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# OUR SOPHISTICATED WEAPON: POSTERS OF THE MOZAMBIKAN REVOLUTION



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# OUR SOPHISTICATED WEAPON: POSTERS OF THE MOZAMBIKAN REVOLUTION

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## **VISUAL ARTILLERY: FRELIMO'S IMAGES OF THE REVOLUTION, FOR THE REVOLUTION**

### **- By Polly Savage**

*The sophisticated weapon is guaranteeing all citizens the right to study, culture, health, justice, progress... The sophisticated weapon is the people's right to create their own history, by directing their own destiny... the sophisticated weapon is...the alternative of civilisation that our society now represents.*

*- Samora Machel (first President of the Republic of Mozambique) Our Sophisticated Weapon, Maputo, August 1982*

The lithograph posters assembled in this catalogue and exhibition are part of a body of publications that depicted in visual terms what Samora Machel called Mozambique's 'sophisticated weapon'. These images, which also included photography, film, mural painting, exhibitions, theatre and print media, communicated a powerful message – that the ultimate artillery in the battles of the time was not a missile, but the prospect of an alternative future - a utopian society liberated from inequality, colonial oppression, and capitalist exploitation, and grounded in the ideals of Marxist-Leninism. Machel's use of martial language to describe this vision draws on the standard lexicon of Cold War rhetoric, but is also reflective of the very real hostilities ravaging the newly independent country. In August 1982, as the president made this speech, rebel group RENAMO was merging with another insurgent faction, the PRM, and, with the support of the US and South Africa, intensifying its violent campaign to destabilise the country and overthrow the government. From the launch of its independence struggle with Portugal in 1962, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO, later the political party Frelimo) found it would need to deploy not only weapons, but also the power of the image, in its battle to construct and defend its vision of the new nation.

Working from its base in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from the mid 1960s, FRELIMO trained several soldiers in photography and tasked them with documenting the collectivised societies established in the 'Liberated Zones' secured in northern Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> FRELIMO also invited foreign filmmakers, journalists and writers to visit and document the Liberated Zones, including Yugoslav director Dragutin Popović in 1966 and British director Margaret Dickinson in 1971.<sup>2</sup> The resulting images were intended primarily to mobilise local and international support for the liberation war against Portugal, but they also offered a powerful and carefully curated statement of the Front's vision for a future independent nation, with an emphasis on education, health-care and popular support for the Front. As graphic designer João Craveirinha Jr

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<sup>1</sup> See Drew A. Thompson (2013) Visualising FRELIMO's liberated zones in Mozambique, 1962–1974, *Social Dynamics*, 39:1, 24-50.

<sup>2</sup> Iina Soiri and Pekka Peltola, *Finland and National Liberation in Southern Africa* (Nordic Africa Institute, 1999), 24–40. The authors record that Kit Ahlfors, a Finnish publisher, travelled to Dar es Salaam to install the machine, before travelling to the Liberated Zones to see how Finnish support was being used.

describes on *page 18*, FRELIMO's capacity to illustrate this vision was boosted in the early 1970s by donations that included Soviet cameras, Japanese film, an Agfa dark room, and a Gestetner printing press sent by a Finnish solidarity group in 1970. This equipment allowed the Front's Department of Information and Propaganda (DIP) to supplement their hand-typed bulletins and radio broadcasts with visual material that included a colour version of the official organ *A Voz da Revolução* and its English language counterpart, *Mozambique Revolution*, as well as school textbooks, poetry anthologies and graphic posters such as *figure 1*. These early posters combined text with photography or hand-drawn cartoons to communicate messages about the liberation struggle, from the fêting of war heroes to graphic descriptions of colonial violence and excess that countered Portuguese propaganda campaigns.

The advent of independence in 1975 inaugurated a new range of platforms from which Frelimo could construct and transmit its vision. The transformation of the capital for Independence Day, on 25 June 1975, is described on *page 20* by Otília Aquino. Posters, banners, insignia, street decorations, parades, speeches and the triumphant unfurling of the new flag all registered a dramatic resignification of civic urban space, captured and memorialised on film as an enduring visible record of the watershed moment of revolution. Anticipating the ongoing potential for images to communicate and consolidate this sense of the new nation, some of Machel's first actions in the years following independence were oriented to the production of visual culture, including the establishment of the National Institute of Cinema (INC) and the National Directorate for Propaganda and Publicity (DNPP) in 1976, and the Centre for Cultural Studies (CEC) in 1977.

Headed by painter and designer José Freire (see pp 19 and 23), the DNPP took over the role of the DIP and brought together a team of graphic artists including João Craveirinha Jr (see p 17), Manuel Ruas (see p 14), João de Azevedo, Sérgio Tique, Luís Galvão and Agostinho Milhafre Elias to issue Frelimo's publicity. Their tasks included the creation of public murals (such as the 105m long narrative of the Mozambican anti-colonial struggle at Praça dos Heróis, Maputo), the layout and design of print journals (including official publication *Tempo*), and the production of the lithograph posters featured here.

Posters had been identified as a priority media during the DIP conference in Macomia in November 1975, (Figure 1), which considered 'the situation of propaganda and its forms of expression with the basis of design, cartoons, posters and photographs', in light of experiences described by delegates from across the country. The session concluded that 'given the very high rate of illiteracy existing in our people', posters offered a valuable tool to transmit to the masses the 'orientations of the structures of the party and government'. As far as possible, it warned, this material should come from the people, who should be encouraged 'to unleash their creative initiative [in] drawings, caricatures and posters which reflect their Mozambican personality'.<sup>3</sup>



Fig1: José Freire (1930-1998) Frelimo, Macomia 26 a 30 Nov 1975, Reunião Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda Frelimo, Macomia 26th to 30th Nov 1975, National Meeting of the Department of Information and Propaganda 1975 Two-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

On the eve of independence, in 1974, Mozambique's level of illiteracy had stood at 97%. Although Frelimo's education drive saw this drop to 72% by 1982,<sup>4</sup> the graphic imagery of the posters remained a critical tool through these years to communicate Frelimo's messages to a population that had been systematically excluded from the colonial education system. Distributed throughout the country, the posters were displayed on street walls, civic buildings, schools and public notice boards (*jornais do povo*). Conceived as a vital arm of Frelimo's education policy, these posters were central to Frelimo's imperative to affirm *O Povo*, The People, new citizens with the affiliations and tools necessary to build a socialist society from the ground up. The qualities of this new citizen included an emphasis on nation, internationalism, cultural and social responsibility, and gender equality, themes which are explored through the four sections of this catalogue and exhibition. In their visual mediation of these values, the posters offer unique insight into the terms on which the party imagined itself and The People, during the early years of independence.

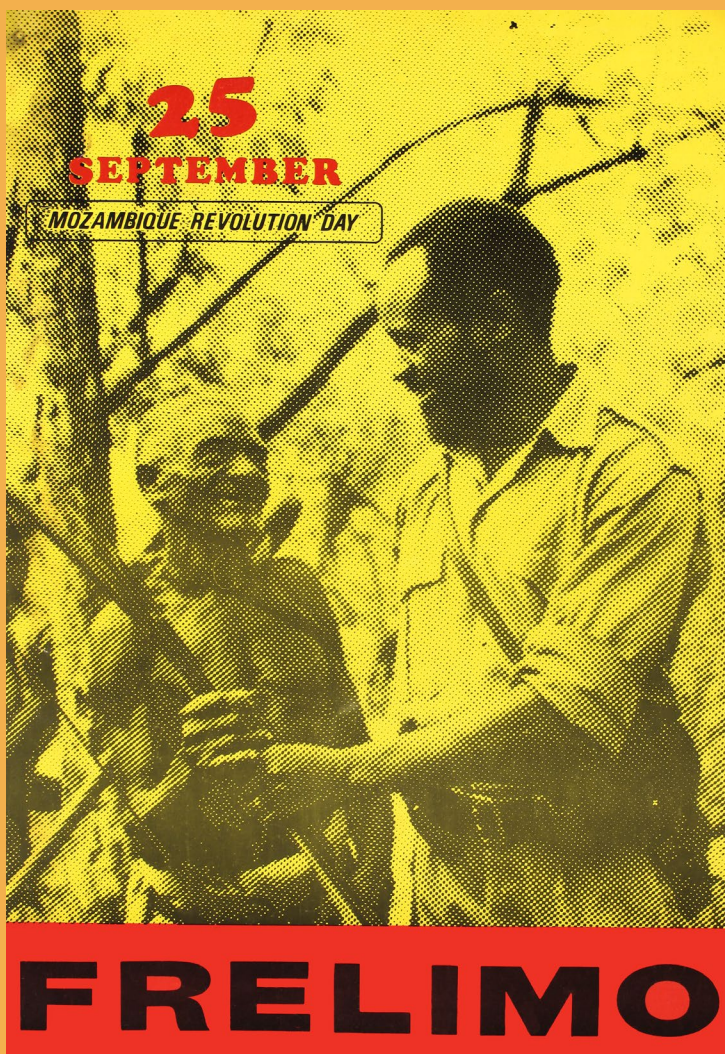
## Independence

Central to the tasks of the DNPP was to publicise an intensive calendar of political anni-

<sup>3</sup> FRELIMO, *Documentos da Conferencia Nacional do Departamento de Informacao e Propaganda* (Department of Information and Propaganda, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Mouzinho Mario & Debora Nandja (2005) *Literacy in Mozambique: Education for All Challenges* UNESCO, Paris p3

versaries for key events in the liberation struggle. Recalibrating the nation's relationship to the past, these poster campaigns emphasised Frelimo's achievements and promoted national unity through the visual motifs of the crowd, the soldier, and the figure of the hero-leader. A focal point of the year was Independence Day on 25 June, an event which reiterated the resignification of the nation's public space that had begun with the ceremonies in 1975 and an iconic poster design by José Freire (fig 2). Against a silhouetted crowd raising weapons to the air, the poster depicts a rising sun heralding a bright new future of agricultural production, healthcare and progress. A year later, the first anniversary of independence was marked with another design featuring a crowd with raised arms, now in the foreground, and wielding hoes rather than guns – a reflection of Frelimo's drive to increase food production. These repeated images of the body politic sought not only to reproduce an image of the new nation and its people but to actively constitute and reify it in the public consciousness.



