aqui que teve em guerra, que nunca parou de fazer cinema. Nunca. Fizemos durante a guerra fizemos quando acabo a guerra, e continuamos a fazer. Nunca paramos... Nao podiam circular. Estavam parados. O Renamo queimava os cinemas moveis. Quemvavam os carros e as pessoas. Nao, era muito complicado durante a guerra, mas nos iamso la filmar. Nunca deixamos de filmar durante a guerra. Tem uma serie de filmes sobre a guerra, tem a documentacao toda sobre a guerra. As coisas horriveis que a gente via...

Sim, eu vi alguns aqui, e tambem a Promarte e a foi dificil para ver esses filmes, uma depois outra, mas tambem eu acho que é um arquivo muito importante.

Sim, sim. O problema é que o arquivo esta mais ou menos abandonado, nao sei se consegue apanhar dinheiro fazer uma recuperacao do arquivo. Ja viste o arquivo?

Sim com Castigo. Foi muito triste ver os filmes assim.

Sim com Castigo. Mas ali está a história, uma boa parte da história assim. Da independência para cá. Poucos países no mundo têm a sua história filmada desde a independência. O aqui tem tudo. As coisas boas, as coisas más, tem lá tudo. Há tudo documentado. Dentro daquilo não era para dizer aquilo era bom, aquilo era mau, está tudo. Depois alguém que quer fazer a história, encontra ali tudo.

Quais são os filmes mais importantes que foram feitos para o Instituto para cinema?

Tirando a *Kuxa Kanema*, que foi a grande escola de cinema de Moçambique, que era semanal, 52 números por ano. Depois fizeram-se vários documentários que... o que que estávamos a falar dos filmes, não é, que, pronto depois tem alguns documentários como foram sendo feitos, não é, e eu fazia bastante dos documentários de aí 26 minutos. E depois fizeram-se os filmes que são, o primeiro foi *Os Tempos dos Leopardos*, uma co-produção com a Jugoslávia, que foi também uma escola porque nós não sabíamos fazer ficção, aprendemos nesse filme. E logo a seguir fizemos chamado *O Vento Sopra do Norte*, do Cardoso que foi feito só por Moçambicanos. A única coisa que vinha de fora era a película, mas o laboratório e tudo, tudo, tudo feito aqui, que eu considero um filme bastante bom para quem acaba de aprender a fazer ficção. Pronto, depois houve outros, houve também um de Licínio de Azevedo que foi feito aqui pelo Instituto Nacional de Cinema que era *A Colheita do Diabo...* em França. E pronto, e depois a partir daí tem outros filmes, mas em a lista dos filmes... tem a lista de filmes feitos aqui pelo Instituto de Cinema.

Na sua opinião quais são as características do cinema Moçambicano agora que são uma continuação dos objetivos do Instituto?

Claro que as coisas evoluíram bastante muito tempo mudaram as suas esquemas económicos, nós agora temos que contar... a ter o máximo de qualidade, ganhar prémios em tudo... Quer dizer é uma luta publicitária, e conseguir e depois quem tem os dinheiros, temos que muitas vezes fazer concessões, porque se não conseguimos o dinheiro para fazer o filme. Então estamos um pouco dependentes do ocidente para fazer o filme. Porque, se há alguma coisa que dentro do guião que agrada muito aos financiadores temos que... uma espécie de censura.

Então muitos filmes sobre...

Exactamente porque agora, se queres fazer um filme agora em África, se tu não colocas alguma coisa sobre o SIDA, sobre a SIDA não ganhas dinheiro. Queres fazer uma coisa, uma telenovela, diz, 'Ah ok, sobre a SIDA.' Vamos ficar reduzido a SIDA. Isso é o grande problema. Nós ainda conseguimos fugir conseguimos fazer outras coisas mas é complicado.

E qual é o papel do Amocine?