Uncredited25 September/Mozambique Revolution Day/Frelimo 1972 Three-colour offset lithograph, Frelimo, Dar es Salaam

Posters also commemorated the launch of the armed struggle on 25 September (Revolution Day, then Day of the Army, the FPLM) with images of soldiers standing for Frelimo's revolutionary vanguard, and Mozambican Heroes' Day on 3 February, the day in 1969 that Frelimo's first leader, Eduardo Mondlane, was assassinated by a parcel



bomb in Dar es Salaam. Mondlane's image recurs throughout the posters, often reproduced as a photographic outline against solid fields of colour, a visual device that echoed the posters produced for Cuba's Tricontinental movement in the late 1960s and 70s. An early design (fig X) places Mondlane's portrait in a lens of yellow, set against a monochrome band of undifferentiated masses. The crowd is bordered at the top by the strapline 'Rovuma' (the river at the northern border of the country), and at the bottom by 'Maputo' (the river by the capital to the south). 'Do Rovuma ao Maputo' (from the Rovuma to Maputo) was a key rhetorical phrase for Frelimo, an allusion to Machel's triumphant overland journey from Tanzania to declare independence in the capital, but also to the urgent imperative to unify and consolidate the nation's diverse population.

## **°Solidarity**

As much as national consciousness was a strategic priority, values of internationalism were also emphasised through the DNPP posters, as Frelimo sought to position Mozambique within a broad global network of socialist friendship. Thanks in part to the concerted efforts of the DIP, Frelimo had successfully negotiated support for its struggle from across the socialist world, as well as from grassroots solidarity organisations in the West. These connections facilitated dynamic international exchanges, not only of print media, weapons and capital, but also of personnel. These flows intensified after independence, as thousands of Mozambican students took up bursaries to study across the socialist world, and large numbers of solidarity workers or cooperantes arrived in Mozambique to help construct the new nation, a process described by former cooperante Richard Gray in the following essay. Several DNPP posters commemorated this international friendship, depicting state visits from allies such as Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, shown in fig X in a warm embrace with Samora Machel during the first state visit to the new Republic, and marking International Workers' Day on 1 May, as a statement of global solidarity and socialist internationalism. In an echo of Cuba's OSPAAAL solidarity campaigns, Machel was also vocal in his support for other liberation movements, offering asylum to refugees from Pinochet's regime (many of whom would collaborate on mural painting across Maputo), and issuing a range of posters in support of anti-imperial campaigns in Nicaragua, El Salvador and East Timor. The AK47 recurs as a visual trope throughout these posters, an icon of militant anti-imperialism and a metonym for guerrilla struggles around the world

## **Building a New Society**

In addition to fostering national and international consciousness, many of the DNPP

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<sup>5</sup> Bulletins 9 and 10 (Congress Special Issue), Mozambique Information Agency, 1977 p19.

posters sought to actively direct the shape of the new post-colonial society. At the Third Party Congress in February 1977, Frelimo formally announced its transition to a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, and its strategy for transition to a centralised planned economy and village settlements. Agricultural productivity was a key priority, and a series of posters issued around this time exhort the population to engage in collective farming.

The Congress also declared a position on culture, seeking to: ‘promote the appreciation of all cultural manifestations of the Mozambican people, giving them a revolutionary content and spreading them in the national and international field, to project the Mozambican personality.’<sup>5</sup> This was to be implemented through the guidance of cultural production including literature, visual arts, music, theatre, painting and dance, and a programme of competitions, exhibitions and seminars. In April 1977, the ‘Cultural Offensive of the Working and Peasant Classes’ was launched to implement these mandates, and included the formation of cultural groups within schools, factories and offices to encourage ‘revolutionary culture’. A series of posters launched the campaign, with editions for dance (p4, 'visual art (Figure 3), craft and other art forms.



Uncredited Let the creativity of each individual become the creativity of all so that from all a new culture is born, Dance, Cultural Offensive of the Working Classes 1978 Two- colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo'

Culture was considered a central driver for the revolution, and even before independence, the role of artists and cultural workers in the new nation was the subject of

<sup>6</sup> Samora Machel, *Mozambique: Sowing the Seeds of Revolution* London: Committee for Freedom, 1974, p41

<sup>7</sup> Samora Machel, ‘Educate Man to Win the War, Create a New Society and Develop Our Country’ Speech at the Second Conference of the Department of Education and Culture, September 1970,” 40.

intense debates during a series of cultural seminars. Policy-makers were cognisant that a deft rhetorical manoeuvre was needed to synthesise Mozambique's disparate traditions and histories into a consolidated image of national heritage, on Marxist-Leninist terms. This task was further complicated by the arbitrary nature of the territory, the boundaries of which had only been defined in 1891, by the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, and which bisected communities such as the Makonde, split between Tanzania and northern Mozambique. Machel's solution was to propose a culture which nominally assimilated elements of the past, but radically transformed them into a new, unified, national identity. 'Mozambique's cultural wealth does not belong to any one region', he argued, in a statement reproduced on the Cultural Offensive posters:

*Let art seek to combine old form with new content, then giving rise to new form. Let painting, written literature, theatre and artistic handicrafts be added to the traditionally cultivated dance, sculpture and singing. Let the creativity of some become that of all, men and women, young and old, from the North to the South, so that the new revolutionary and Mozambican culture may be born of all.*<sup>6</sup>

## **Women and Revolution**

Shared across the various aims of the DNPP poster campaigns was Frelimo's project to produce The People. This project was to be achieved through a radical re-invention of the citizen, at a psychic level, in the figure of the *homem novo*, or new man, and by extension, the new woman, through what Machel termed in 1970 'the creation of a new mentality.'<sup>7</sup>

In 1966, the FRELIMO Central Committee agreed on the need for women to take an active role in the liberation struggle, and by 1967, the first detachment of women were receiving political and military training at the front's rear base in Nachingwea, southern Tanzania, a group that included Samora Machel's first wife, Josina Machel. These women became the founding members of the *Destacamento Feminino* (DF, Female Detachment), a group that would go on to play a decisive role in the conflict, and achieve legendary status among leftist and feminist militant movements around the world.

In 1973, FRELIMO founded a second organisation for women, the *Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* (OMM, Organisation for Mozambican Women). A non-military structure, the OMM sought to support women's education and welfare as part of a broader emancipation of society from the dual bonds of colonialism and patriarchal tradition. The final section of the catalogue includes a series celebrating the OMM and Mozambican women's day on 7th April, the date of Josina Machel's death from cancer in 1971. The designs depict a range of roles for women in the new society, from mother to farmer, teacher, industrial worker and soldier. The images seek not only to depict, inform and educate, but to actively produce a new form of consciousness – a radical new citizenry committed to building a revolutionary new society, in the wake of colonial rule.

## **“MOZAMBIQUE WAS A BEACON...”: A PERSONAL REFLECTION**

**- By Richard Gray**

*Richard Gray worked in Mozambique from 1977-1981. Afterwards he was Publishing Worker at The Bookplace, Peckham’s Community Bookshop (1981-1990), and a London primary school teacher (1990-2010). He is currently completing a PhD thesis at SOAS, University of London, about the artist Malangatana Valente Ngwenya (1936-2011, born Mozambique).*

The eight posters lent by me and my partner Julia for this exhibition are from a collection of twelve published in 1979 by the Direcção Nacional da Propaganda e Publicidade (National Directorate of Propaganda and Publicity, DNPP). The title was Moçambique Cartazes 1978-1979: 1979 Ano da Consolidação das Nossas Conquistas (Mozambique Posters 1978-1979: 1979 Year of the Consolidation of Our Conquests). In December of that year we bought two copies at the INLD bookshop on one of Maputo’s main thoroughfares, the Avenida 24 de Julho.

Julia and I were among the many cooperantes internacionalistas (internationalist co-workers) in Mozambique at the time. Frelimo<sup>1</sup> had contracted us via MAGIC (the Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau Information Centre), based in London. MAGIC was the UK’s solidarity organisation with those states and we had supported its activities since the coming of Mozambique’s independence in 1974-1975. We arrived there in late 1977 and were posted to the northern province of Nampula. Julia was the dentist at the Central Hospital in the provincial capital (also called Nampula) and I taught English and History in its two secondary schools.

We and another British couple were four out of approximately one hundred civilian cooperantes in the city. The rest were mainly from the Soviet Union, Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, supplemented by small groups and individuals from a range of African and Western European states. Our role was to plug the severe gaps in the workforce created by the exodus of Portuguese settlers at independence. Other foreigners (mainly from the USSR, Cuba and the GDR) were military advisers at the local army base.

Shopping in the national capital was a pleasure after two years in the north, where consumer goods were scarce. Julia and I were passing through, heading for leave in the

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<sup>1</sup> Livraria do Instituto Nacional de Livro e Disco (National Institute of Book and Disc, INLD)

<sup>2</sup> Chris and Pearl Searle. See Chris Searle’s *We Are Building the New School: diary of a teacher in Mozambique* (Zed Press, 1981)

<sup>3</sup> It has been estimated that only 40 university graduates remained in Mozambique. Most of those who fled were brancos (whites). By the end of 1976 more than 90% of brancos (120,000 in the 1970 census) had gone (Hall and Young 1997:45,50).

UK. We thought of giving our posters to family and friends as Christmas presents, but changed our minds because we did not wish them to think we were trying to make converts to Frelimo-style socialism. Also, we were reluctant to part with the posters because they represented our reason for being in Mozambique (see below).

The images on the posters were familiar from our everyday lives in Nampula. I knew them from the noticeboards known as *jornais do povo* (people's newspapers) in the schools where I taught. In the Escola Secundária de Nampula, for example, the *jornal do povo* was in an open corridor painted with slogans and political images, such as students putting into practice the words *Estudar, Produzir, Combater* (Study, Produce, Fight). Other locations for a *jornal do povo* were offices and shops, especially the consumer cooperative of the Bairro dos Poetas (our neighbourhood), where the posters on it demonstrated patriotism and revolutionary zeal. When I visited rural areas with students to carry out research reclaiming the history of Mozambique from its colonial version, we encountered *jornais do povo* and DNPP posters when we reported to local administrações distritais (district administrative offices). We also came across them in the communal villages where we interviewed elders who remembered the resistance of local rulers to occupation by Portuguese colonial forces in the early twentieth century.



Above, The entrance of the Escola Secundária de Nampula, 1979. Middle, The *Jornal do Povo* of the Escola Secundária de Nampula, 1979 (below).

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<sup>4</sup> In the Campanha Nacional de Preservação e Revalorização da História e Cultura Popular (National Campaign to Preserve and Restore Value to People's History and Culture, 1978-1983)

<sup>5</sup> Documentos Base da Frelimo 1 (Frelimo 1977:114)

<sup>6</sup> Documentos da Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda (Frelimo 1975)

<sup>7</sup> Cherinda 1983, INLD

<sup>8</sup> [alutacontinua.art](http://alutacontinua.art)



Below left, Student researchers at the grave of Mukuttu-Munu, leader of resistance to late 19th century colonial occupation in Nampula's Mossuril District. A possible connection with the popular creativity which Frelimo sought to “unleash” is the display of red and white cloths to honour the king’s memory according to the longstanding cultural practices of Nampula’s Makua-speaking community. Below right, I teach a History module on African Liberation Movements (NB student mural on left).



tive initiative, motivating them to the elaboration of drawings, caricatures and posters in which are reflected the Mozambican personality". In post-independence Nampula, young people took the lead in this. For instance, students on a course run by Julia for dental auxiliaries designed oral health posters. A popular example featured a smiling President Machel above an extract from a 1978 speech in which he denounced students who came to class with dirty teeth. Another student poster hung outside Julia's surgery.

Her nurse Vitorino, used it for dental hygiene talks to the queue of patients, who had come, often on foot, from throughout the province and sometimes beyond. An example from my area of work in schools was a graphic cartoon by Marcos Cherinda, a Year 9 student who based his Nas Terras do Rei Khupula (In the Territory of King Khupula) on our historical fieldwork. Drawn in the same year as the Ano das Conquistas poster collection, the INLD published Cherinda's booklet nationally in 1983. DNPP posters also inspired students to make ambitious backdrops for the actividades culturais (cultural activities) which marked important dates in the revolutionary calendar, such as Mozambican Heroes Day (February 3rd), Independence Day (June 25th) and the Day of the Foundation of the Party/Beginning of the Armed Struggle (September 25th). On these occasions, as many as thirty school classes contributed, one by one, to an all-day festival of songs, dances, poetry and drama. A recording of extracts from September 25th 1978 in Nampula's Escola Três de Fevereiro is on the Soundcloud, with notes on the website.



*Vitorino's daily dental hygiene talk, Nampula Central Hospital.*

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<sup>12</sup> See interview with Aquino in this catalogue (15/11/2021). She made the remark quoted here in a preliminary conversation (09/03/2021).



*Marcos Cherinda shows his graphic work O Velhote (The Old Man, 1978).*



*Left, Julia gives a dental hygiene talk to primary school children using a student poster. Right, Atividades Culturais at Nampula Secondary School, September 25th, 1979. Julia dances with my class. NB Backdrop with DNPP style combatant waving Mozambican flag.*

The public reception of the DNPP's posters and knock-on effects like those mentioned above demonstrated popular engagement with Frelimo and its socialist project in the immediate post-independence years. Historians have explored how this goodwill dissipated. Some have called it "the euphoria of independence" I suggest that it lessened in the 1980s, especially after Samora Machel's death (1986). Currently, however, the Machel era has recaptured public attention, as the Mozambican musician/producer TRKZ suggests in his contribution to the exhibition's soundtrack. Though born more than a generation after Frelimo's socialist years, TRKZ presents versions of five hinos revolucionários (revolutionary songs).



There is room for debate about why cooperantes internacionalistas went to Mozambique at this time (1975-1986, approx). Shades of opinion range from suggesting that we were pursuing a chimaera, to the idea that Mozambique was a beacon for progressive regimes, solidarity movements and individuals around the world. My view (in this personal reflection) tends to that end of the spectrum. I agree with Otilia Aquino that Mozambicans can look back and say “in those days we were somebody” . Like many Western cooperantes, I wanted to help create an alternative to the post-1945 societies in which we grew up, with their capitalism, racism and misogyny. Some Western cooperantes settled in Mozambique.

# MANUEL RUAS



*Thanks to his skill in graphic design, Manuel Ruas (b. 1953, Lourenço Marques) had a reputation in the DNPP team as “the finisher”. He left Mozambique in 1980 and settled in Andorra. This came about after Frelimo sent him to Nottingham, UK, to paint his design for the logo of Linhas Aéreas de Moçambique on the tailplane of its first Boeing, which was chartered from Dan Air. In September 2021, he talked to Richard Gray about his poster designs for the DNPP.*

### **What is going on in these images?**

They reflected ideas meant for their principal audience, the Povo (People), seeing that those were revolutionary times. Mozambique was then a People's Republic based on communism, so the images had an epic sense of direction linked with the alliance between workers and peasants.

### **How and by whom were the posters commissioned?**

Above all by the Ministry of Information, since everything was very centralised. The DNPP was an organ of the ministry, to which it was accountable. We had to have the minister's approval, or in his absence that of his secretary, for all projects.

### **Who were the artists?**

Mostly the DNPP's internal team. We had a specialist in graphic design (me), two artists (the director, José Freire, and João Craveirinha), an illustrator (Milhafre), two specialists in layout and drawing (I don't remember their names now) and finally a Portuguese cooperante (co-worker) from the PCP (Communist Party of Portugal), who, I think, never adapted to his rôle.

### **What were your visual sources?**

Mainly the photographic archives of Tempo Magazine (the works of Ricardo Rangel and Kok Nam). We also had recourse to Frelimo's own archive, through Maquinasse, who was the official party photographer and accompanied the president on visits.

### **What were the DNPP's decision-making processes about content and graphic design?**

The idea to be moulded came as much from the ministry as from our director, since the link with the "client" was Director Freire or, in his absence, myself. All the organisms dependent on the Ministry of Information had a weekly meeting with the minister, to discuss the work to be carried out by each. Any idea for possible production had to follow the line set out in that meeting about whether it was propaganda or publicity, according to the distinction between brand and product. Within that we all had more free choice.

### **What were the relationships between the members of the team? Was your production individual or collective?**

I think we all got on well, up to a point, and were aware of our roles according to our areas of expertise. As the member responsible for production, I gave everyone plenty of space to express themselves. Two of us, Martinho and I, came from a publicity agency, Produções Golo (Goal Productions). We were, so to speak, the technicians most capable of sending work to press in the proper state, so we had to insist that it met the standards required. You must appreciate that the job was manual, nothing like digital design today. We had to be thorough, minute, using letreset, set squares, rotring etc. Resetting, correcting errors and removing blots, was difficult.

**The visual ideas and practices of the posters have an affinity with Cuban revolutionary posters. Did the artists at the DNPP draw on the work of their Cuban counterparts?**

MR. In relation to influences, I think the artists of the nations considered people's states all drank at the same source at that time, the USSR. If we analyse, Cuba and the German Democratic Republic were alike in this. Of the newly-independent Lusophone territories in Africa, Angola had more contact with Cuba than Mozambique. Mozambique turned more towards the USSR, the German Democratic Republic and, I would add, North Korea. To digress about the last-named, I recall a direct collaboration with a delegation of North Koreans in Mozambique. They were asked to design a commemorative postage stamp. We almost had a diplomatic incident, because, despite producing a fantastic portrait of Samora Machel, impressive for its detail, they painted with, as it were, one-coat brushes. The problem was that the president's eyes looked oriental, almond-shaped and slanted. We had a disagreement about this false image. We could not make the Koreans see it was impossible. If that stamp had been issued to the public, I imagine we would all have had to go to re-education!