Bom, o Amocine tem papel relevante nesta questão inclusivamente se não fosse o Amocine, nós teríamos a fazer instituições nacionais. E conseguimos fazer filmes da altura com o dinheiro que o Amocine conseguia junto da embaixada da França aqui, e estamos a conseguir fazer os nossos próprios filmes, porque se não tempos estaríamos a fazer institucionais. Agora mesmo alguns filmes, sendo financiados com institucionais, e essa é a grande coisa que se criou aqui no cinema Moçambicano agora. É, 'Ok, dá-me o dinheiro para eu fazer um filme sobre SIDA, mas eu vou contar a minha história como for', estas a ver? E conseguimos dar a volta a isso, em que a única coisa que aparece assim que diga que o filme é institucional é um cartão no início do filme, 'Este filme foi feito, financiada... SIDA, não sei quantas pessoas em Moçambique', depois todo o resto é trabalho do realizador. Estas a ver? E fazemos muitos filmes assim, eu tenho um que agora até teve, passo agora no TV5, que está a passar muito aí pela Europa, que é uma coisa financiada pela UNESCO sobre rádios comunitárias em Moçambique. Aparece uma vez como uma rádio

comunitaria assim mutio derepente, e toda a historia eram as pessoas que fazem a radio, e a historia da vida daquelas pessoas que vao receber essa informacao que as radios comunitarios...Nao tem nada sobre...quem ve aquilo. Houve uma reuniao da UNESCO ai em Lusaka, na Zambia, sobre as radios comunitarias. Na reuniao Africanos todos paises et tal, entao depois quiseram amostrar este filme, as pessoas so forma muitas poucas pessoas, a gente foi ver o filme porque aquilo vai ser um filme, a gente ja sabe como se monta a radio comunitario, como é que faz isso, pouca gente foi ver e o dia seguinte foram pedir para que o filme foi novamente projectado, porque afinal nao era um filme sobre radios comunitarios, mas uma historia diferente. Entao o filme foi projectado para toda gente ver. Sao estas coisas que a gente desmonta e consegue fazer, pronto, com esse dinheiro tentar fazer coisas na altura docu-dramas, que deu para ver. Nos temos uma serie delas na Eban, se quizer ir la ver.

Qual é a sua sentido agora de esse edificio. Porque no filme do Margueritte Cardoso ha uma ambiente, um atmosfer, muito pesimista...

Claro pesimista, sim. Mas era porque isto aqui foi a nossa casa. Eu pessoalmente dormi aqui muitas vezes, porque nao tinha tempo para ir para casa porque a Kuxa Kanema tinha que sair, porque depois tinha um documentario, ainda estava numa cadeira e dormiam quando tudo continuava. Mas aqui era a nossa casa. Isto é um grande laboratorio, uma coisa seria. Agora esta abandonado, nao é, nos ainda estamos a fazer alguma coisa que é recouperar esta parte, para Amocine, para nao perdermos, para nao deixarmos que isso se perca. Se nao qualquer dia aqui montam, um cabaret ou coisa assim. Nos queremos que isto continua a ser uma casa de cinema, uma casa de formacao principalmente. Nos queremos formar mais gente aqui. Mas temos alguns dificuldades porque isto pertence au estado e o estado nao da isto, e depois as pessoas que querem dar dinheiro dizem, 'Eu do dinheiro, mas quero garantia de que o edificio passa para Amocine. Se nao tiver essa garantia, nao ha dinheiro!', entao ficamos em isto. O estado nao nos da o edificio, as pessoas nao nos dao o dinheiro. E depois o estado fica com isso. É uma bola de nerve.

O dinheiro de Amocine vem daonde?

Vem dos cotas – dos membros, nos todos membros pagamos, e vem de varias...nos fazemos varias coisas agora estivemos a fazer cinema arena, com contactos Italianos, esse projecto cinema arena, e ainda um cinema movel. Mais virado para areas de educacao de saude e outras. E principalmente por causa do SIDA. E, mas por outro lado passa filmes Mocambicanos tambem. É um projecto muito interessante... E ha uma coisa bonita que é uma, uma pesquisa feito pelo um sociologo Mocambicano, Luis Cabaco, que é uns dos fundadores do cinema de Mocambique e nao sei se ja falste com ele?Nao é sobre este aspecto do cinema movel. Mas ele depois pode falar sobre cinema Mocambicano porque ele é bastante conhecido. Ele tambem tem um documento sobre a historia - nao é a historia completa mas, um documento bastante bom sobre o cinema Mocambicano. Que eu pedi para ele escrever. E ele tem esse documento tambem tem de falar com ele sobre isso. Ele foi das pessoas mais importantes no impulso do cinema, do Instituto Nacional de Cinema.