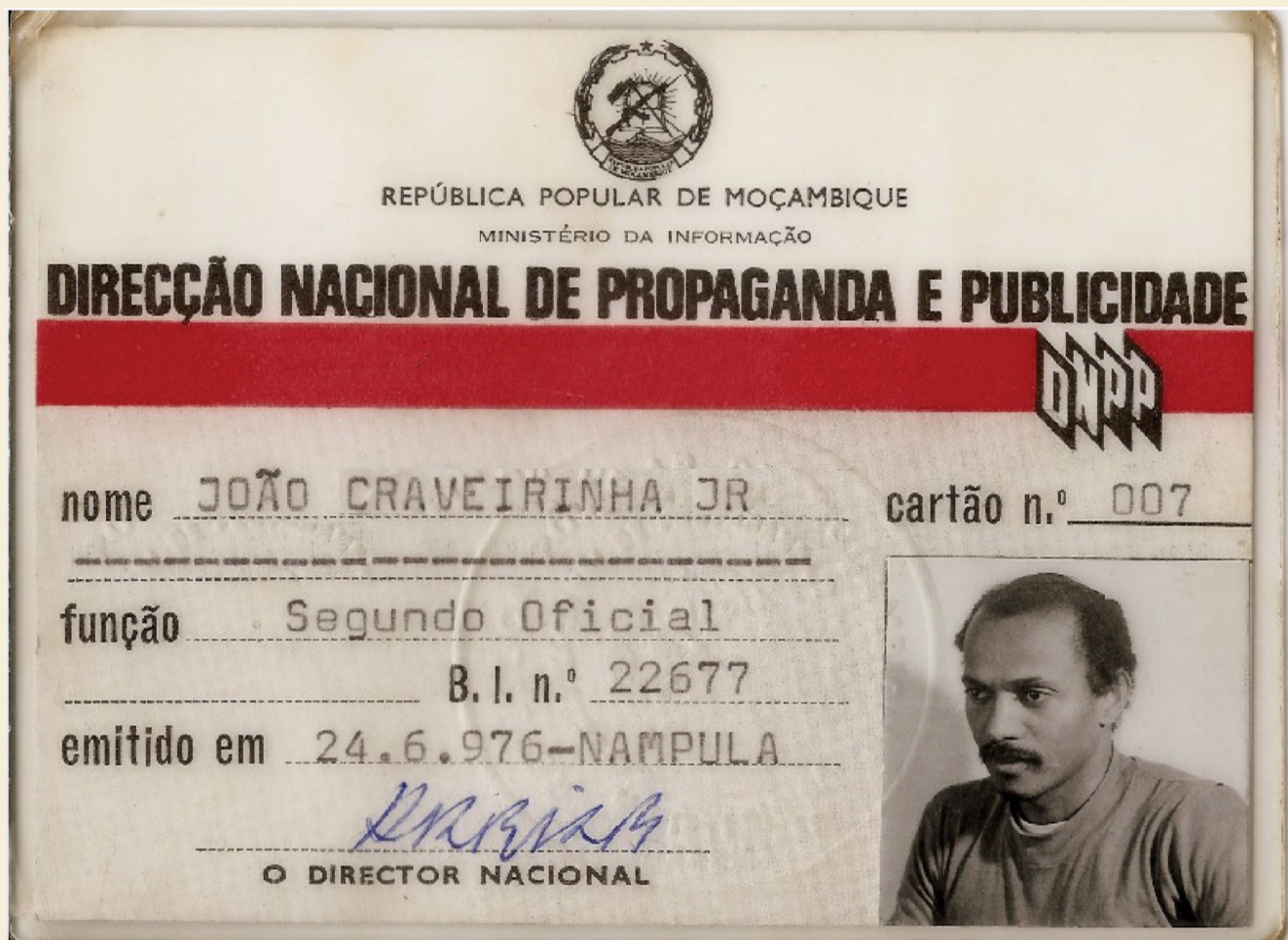
**What about the distribution of the DNPP posters, print-runs and target audience for example?**

We need to take into account that the majority of the images were created to publicise dates and concrete events, so their distribution was to the main centres of population - cities, provincial towns and communal villages. The target-audience, clearly, was the Povo, the masses, the majority of whom were illiterate at the time, because the Portuguese colonialists were never interested in teaching them to read and write. This leads me to stress that the posters had to be quite simple, with a slogan from the president and an image which would put the message across.

**So where were the posters exhibited?**

Posters were the principal way to get a message or public announcement across to the people. They were placed where gatherings took place, for example on public noticeboards (known as jornais do povo, meaning people's newspapers, or jornais de parede, wall newspapers), schools, road junctions, squares, etc. In the press a photo of a poster might accompany an article about an event. It is important to bear in mind that most messages had to be transmitted orally, for example by presidential speeches, because literacy levels were low. People listened on the radio. Images on posters helped to bring them alive. The messages were not only political but about the quality of life, for example improvements in health.

# JOÃO CRAVEIRINHA JR



João Craveirinha Jr (b. 1947, Ilha de Moçambique) worked as Frelimo's graphic designer during the Armed Struggle, issuing posters, pamphlets and journals from the Front's base in Tanzania from 1967 to 1972. After independence, he worked as a designer for the DNPP in Maputo, from 1976 until his departure for Europe in 1983.

In 1967 I left a middle-class home in Lourenço Marques to join Frelimo in Tanzania. I went first to Swaziland and South Africa, then in Botswana I was arrested. I crossed Rhodesia and Zambia, and got all the way to Congo Kinshasa where I was arrested again and put in prison in Zambia. They wanted to send me back to PIDE but Frelimo intervened so I was able to be sent to Tanzania. I went to Nachingwea camp in the south of the country where everybody had to have guerrilla training with the Chinese for three or four months.

At that time Eduardo Mondlane was president, and he told me he wanted to send me to Fine Art school in New York, to Syracuse where he was professor of Anthropology, but

Chissano refused, he said 'this is an intellectual from an intellectual family - if you send him to the US he'll never come back!' Instead I worked as a designer of military maps, until 1969.

Soon after that Eduardo Mondlane was killed by internal agents of the Portuguese police in Dar. When the Portuguese started a new strategy with Cahora Bassa dam, Jorge Rebelo requested that I go to Dar es Salaam and become a graphic designer in the printing house. Some Finnish secondary school students had made a donation to build the printing house for Frelimo.

They sent the last Gestetner printing machine from Heidelberg in 1970. It was single colour, we had to offset it colour by colour. They even sent a Finnish engineer to mount it, Keith his name was. I did graphic layout, graphic design, cartoons, everything concerning propaganda. I designed the cover of Poesia de Combate - a peasant beating a drum, and did the cover, layout and paste up for the first textbook of Mozambican history. Many cartoons which were signed Frelimo were mine. At that time there was no computer - we had to paste up with a dark room and film archive. Jorge Rebelo used to make drawings in old fashioned stencil.

# OTÍLIA AQUINO



Otília Aquino (b 1957, Lourenço Marques) was personal assistant to José Freire. The 1979 collection of DNPP posters featured in this exhibition appeared midway between the Accords of Lusaka (1974), when she met him, and the Nkomati Agreement (1984), when she stopped working for the Ministry of Information, of which the DNPP was a department. To Aquino, the 1979 collection was a highpoint. She spoke of that time with pride, because, in her view, socialist Mozambique was regarded as a beacon by progressive regimes, solidarity movements and individuals around the world.

### **What was your part in producing the posters?**

I was José Freire's personal assistant. I was very close to him. I accompanied the making of all the posters, so I knew the other artists, too, João Craveirinha, Manuel Ruas and Alexandre Milhafre. Craveirinha is possibly the best-known, but Ruas arguably the most consistent. Milhafre was an artist and pamphleteer from the Armed Struggle who is now dead. There were also two photographers. One of them, Martinho Fernando, is still alive. The other, Maquinasse, died with the president. Freire himself was an architect and designer. He was director of the DNPP, personally responsible for many of the posters and other things too. For example, he took part in making the Praça dos Heróis (Heroes Square). In 1975-1974 he designed Mozambique's symbols such as the first national flag, the state insignia, uniforms and postage stamps and the decorations in Maputo's public spaces for Independence Day.

### **How were the DNPP posters commissioned?**

Freire and Samora had a strong rapport. Freire was close to Jorge Rebelo (Minister of Information), too. This trio decided the themes of the posters and timing of their release. Freire's input was creative and executive. The artistic resources were mainly images from the artists' various experiences of art, especially in the socialist world, during the Luta Armada (Armed Struggle).

### **Did the Cuban artists at the Escola de Artes Visuais (School of Visual Arts) have anything to do with the DNPP posters?**

No, there were a few foreign technicians at the DNPP, including Cubans, but the Cubans at the Escola de Artes Visuais were teaching fine art. All the DNPP posters were by Freire and his team. Some of the collection in your folder published in 1979 were not by them. They were included because they were by associated artists. The poster titled 1 de junho dia internacional da criança (1st June, International Day of the Child) was one of those.

### **Were the posters printed in different sizes for different purposes?**

They were in large and small sizes. The large ones were displayed in streets and squares and many kinds of workplace, for example factories, shops, schools, hospitals, party and government premises. In rural areas they appeared in administrações (local government offices), at cooperative farms and communal villages. A site used everywhere was the jornal de povo (people's newspaper). The small-size posters were for

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1 The Lusaka Accords (signed 7th September, 1974) ended Frelimo's Armed Struggle against Portuguese colonialism and heralded the uneasy Transition Period until Independence Day (June 25th, 1975).

2 The Nkomati Agreement (signed 16th March, 1984) purported to end mutual destabilisation between Mozambique and South Africa. Mozambique stopped providing rear bases for the armed struggle of the ANC (African National Congress), but the apartheid régime continued its logistical and diplomatic support for Renamo (the opposition movement to Frelimo).



domestic display, gifts and souvenirs.

### **What did the posters mean to you and those who saw them at the time?**

In those years we Mozambicans had a social project. We had a sense of being important people for our country. Samora and independence gave Mozambicans a sense of belonging, the feeling that each of us could make a difference. In those days we were somebody.

### **Which posters still mean a lot to you?**

That's a hard question. If you push me, I choose two, Dia dos Heróis Moçambicanos, 3 Fevereiro 1979 (figure 26: Day of Mozambican Heroes, 3rd February, 1979) and the previous year's poster marking the same date (figure 25). The 1979 poster reproduced João Craveirinha's design from a section of the mural at the Praça dos Heróis (Heroes Square). The barbed wire in the foreground and prisoners behind bars show that independence was a conquest. Conquista was an often-used word back then. It was about not only military conquests, but Frelimo's successes in the social, economic and cultural spheres. The DNPP posters didn't just sell things to consumers, like posters do in Mozambique today. They celebrated these achievements and spread the line. As for the 1978 poster, the photograph shows that Craveirinha's images came from actual people. For me, it is crucial to remember that historic achievements are brought about by living, breathing human beings.

### **Tell us more about José Freire and your relationship with him.**

He was like a father to me. Besides being my chefe (chief, boss), José Freire taught me almost everything I know. I was very young, only seventeen, when I started with him. He took me under his wing and was very important in my development. He was one of those called naturais, born in Maputo of Portuguese heritage. He went abroad to study, but came back. He was a painter, sculptor and designer. He designed for companies and banks, creating concepts for their house-styles. Before independence, he won a big prize in Salisbury, Rhodesia. He was also a bon viveur. He liked his wines and whiskies and knew every bar in town. He was a person of excellent taste and well versed in artistic matters. I don't know exactly how, but after the Lusaka Accords he was invited to take part in designing the pageantry of the independence celebrations, such as the banners, emblems, pendants, colours for the street decorations, styling of the avenues and so on. I was in a group of twelve young assistants, very young. We helped him decorate the city. That's how I got to know him. After the big day I carried on working for Freire for four or

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3 In the suspicious plane crash of 1986, which killed Samora Machel. The presidential plane flew into a mountain at Mbuzine, near the border between South Africa and Mozambique, after allegedly following a false beacon on a flight from Zambia.

4 1975-1983. Freire developed a prototype by Luís Chaves (see interview with Zé Tomas, Freire's son).

5. Harare, Zimbabwe, from independence (1980).

five months in the Comissão Nacional da Preparação dos Festejos da Independência Nacional (Commission for the Preparation of the Festivities of National Independence). We were under Jorge Rebelo, (Minister of Information), but the person who taught us how to do our job was José Freire. I was the only woman among many men. Freire protected me.

### **And then?**

Everything I took on from 1975 until 1984 was connected with Freire in one way or another. As I became more mature he put work my way, including major assignments. Some were very demanding, but he had a capacity for keeping calm. He also had a wicked sense of humour. His unflappability kept us going. He sat for hours beside the printing-press, drawing. Freire never stopped being creative. In the graphics office at the DNPP, he discussed everything with Craveirinha, Ruas, the other artists and me. The creatives, the artists and the admin section were all together in there. We would hear the debates and decisions of our chefes (leaders), but the artistic area was undoubtedly where the difference was made and what became visible to others was produced. Freire gave us good guidelines. He was a very hands-on director, very attentive about what needed doing.

### **What else did you do?**

After a while Freire realised that I was good at producing events, so I did assignments for the minister, Jorge Rebelo. I organised international conferences, celebrations, visits by heads of state and so on, up to the Nkomati Accord of '84. Nkomati was the end for me. I was completely burnt-out Those ten years (1984-1974) were super-intense. They completely changed my life. I worked day and night as well as looking after my children. So Rebelo agreed that I should have a change. I was transferred to work for Luís Bernardo Honwana (Secretary of State for Culture), but I still did assignments for the DNPP, for example decorating airports, conference halls and public places like theatres and banks for VIP visits. I put into practice what I learned from Freire. Everything was done by teamwork. We had a very close link with the president, which made the work much easier, almost automatic. It was not necessary to keep checking and re-checking that things were done properly.

The poster, the symbol, the emblem, the uniform, we took care of them all. Freire was the ultimate technician, but not vocal about politics. He was a doer rather than a person who went in for speechmaking. He belonged to the party, but was uninterested in that kind of thing. Another of his achievements, like I said, was his contribution to the Praça dos Heróis (Heroes Square). As at the DNPP, he collaborated with other artists. None of

# JOSÉ (ZÉ) TOMAS

The son of José Friere, Zé Tomas witnessed his father's trajectory from prizewinning designer in colonial times to director of the DNPP under Frelimo and subsequent return to freelance work when the ruling party abandoned socialism in the late 1980s. Zé was a secondary schoolboy at independence (1975). After leaving school, he trained to be a marine pilot. He worked for many years guiding ships in and out of Maputo's docks and still lives in the national capital. He spoke about his father's work at the DNPP to Richard Gray in September 2021.

## **What can you tell us about your father?**

My father was a painter and designer. He was very good at drawing and designing, not only posters but furniture and buildings. He was not an architect, more of a designer of built environments. For example, in colonial times he won a prize for the design of the Mozambique Pavilion at the Rhodes Centenary Fair of 1953 in what is now Zimbabwe. Of course, it showed the colony as an overseas province of Portugal. He spent the prize money on a year or so's trip to Europe, during which he bought a Jaguar car at the factory and had it shipped to Lourenço Marques. He never said much about his work, but he was busy and successful. He had little training, in fact you could say he was self-made. As a result, we lived in a nice house.

## **What were his politics?**

ZT. He was always anti-fascist, anti-Salazarist. He supported Frelimo's project to turn Mozambique into a socialist country, in solidarity with the people. When Frelimo came to power he stopped doing oil-paintings. I was twelve at the time and had a temper tantrum about it. He told me to shut up, so I converted his studio into my music-room. He had two studios, one for oil-painting, the other for design work. He was setting out to make posters, but didn't know anything about Social Communication. He began to study the subject. He lent me *Design and Social Communication* by Bruno Munari, one of the great books about this. I loved it. The book helped me understand that my father wanted to communicate with people in the most direct way possible, via posters. When you pass a good quality poster, you stop and look. This was important at the time because the majority of Mozambique's population was illiterate. What mattered was the message in the image, for example, how to wash your hands.

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1 Colonial name of Mozambique's capital, now Maputo.

2 António de Oliveira Salazar, Prime Minister of Portugal (1932-1968), created the Estado Novo (New State), the authoritarian right-wing régime that ruled the Portuguese empire until 1974.

3 Bruno Munari (1907-1998, b Italy), artist, designer and innovator in many areas of visual art.

He was influenced to some extent by the Soviet example, imposed by the party, in particular Frelimo's strongly socialist Minister of Information, Jorge Rebelo. He also collaborated with a great friend, Luís Chaves, on the design of the first national flag, the one hoisted on Independence Day at the Machava Stadium, when the Portuguese flag was hauled down. The idea for the insignia with the crossed hoe and Kalashnikov above the book came from Chaves. He drew the original when Frelimo was still in Tanzania. Afterwards, in Maputo, my father adjusted the proportions, made some refinements and prepared the design for production. He was pleased with the coloured diagonals fanning out from the top left corner. He thought it was a global first.

### **When did he start working for Frelimo?**

He was not in Tanzania, did not go to war, but was a sympathiser. He was always against the colonial system. He started with Frelimo in the months before independence, known as the Period of Transition. He lent a hand, because everything was at sixes and sevens. We had the first flag at home for many years, till he decided to give it away, to the Arquivo Nacional (National Archive), I think. I don't know where it is now. I told him we should keep it. He said, "No, son, it's a historic object, the Independence Day flag..."



*Flag of the People's Republic of Mozambique, 1980-1975, designed by José Freire with insignia by Luís Chaves*

### **Tell us more about his work.**

He devoted himself to Social Communication, the mass media as it was afterwards called, working on campaigns to inform the public about personal hygiene, looking after children and so on as well as political messages. Many of the items credited to the

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4 Mozambique's northern neighbour, Tanzania, under President Julius Nyerere, was Frelimo's HQ and rear military base during the Luta Armada (Armed Struggle) for national liberation (1964-1974).

5 Nov 1974-June 1975

DNPP in the 1986 catalogue of Mozambican posters were by him. He did not always sign them. I said to him, “But I saw you working on that one, that one and that one”. He said, “Son, I couldn’t sign them all, or people would think I did everything”. The truth is he created a very good team at the DNPP, with the other artists and a photographer. Manuel Ruas, my brother, was their finisher. They worked entirely by hand, using paintbrushes, ink, Letraset etcetera. It was before computers. I was very immature. I thought he should get credit for everything, but for him it was too much.

### **What did he design as well as the DNPP posters?**

Lots of things, for example postage stamps and uniforms for President Machel, the police and senior military officers. He worked at home, by hand. I saw him. When he died, I gave the material to the Arquivo Nacional (National Archive), director António Sopa. There were also plans for buildings, complete with furnishings. My father created designs for all sorts of items.

### **Did he talk much to you about his work as you grew older?**

Actually we had less and less contact. I ended up going to sea, after failing to pass the year twice running at school. It was the time when students taught classes, because the teachers, mostly Portuguese settlers, fled the revolution. I preferred drinking rum-and-cokes with friends at the Hotel Cardoso to going to school. When I was sixteen, my options were to study somewhere in the Eastern Bloc, like the Soviet Union or Cuba, be drafted for military service (the post-independence insurgency was beginning) or join the merchant navy. I chose Nautical School and had a career at sea, becoming a professional pilot. My father went on designing. When President Machel died, he handed in his party card. He said, “I don’t identify with this new ideology [capitalism] under President Chissano. I’m ready to carry on helping, for free, but I no longer want to work for the government”. He became self-employed, turning mostly to building design.

### **How would you sum up?**

All in all, I am proud of my father. At times, he had money, at others not. Before independence, he was well-off, a bon vivant. Afterwards, he changed. He abandoned his precious Jaguar under a cashew tree and lived for socialism.

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6 Catálogo Moçambique Cartazes/Catalogue Mozambique Posters, 1986. eds Salstrom and Sopa. Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique/Universidade Eduardo Mondlane elimo’s HQ and rear military base during the Luta Armada (Armed Struggle) for national liberation (1964-1974).

7 Manuel Ruas is José Freire’s stepson and therefore Zé Tomas’ half-brother.

8 Letraset: a company which produced sheets of typefaces and other graphics for transfer (known as paste-up) to artwork before printing.