Polly Gaster falou do conceptcao que ele teve de criar um arquivo da vida nas zonas libertadas, e isso parece me bastante importante, e quero muito falar com ele sobre isso, porque acho que esses dois papeis do arquivo da vida cotediana e tambem o papel do Ecran na criar uma ligacao com o mundo fora...

O que era fundamental, tal colonial que nao permitia tivesimos essa relacao com ninguem. Nem entre nos, nem com o exterior. Como é que o Salazar tinha uma coisa que dizia ' Orgulhosamente So' , era a locura de fascismo.

Filmography

Fatima Albuquerque and Ismael Vuvo

Samora Vive (1986)

35mm, Portuguese

INC, Mozambique

Manuel Faria de Almeida

Catembe – 7 dias em Lourenço Marques (1964)

47 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

Faria de Almeida, Mozambique

Santiago Alvarez

Milagro en la Tierra Morena (1974)

ICAIC, Cuba

Licínio Azevedo

A Guerra de Agua (1996)

Video

Ebano Multimedia, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo

A Última Prostituta (1999)

Video

Ebano Multimedia, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo, Camillo de Sousa, João Costa and Carlos Henriques

Cinco Tiros de Mauser (1981)

Televisão Popular de Angola/Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol

Escola em Armas, (198?)

Video

Instituto de Comunicação Social, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol

A Coluna (198?)

Video
Instituto de Comunicação Social, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol

Melancolia (198?)

Video

Instituto de Comunicação Social, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol

O Poço (1986)

Video

Instituto de Comunicação Social, Mozambique

Licínio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol

A Colheita do Diabo (1988)

52 mins, video

Mozambique

Balufu Bakupa Kanyinda

Ten Thousand Years of Cinema (1991)

Burkina Faso/Democratic Republic of Congo

Balufu Bakupa Kanyinda

Thomas Sankara (1991)

26 mins, 16mm, French

Democratic Republic of Congo

Joquim Lopes Barbosa

Deixam-me pelo menos subir as palmeiras (1972)

35mm, Portuguese

Mozambique

Bernado Bertolucci

Last Tango in Paris (1972)

129 mins, 35mm, French

France and Italy

Mário Borgneth

Fronteiras de Sangue (1986)

Portuguese and English

Kanemo, Mozambique

João Botelho
Um Adeus Português (1985)
85 mins, 35mm, Portuguese
Portugal

Jorge Brum de Canto
Chaimite (1953)
Portuguese
Cinal, Portugal

Henrique Caldeira
30 de Janeiro (1981)
4 mins, 35mm, Portuguese
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

José Cardoso
Annuncio (1961)
Mozambique

José Cardoso
O Pesadelo (1969)
Mozambique

José Cardoso
Que Venham! (1981)
25 mins, 35mm, Portuguese
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

José Cardoso
O Vento Sopre do Norte (1985)
35mm, Portuguese
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Margarida Cardoso
Kuxa Kanema: The Birth of Cinema (2003)
52 mins, Portuguese
Mozambique/Portugal

José Celso and Celso Luccas
25 (1975)

French and Portuguese
Servico Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Franco Cigarini
Dieci giorni con I guerriglieri nel Mozambico Livro (Ten Days with the Guerillas in Free Mozambique, 1972)
Italian
Italy/Mozambique

Souleymane Cissé
Baara (Work, 1977)
90 mins, 16mm
Les Films Cissé, Mali

Souleymane Cissé
Finyé (The Wind, 1982)
100 mins, 35mm
Les Films Cissé, Mali

Souleymane Cissé
Yeelen (Light, 1987)
105 mins, 35mm
Les Films Cissé, Mali

João Costa and Carlos Henriques
Pamberé ne Zimbabwe (1981)
50 mins, 35mm
Televisão Popular de Angola/Instituto Nacional de Mozambique

Margaret Dickinson
Behind the Lines (1971)
English and Portuguese
United Kingdom

Daniel Edinger and Michel Lequenne
Setubak: Ville Rouge (1975)
Portuguese
France and Portugal

Sergei Eisenstein
Bronenosets Potyomkin (Battleship Potemkin, 1925)
5,709 ft

USSR

Ângela Ferreira

Casa – um retrato íntimo da casa em que nasci (1999)

Two screens supported by metal structure; one digital video b/w silent, 30 sec loop, one digital video colour silent 30 sec loop

Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal

Miguel Fleitas

La Guerra en Angola (1976)

ICAIC, Cuba/Angola

Moira Forjaz

Um Dia Numa Aldeia Communal (1981)

29 mins, 35mm, Portuguese and Ronga (?)

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Moira Forjaz and Lício Azevedo

Televisão nos bairros (1981)

Televisão Experimental, Mozambique

Jean-Luc Godard

La Chinoise (La Chinoise, ou plutôt à la Chinoise, 1967)

90 mins, 35mm, French

France

Flora Gomes

Mortu Nega (Those Whom Death Refused, 1988)

93 mins, 35mm, Criolo

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Guinea-Bissau

Flora Gomes

Udju azul di Yonta (The Blue Eyes of Yonta, 1991)

90 mins, 35mm, Criolo

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Guinea-Bissau

Flora Gomes

Nba fala (My Voice, 2002)

Criolo and French

Fado Films, Portugal/Les Films de Mai and Samsa Films, France

Flora Gomes and Sana Na N'Hada
Regresso de Cabral (Return of Cabral, 1976)
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Guinea-Bissau

Flora Gomes and Sana Na N'Hada
A Reconstrução (1978)
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Guinea-Bissau

Flora Gomes and Sana Na N'Hada
Anós na oça luta (We Dare to Fight, 1978)
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Guinea-Bissau

D.W. Griffith
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
13,058 ft
United States

Ruy Guerra
Mueda, Memória e Massacre (1979)
80 mins, 35mm, Portuguese
Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Ruy Guerra
Actas de um Processo de Decolonização (1986)
Portuguese
Kanemo, Mozambique

Michael Hanecke
Caché (Hidden, 2005)
118 mins, French
France

Thomas Harlan
Torre Bela (1977)
119 and 240 mins, 16mm, Portuguese
Era Nova, Portugal

Mahamet Saleh Haroun
Bye Bye Africa (1999)
86 mins, Arabic and French
Les Production de la Lanterne, France/Chad

Ana Hatherly

Revolução (1975)

12 mins, 16mm

Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon

Pev Holmqvist

We Would Rather Die Than Go Back to the Old System (1975)

Portuguese

Pev Holmqvist

Quem Semeia Deve Colher (1978)

Portuguese

Pev Holmqvist

In Portugal There is Still a Dream (1978)

Portuguese

Med Hondo

Soleil Ô (1969)

98 mins, 35mm, French

Films Soleil Ô, France

Med Hondo

Les Bicots-Nègres vos voisins (1974)

190 mins, 35mm, French

Films Soleil Ô, France

Med Hondo

Polisario: un peuple en armes (1976)

Med Hondo

Sarrounia (1986)

120 mins, 35mm, French

Films Soleil Ô, France/Burkina Faso

Med Hondo

Lumière Noire (1992)

105 mins, 35mm, French

M.H. Films, France/Mali

Instituto Nacional de Cinema

As Eleições (1977)

35mm, Portuguese

Mozambique

Instituto Nacional de Cinema

Estas São as Armas (1978)

35mm, Portuguese

Mozambique

Instituto Nacional de Cinema

Moçambique em progresso sob a direcção do Presidente Samora Moisés Machel (1981)

Portuguese

North Korea/Mozambique

Instituto Nacional de Cinema

Nova Sinfonia (1981)

Portuguese

ICLAC, Cuba/INC, Mozambique

Dani Kouyaté

Ouaga Saga (2004)

90 mins, 35mm

Burkina Faso

Isaac Julien

Fantôme Afrique (2005)