9 Under the presidency of Joaquim Chissano, previously Machel’s long-serving foreign minister, Frelimo abandoned its self-definition as Marxist-Leninist at its Fifth Congress, in 1989. Its main ally, the USSR, collapsed as it simultaneously came under extreme pressure internally from the war against the di

# TRKZ: Hinos Revolucionarios (Revolutionary Hymns) 2021



Mozambican producer TRKZ (Ailton Matavela) was commissioned to produce five audio tracks for the Our Sophisticated Weapon exhibition. Here, he speaks about these tracks, which sample revolutionary songs from Mozambique's national liberation struggle and the early years of independence. The tracks can be accessed via the exhibition website: [alutacontinua.art](http://alutacontinua.art)

**O Homem Novo** is an introductory song, about the birth of the Homem Novo (New Man), whenever one gains freedom over oppression and colonisation. It happens through the will and power of the people in the struggle for freedom. The process represents a leap of faith towards the beginning of a revolution and the building of a new nation.

**África** is inspired by the idea that we can never create a new world on our own. President Samora Machel said in a 1976 speech that we (Mozambicans) will never be fully free if we don't help the fight for the freedom of Zimbabwe. The song's appeal to take strength from one another, from one country and one leader to another, invokes a common factor which all Africans share, because we are people who have endured and suffered centuries of colonial oppression.

**Do Rovuma ao Maputo**, do Zumbo ao Índico invokes the vastness and diversity of the huge territory of Mozambique and Samora Machel's will to unify our diverse land, with its many cultural and linguistic communities. One of the measures taken at independence was the adoption of a common language (Portuguese). Frelimo also promoted unity via, for example, mobile cinema (a newsreel called Kuxa-Kanema, 1986-1978), the First Festival of People's Dance (1978) and the First Festival of Traditional Song and Music (1980). Culture was always a priority to Samora. The festivals sought to give the Mozambican people an opportunity to know their many different facets through music and dance.

**Josina.** There is a lot to say about Josina Machel. She was one of the main founders of the Organização das Mulheres Moçambicanas (Organisation of Mozambican Women, OMM) during Frelimo's Luta Armada (Armed Struggle) for liberation from Portuguese colonialism, (1974-1964). There is also a lot to say about the importance of women in Mozambique (in northern areas a matriarchal society), for instance about how women organized and gave fundamental aid in the Luta Armada, treating the wounded, fighting in Frelimo's Destacamento Feminino (Women's Detachment) and serving the national cause with honour and graciousness. Josina was not only the wife of President Samora, but a symbol that remains alive until this day. Most of all she was a heroine and a very important figure in the war effort.

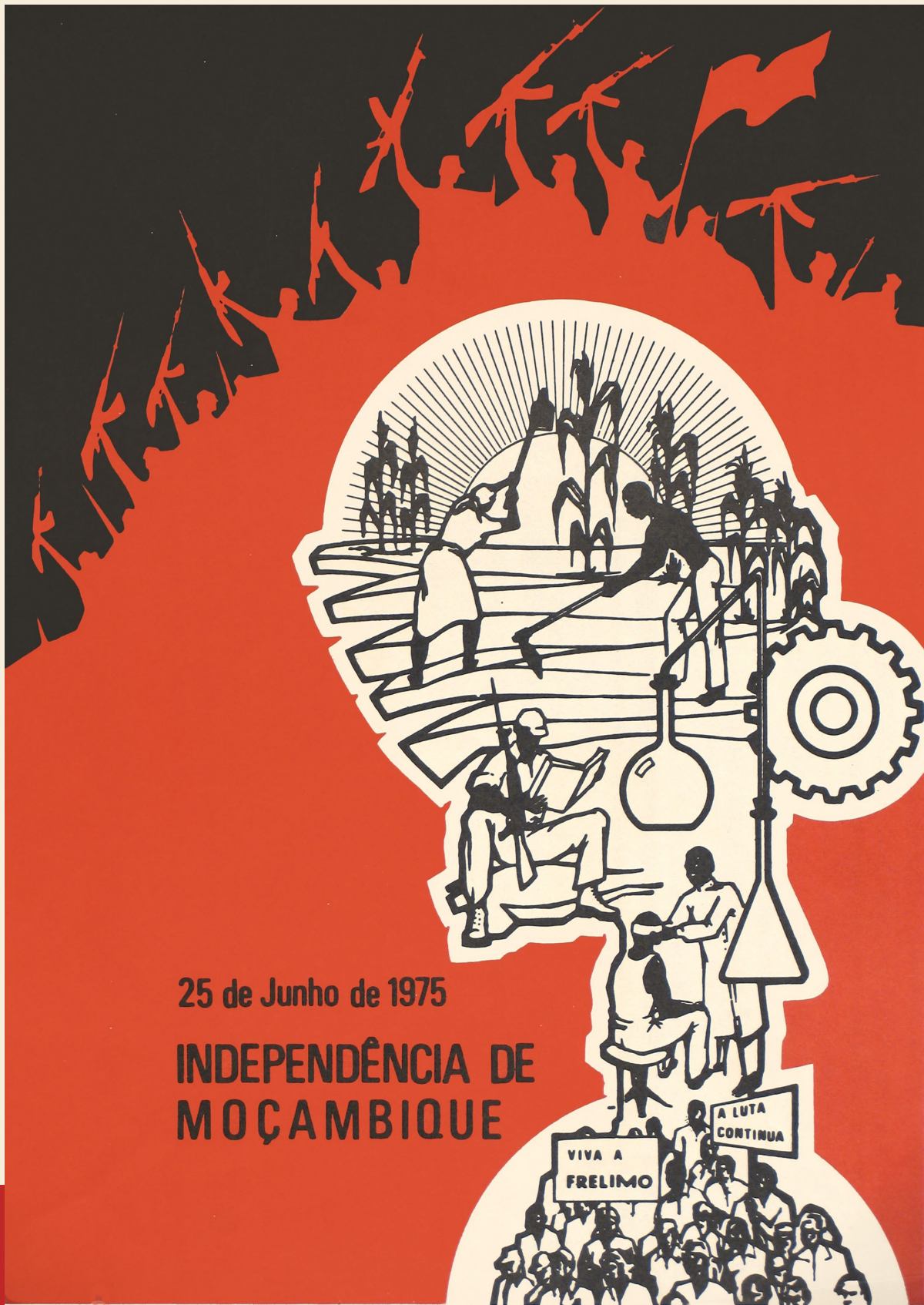
**Tanane** translates as 'vinde' in Portuguese, or 'come' in English. The song is about the culmination of the struggle. People feel that the hard-fought battle is close to an end and that victory is just a step away. It also laments for all we have been through, and honours those who passed away, letting them know that they did not die in vain and that their ancestors are standing tall and proud of our accomplishments. The song makes me think about the resilience of all who fought for us and allowed Mozambique to be what it is today, in spite of the violence of the independence struggle and the sixteen years of civil war that followed, while Mozambique also offered aid to Zimbabwe and fought against Apartheid.



*José Freire (1998-1930) Frelimo, 3rd February 1976, One Single People 1976 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

On 3rd February 1969, seven years after forming the Front for the liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo), Eduardo Mondlane was killed by a parcel bomb at his Dar es Salaam office. He is remembered by Frelimo for his legacy of national unity, alluded to here by the overlay of the map on his portrait. To create Um Só Povo (One Single People) from Mozambique's diverse population would be one of the greatest challenges facing his successor, Samora Machel.





25 de Junho de 1975  
INDEPENDÊNCIA DE  
MOÇAMBIQUE

*José Freire (25 ,1975 (1998-1930th of June 1975, Independence of Mozambique 1975 Two-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

Issued to celebrate Mozambique's Independence Day, this poster represents the revolution as a peaceful sunrise that allows peasants to work freely, a soldier to study rather than fight, and citizens to benefit from science, technology and universal medical care. The crowd's placards proclaim, 'Long Live Frelimo' and 'The Struggle Continues'. José Freire also designed the uniforms, banners and street decorations for the independence ceremony in Maputo, the renamed capital city.

**25 DE JUNHO DE 1976  
UM ANO DE INDEPENDÊNCIA**



**OFENSIVA POLÍTICA E ORGA-  
NIZACIONAL GENERALIZA-  
DA NA FRENTE DA PRODUÇÃO**

**REPÚBLICA POPULAR DE MOÇAMBIQUE**

*José Freire (25 (1998-1930th June 1976, One Year of Independence / Generalised Political and Organisational Offensive on the Production Front 1976 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

This poster marks the first anniversary of independence, a time when the need to restore economic productivity was Frelimo's main priority. The sudden exodus of Portuguese settlers had caused a crisis of food supplies and cash-crop exports. Frelimo responded by organising communal villages, collective farms and cooperatives, following the model used in the Liberated Zones during the Armed Struggle.



**ANO DE ESTRUTURAÇÃO DO PARTIDO**

**MOÇAMBIQUE 25 DE JUNHO 1978**



**TERCEIRO ANO DE INDEPENDÊNCIA**

**ANO DE ESTRUTURAÇÃO DO PARTIDO**

MOÇAMBIQUE — MINISTÉRIO DA INFORMAÇÃO — D.N.P.P.

José Freire (3 (1998-1930rd February 1975, Rovuma - Maputo 1975 Two-colour offset lithograph, Minerva Central, Lourenço Marques

Mondlane's portrait is set here against an image of the masses, bordered by Rovuma and Maputo, the rivers at the far north and south of Mozambique. The poster dates from the Period of Transition between the end of Frelimo's Armed Struggle on 25th April 1974, and Independence Day on 25th June 1975, a time when Frelimo was looking to foster national unity in anticipation of independence.