Three screen projection, 35mm

UK/Burkina Faso

Gaston Kaboré

Wend Kúuni (The Gift of God), 1982)

75 mins, 35mm, Moré

Direction du Cinéma, Burkina Faso

Gaston Kaboré

Zan Boko (1988)

95 mins, 35mm, Moré and French

Gaston Kaboré and Bras de Fer, Burkina Faso

Gaston Kaboré and Rasmané Ouedraogo

Peuple debout (1983)

Burkina Faso

Dani Kouyaté

Sia – Le rêve du python (2001)

96 mins, 35mm, Bambara

Les Productions de la Lanterne, France/Sahélis Production, Burkina Faso

Dani Kouyaté

Ouaga Saga (2004)

90 mins, 35mm, French

Burkina Faso

Robert Kramer

People's War (1969)

Robert Kramer and Phillip Spinelli

Scenes from the Class Struggle (1976)

90 mins, 16mm, English and Portuguese

United States

Maria Lusitano

Nostalgia (2002)

Portugal

Sarah Maldoror

Monangambée (1971)

Congress of National Organisations in the Portuguese Colonies, Algeria

Sarah Maldoror

Sambiganza (1972)

102 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

MPLA, People's Republic of Congo/France

Djim Mamadou

Le Sang des Parias (1972)

Burkina Faso

Djibril Diop Mambety

Touki Bouki (The Journey of the Hyena), 1973)

110 mins, 35mm, French

Cinégit, Senegal

Djibril Diop Mambety

Parlons Grand-Mère (Let's Talk Grandmother, 1989)

34 mins, 16mm, French

Maag Daan, Senegal/Burkina Faso

Djibril Diop Mambety

Hyènes (1991)

113 mins, 35mm, French

Maag Daan, Senegal/Thelma Films, Switzerland/ADR, France

Chris Marker

Sans Soleil (1983)

100 mins, 35mm, versions in English and French, with additional photography by Sana N'Hada,

Danièle Tessier, Jean-Michel Humeau, Mario Marret, Eugenio Bentivoglio, Haroun Tazieff

France

Mario Marret and Eugenio Bentivoglio

Guerilla in Bissau (1966)

José Massip

Madina Boe (1968)

35mm

ICAIC, Cuba/Guinea-Bissau

José Massip

Angola, Victoria de la esperanza (1976)

ICAIC, Cuba/Angola

Franco Meirelles

Cidade de Deus (2002)

130 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

Brazil/Germany/France

Fanta Régina Nacro

La Nuit de la Vérité (2003)

100 mins, 35mm, French

Burkina Faso and France

Kati Lena Ndiaye

Traces, empreintes de femmes (2003)

52 mins

SCAC, Senegal

Newsreel Collective

On the Side of the People (1976)

48 mins, 16mm, Portuguese and English

Newsreel Collective, UK

Oficina Samba

O Parto (The Delivery), 1974)

Portuguese

Brazil and Portugal

António Ole

O Ritmo do N'gola Ritmos (1978)

60 mins, 16mm and 35mm, Portuguese

Televisão Popular de Angola

António Ole

No Caminho das estrelas (1980)

28 mins, 16mm, Portuguese

Televisão Popular de Angola

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Yam Daabo (1987, *The Choice*)

80 mins, 16mm

Films de l'Avenir, Burkina Faso

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Yaaba (Grandmother), 1987)

125 mins, 35mm, Moré

Arcadia Films/Les Films de l'Avenir, Burkina Faso/ Thelma Films, Switzerland

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Obi (19??)

55 mins, Moré

Burkina Faso

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Samba Traoré (1993)

85 mins, 35mm, Moré

Burkina Faso

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Cri du Coeur (1994)

85 mins, 35mm, French

Les Films de la Plaine and Les Films de l'Avenir, Burkina Faso/Le Centre Européen
Cinématographique Rhône-Alpes, France

Idrissa Ouédraogo

Kini et Adams (1997)

93 mins, 35mm

Les Films de la Plaine, Noé Productions and Les Films de l'Avenir, Burkina Faso/France/Polar
Production Ltd and Framework International, Zimbabwe

Euzahan Palcy

Rue Cases Nègres (1983)

106 mins, 35mm, French

France and Martinique

Gillo Pontecorvo

The Battle of Algiers (1966)

135 mins, 35mm, French

Algeria/Italy

Sydney Pollack

The Interpreter (2005)

35mm, English

Universal Pictures, United States

Dragustin Popovitch

Venceremos (1968)

Yugoslavia/Mozambique

Dragustin Popovitch

Nachingwea (1975)

35mm, Portuguese

Yugoslavia/Mozambique

Dragustin Popovitch

Do Romuva ao Maputo (1975)

35mm, Portuguese
Yugoslavia/Mozambique

Tony Richardson
The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner (1962)
104 mins, 35mm, English
United Kingdom

Glauber Rocha
Der Leone have sept cabeças (The Lion Has Seven Heads, 1970)
103 mins, several languages
Italy/France Brazil/Congo

Glauber Rocha
Terra em Transe (Land in Anguish, 1967)
Portuguese
Brazil

Glauber Rocha
Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol (Black God, White Devil, 1964)
110 mins, Portuguese
Brazil

Emmanuel Kalifa Sanon
Désébagato (1987, *The Last Salary*)
Burkina Faso

Alberto Seixas Santos
Brandos Costumes (1974)
Portuguese
Cinemateca Portuguesa, Portugal

Ousmane Sembène
Borom Sarret (1962)
22 mins, 16mm, French
Filmi Domireew, Senegal/Actualités Française, France

Ousmane Sembène
La Noire de... (1966)
65 mins, 35mm, French
Filmi Domireew, Senegal/ Comptoir Français du Film, France

Ousmane Sembène

Xala (1974)

128 mins, 35mm, French and Wolof

Filmi Domireew and Société Nationale de Cinéma, Senegal

Ousmane Sembène

Ceddo (1976)

117 mins, 35mm

Senegal

Ousmane Sembène

Camp de Thiaroye (1988)

90 mins, 35mm, French

SNPC, Senegal/SATPEC, Tunisia/ENAPROC, Algeria

Victorio de Sica

The Bicycle Thieves (1948)

96 mins, 35mm, Italian

Italy

Fernando da Silva

Um Ano de Independencia (1975)

Portuguese

Servico Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Fernando da Silva and Courinha Ramos

O Vendedor (1974)

90 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

Sonar Films, Mozambique

John Sheppard, Michael Dodds and Christian Wrangler

A Small Group of Terrorists Attacked (1968)

English and Portuguese

Granada Television, United Kingdom

Rui Simões

Deus, Pátria, Autoridade (1975)

110 mins, 16mm, Portuguese

IPC, Portugal

Rui Simões

Bom Povo Português (1977–1980)

135 mins, 16mm, Portuguese

Vir-Ver, Portugal

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino

La Hora de los Hornos (1968, *The Hour of the Furnaces*)

Spanish

Argentina

Camillo de Sousa

Ofensiva (1980)

33 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Camillo de Sousa

Operação Leopardo (1981)

20 mins, 35mm, Portuguese

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique

Studio Dokumentalnykh

Portugal: First Days of Freedom (1974)

Russian

USSR

Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica

As Armas e o Povo (1974–1975)

80 mins, 16mm, Portuguese

IPC, Portugal

Apolline Traoré

Sous la clarté de la lune (2004)

90 mins, 35mm, French

Burkina Faso

Sérgio Tréfaut

Outro País: Memórias, sonhos, ilusões (1999)

60 mins, Portuguese, French and English

SP Filmes, Portugal

Robert Van Liecrop

A Luta Continua (1971)

Mozambique

Robert Van Lierop

Povo Organizado (1976)

67 mins, 16mm, Portuguese

Mozambique

Zdravko Velimrovic

Os Tempos dos Leopardos (1985)

35mm, Portuguese

Instituto Nacional de Cinema, Mozambique/Yugoslavia

Dziga Vertov

Man with a Movie Camera (1929)

6,004ft

USSR

Paulin Soumanou Vieyra, Mamadou Sarr and the Groupe Africain du Cinéma

Afrique sur Seine (1955)

21 minutes, 16mm

Ministère de la Coopération, France

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