**dia  
dos heróis  
moçambicanos**



**3 fevereiro 1978**

*João Craveirinha Jr (b 1947) Day of Mozambican Heroes, February 3rd 1978 1978 Two-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

Mozambican Heroes Day commemorates the victims of the Armed Struggle. This poster features a photograph by Daniel Maquinasse of a Frelimo guerrilla bonding with a peasant in one of the Liberated Zones. Frelimo militants came from diverse parts of Mozambique but sought to overcome differences of language and culture by joining local residents in farming and cultural activities, such as dances.



dia dos heróis  
moçambicanos

**3 FEVEREIRO 1979**

MOÇAMBIQUE — MINISTERIO DA INFORMAÇÃO — DNPP

*João Craveirinha Jr (b 1947) Day of Mozambican Heroes February 3rd 1979 1979 Five-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

This image depicts political prisoners jailed by the colonial secret police (PIDE) during the Armed Struggle. It is a detail from the mural Craveirinha designed for Praça dos Heróis in Maputo, a site where heroes of the revolution are interred, including former presidents and the artist's uncle, poet José Craveirinha (2003-1922), who was himself tortured and imprisoned by the PIDE for supporting Frelimo.

dia das FPLM  
dia da Revolução



DEFENDER A PÁTRIA  
É CONSOLIDAR  
AS NOSSAS  
CONQUISTAS



1964 - 25 DE SETEMBRO - 1979  
15º Aniversário  
do início da luta armada de libertação nacional

MOZAMBIQUE — MINISTÉRIO DA INFORMAÇÃO — DNPP

*José Freire (1998-1930) September 25th Day of the FPLM Day of the Revolution, To Defend the Homeland is to Consolidate Our Conquests, 25 – 1964th September – 15 ,1979th Anniversary of the Beginning of the Armed Struggle for National Liberation 1979 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

Members of Frelimo's army, the People's Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique (FPLM), hold aloft a hammer and enxada (African hoe) as well as their guns. The principle that militants should engage in production as well as defending the homeland was established in the Liberated Zones during the Armed Struggle. In 1979, Mozambique's main enemies were the white-separatist regimes of Ian Smith's Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa.

**SOLiDARiTY**



# BEM.VINDO NYERERE

*José Freire (1998-1930) Welcome Nyerere 1975 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

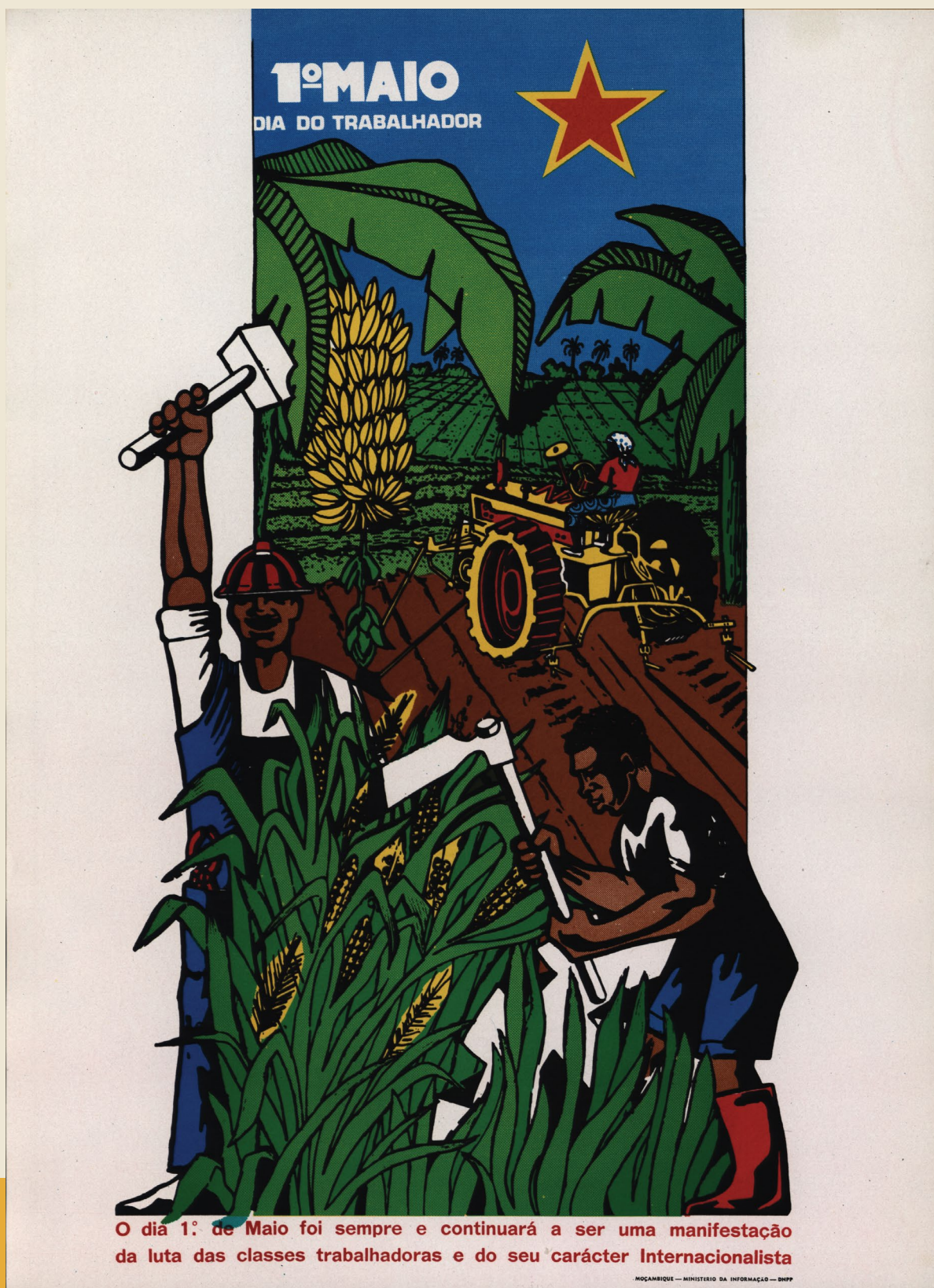
Frelimo received broad international support in its struggle for liberation, but Tanzania was their greatest ally, and from 1962 the Front operated from bases in Dar es Salaam and near the border. Here, Samora Machel (left) warmly embraces Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, the first head of state to visit Mozambique following independence. Nyerere's model of African socialism, based on the concept of Ujamaa (familyhood), was distinct from Machel's more orthodox Marxist-Leninist approach





*Manuel Ruas (b 1 (1953)st of May World Day of the Worker 1978 Offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

Frelimo actively reciprocated their international support through gestures of solidarity with the socialist world and anti-imperialist movements. Celebrations for International Workers Day on May 1st offered a chance to demonstrate a commitment to solidarity with socialist states and workers everywhere.



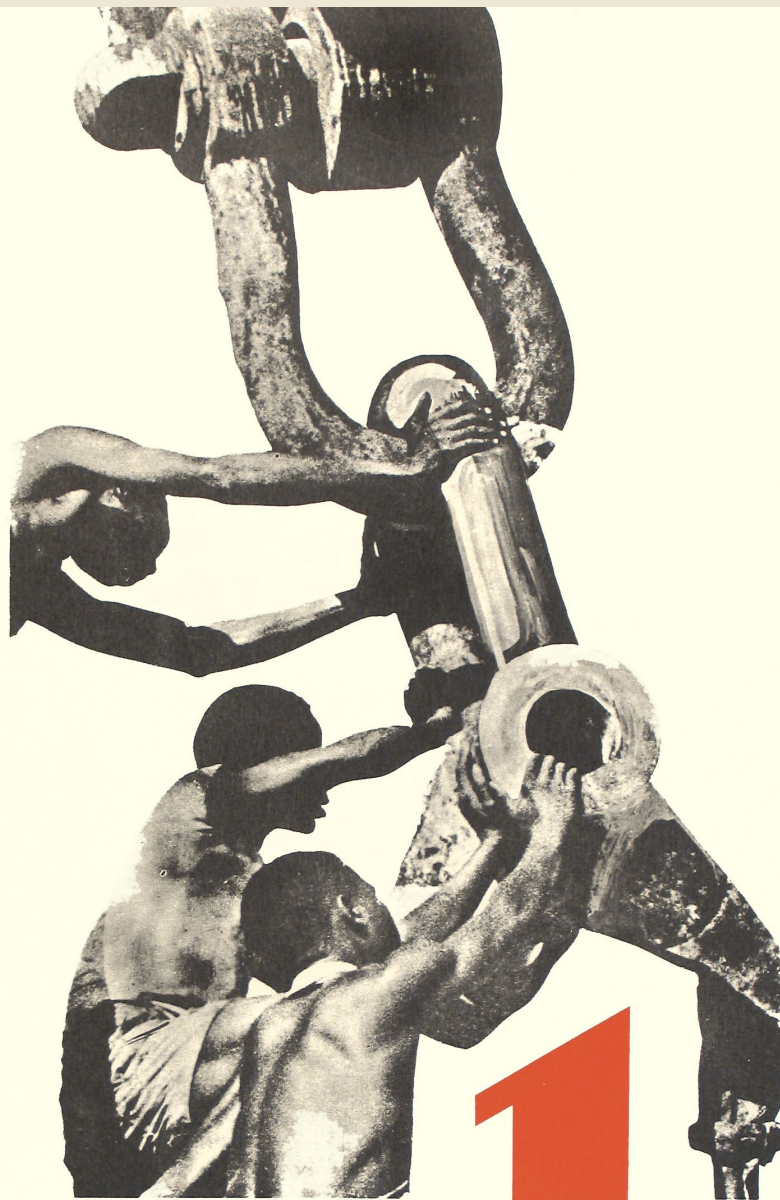
João Craveirinha Jr (b 1947) *May 1st, Day of the Worker*. May 1st was always and will continue to be a manifestation of the struggle of the working classes and their internationalist character 1979 Colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

The red star of international socialism shines down on an idyllic Mozambican landscape, heralding a new dawn of equality, production and technology. João Craveirinha Jr worked as Frelimo's graphic designer during the Armed Struggle, issuing posters, pamphlets and journals from the Front's base in Tanzania. Despite many years of commitment to the party, he ultimately found Frelimo's cultural policies oppressive, and left Mozambique in 1983.



José Freire (1 (1998-1930st May, Day of the Worker Late 1970s Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

This design for 1st May also features two figures holding aloft the hammer and enxada (African hoe). The iconography of crossed tools, red flag and five-pointed star all articulate Frelimo's affiliation with the rest of the socialist world, but with an important modification - the enxada was chosen to give a closer reflection of as nossas realidades (our realities) than the sickle used in Soviet emblems.



1  
O  
DE  
MAIO

DIA DO TRABALHADOR

*Manuel Ruas (b 1 (1953)st May, Day of the Worker Late 1970s Two-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

This poster is unusual in its depiction of industrial workers, to the exclusion of peasant farmers. At the time of independence, the industrialised working class in Mozambique was a tiny minority compared to the peasantry, a configuration that left little hope for socialist revolution in an orthodox Marxist sense. As Mao had done in China, Machel instead framed the peasantry as historically oppressed masses who could be mobilised for revolution.



**BUILDING A NEW SOCIETY**

**25 DE JUNHO DE 1977**  
**2º ANO DE INDEPENDÊNCIA**

**VENCER A BATALHA DA**

**PRODUÇÃO**



*José Freire (25 (1998-1930th of June 2 ,1977nd Year of Independence, Win the Battle of Production, Long Live the Third Congress, Long Live Frelimo, Vanguard Party of the Mozambican People 1977 Colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

One of Frelimo's most pressing tasks from 1975 was to rebuild the economy, above all in agriculture. Their socialist policies in this area ultimately failed, in part due to the destruction of infrastructure by opposition group Renamo and external actors during the 'civil war' (1992-1976).

REPÚBLICA POPULAR DE MOÇAMBIQUE - 1983



**o fim  
da fome  
está nas  
nossas mãos**



**16 DE OUTUBRO · DIA MUNDIAL DA ALIMENTAÇÃO**

*Uncredited The End of Hunger is in Our Hands / 16th October World Food Day 1983 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

The enxada (African hoe) was a widely recognised emblem of collective production, and the determination of Frelimo militants to bring about better living conditions by 'relying on our own resources' rather than waiting for advanced technology or outside help. During team-building farming days, all employees, including senior managers, were expected to pegar enxada (pick up a hoe) and display collective spirit.



MOCAMBIQUE - INAC - DNPP

*QUE A CRIAÇÃO  
DE CADA UM  
SE TORNE  
A CRIAÇÃO  
DE TODOS  
PARA QUE  
DE TODOS  
NASÇA  
UMA NOVA  
CULTURA*

EDUARDO MONDLANE



**DANÇA**

**OFENSIVA  
CULTURAL  
DAS CLASSES  
TRABALHADORAS**

Uncredited Let the creativity of each individual become the creativity of all so that from all a new culture is born, Dance, Cultural Offensive of the Working Classes 1978 Two- colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

The 'Cultural Offensive of the Working and Peasant Classes' was a series of initiatives launched by Frelimo in April 1977 to encourage revolutionary transformation in literature, visual arts, music, theatre, painting and dance. This included the National Festival of People's Dance in 1978, launched with the promise to 'make culture an important weapon of revolutionary education, a fundamental instrument in the creation of the New Man.'



*Uncredited Soviet Film Week, National Film Institute, Ministry of Information, People's Republic of Mozambique 1985 Three-colour offset lithograph INC, Maputo*

Frelimo prioritised cinema as an innovative means of mass communication alongside radio, the press and posters. Between 1980 and 1985, the INC ran weeks devoted to African, Mozambican, Cuban, Vietnamese, Algerian, Polish, Brazilian, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese, Swedish and Indian cinema, as well as Soviet film, introducing audiences to politically-engaged films in the tradition of 'Third Cinema,' a radical alternative to Hollywood productions

**A LIBERTAÇÃO DA  
MULHER MOÇAMBICANA  
É UMA NECESSIDADE DA  
REVOLUÇÃO.**

**É A GARANTIA DA  
SUA CONTINUIDADE.**

**É A CONDIÇÃO DO  
SEU TRIUNFO.**

**FRELIMO 1976**



**7de abril dia da mulher moçambicana**

*José Freire (1998-1930) The Liberation of the Mozambican Woman is a Necessity of the Revolution, a Guarantee of its Continuity, and a Condition of its Triumph. Frelimo 7. 1976th April, Day of the Mozambican Woman 1977 Two-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

In 1973, Frelimo dedicated 7th April, the anniversary of Josina Machel's death, as Mozambican Women's Day. The text in this poster quotes Samora Machel's speech that year to launch the Organisation of Mozambican Women (OMM). The emancipation of women was considered a cornerstone of Frelimo's ideology and integral to the process of liberation and decolonisation.

# 7 de abril 1978



**"ENGAJAR A MULHER NA TAREFA PRINCIPAL –  
A EDIFICAÇÃO DA BASE MATERIAL E IDEOLÓGICA  
PARA A CONSTRUÇÃO DA SOCIEDADE SOCIALISTA"**

*Manuel Ruas (b 7 (1953th April 1978, Engage women in the principal task – building the material and ideological base for the construction of socialist society 1978 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo*

This design by Manuel Ruas commemorates the sixth Mozambican Women's Day with a dual image of women working in industry and agriculture. These sectors formed the economic bases of the worker-peasant alliance, the driving force of Mozambique's development. Thanks to his skill in graphic design, Manuel Ruas had a reputation in the DNPP team as 'the finisher'. He left Mozambique and settled in Andorra after Frelimo formally abandoned socialism at the Fifth Congress in 1989.



MULHER MOÇAMBICANA  
CONSOLIDEMOS AS NOSSAS  
CONQUISTAS REVOLUCIONÁRIAS  
PARTICIPANDO NO AUMENTO  
DA PRODUÇÃO E PRODUTIVIDADE  
ENGAJANDO-NOS DECIDIDAMENTE  
NA DEFESA DO PAÍS



José Freire (7 (1998-1930th of April 1979, Mozambican Women's Day. Mozambican woman, let us consolidate our revolutionary conquests participating in increasing production and productivity and engaging resolutely in the defence of the country 1979 Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

The image shows women studying, producing and fighting. These were key activities for all Mozambican militants, and exemplified by the members of Frelimo's Women's Detachment during the Armed Struggle.

In addition to João Craveirinha and Manuel Ruas, the DNPP team of artists headed by José Freire included Agostinho Milhafre Elias, João Azevedo, Sérgio Tique and Luís Galvão among others. After Frelimo's turn to neo-liberalism in the mid-1980s, José Freire dissociated from the party, and the work of these artists began to be erased from official histories, as the government sought to suppress memories of Mozambique's brief socialist moment.

# 1975



**FORÇAS  
POPULARES DE  
LIBERTAÇÃO  
DE  
MOÇAMBIQUE**

# 25 DE SETEMBRO

José Freire (25 1975 (1998-1930th September People's Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique 1975  
Three-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

Cheap, easy to use and reliable, the Soviet-made AK47 was reputed to function after two years buried in sand, making it the global guerrillas' weapon of choice. By the 1960s, the image of the AK47 had become a visual shorthand, not only for the socialist affiliations of the African liberation movements, but also for a militant solidarity with Cuba's Tricontinental movement and resistance movements in Vietnam and South and Central America.



Uncredited Unity, Work, Vigilance, 1975 Frelimo 1975 Year of Independence 1975 Four-colour offset lithograph, DNPP, Maputo

The watchwords 'Unity, Work, Vigilance' became ubiquitous during Frelimo's socialist years, appearing in the press, speeches, murals and official documents. 'Unity' highlighted nation-building and collectivism, 'Work' the labour required to build the New Society, and 'Vigilance' the need for the New Man to guard against internal and external enemies.

He was influenced to some extent by the Soviet example, imposed by the party, in particular Frelimo's strongly socialist Minister of Information, Jorge Rebelo. He also collaborated with a great friend, Luís Chaves, on the design of the first national flag, the one hoisted on Independence Day at the Machava Stadium, when the Portuguese flag was hauled down. The idea for the insignia with the crossed hoe and Kalashnikov above the book came from Chaves. He drew the original when Frelimo was still in Tanzania. Afterwards, in Maputo, my father adjusted the proportions, made some refinements and prepared the design for production. He was pleased with the coloured diagonals fanning out from the top left corner. He thought it was a global first.

### **When did he start working for Frelimo?**

He was not in Tanzania, did not go to war, but was a sympathiser. He was always against the colonial system. He started with Frelimo in the months before independence, known as the Period of Transition. He lent a hand, because everything was at sixes and sevens. We had the first flag at home for many years, till he decided to give it away, to the Arquivo Nacional (National Archive), I think. I don't know where it is now. I told him we should keep it. He said, "No, son, it's a historic object, the Independence Day flag..."



*Flag of the People's Republic of Mozambique, 1980-1975, designed by José Freire with insignia by Luís Chaves*

### **Tell us more about his work.**

He devoted himself to Social Communication, the mass media as it was afterwards called, working on campaigns to inform the public about personal hygiene, looking after children and so on as well as political messages. Many of the items credited to the

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4 Mozambique's northern neighbour, Tanzania, under President Julius Nyerere, was Frelimo's HQ and rear military base during the Luta Armada (Armed Struggle) for national liberation (1964-1974).

5 Nov 1974-June 1975



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