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## Muslims of northern Mozambique and the liberation movements

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Despite the fact that the liberation war occurred in northern Mozambique, where a considerable number of Muslims lived, their contribution to the independence struggle has been little studied. This paper focusses on their participation in two nationalist liberation movements, Mozambican African National Union (MANU) and *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), and demonstrates that the prevailing idea in scholarship about Muslims' aloofness from the liberation struggle is unjustified. It argues that Muslim support and participation in the liberation movements stemmed primarily from grassroots African nationalism. Like most Africans, Muslims wished to end colonialism and recover their land from the Portuguese. African Muslims of northern Mozambique were well suited to support these movements, because Islam and chieftainship were linked to each other. Chiefs were believed to be the 'owners' and 'stewards' of the land, and a majority of Muslim leaders, whether traditional chiefs (*régulos*, in Portuguese) or Sufi leaders (*tariqa khulafa'*, in Arabic), were from the chiefly clans. Most importantly, Muslims of northern Mozambique had close historical and cultural ties to Tanganyika and Zanzibar, especially through Islamic and kinship networks. The involvement of Muslims in the liberation movements of those regions, in particular in Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), inspired and encouraged the Muslims of northern Mozambique to support MANU and FRELIMO, especially since these two movements were launched in Tanganyika and Zanzibar with TANU backing and the participation of Muslim immigrants from northern Mozambique.

**Keywords:** Liberation movements; MANU; FRELIMO; Islam; northern Mozambique; Zanzibar

Northern Mozambique was the principal region of the independence war against colonialism, and people there suffered harsh persecutions from the Portuguese Secret Police (PIDE). A significant part of the population of this region was Muslim, but their participation in the liberation struggle has hardly been addressed in scholarship, though much has been written on the role of Protestants and Catholics.<sup>1</sup> Some authors even consider Muslims to be aloof from the independence struggle altogether.

This paper focusses on the response and involvement of northern Mozambican Muslims in the two principal nationalist liberation movements: the Mozambican African National Union (MANU), also known as the Makonde African National Union, and the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO: *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*). Besides archival data, especially the PIDE records and the documentation of

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the Portuguese Secret Services for Centralisation and Coordination of Information for Mozambique (SCCIM), the paper relies on fieldwork conducted in Maputo and Pemba in 2007–2008. The central story of this paper, that of Shaykh Yussuf Arabi (1925–2005), a prominent religious leader who rose to a position of political leadership both in MANU and FRELIMO, provides a unique insight into this period of Mozambican history, in particular, with regard to the relationships between Muslims and the main liberation movements. Though the key source for his life-story is the PIDE interrogation data from the Torre do Tombo Archives in Lisbon,<sup>2</sup> I was also able to interview some of his former associates.<sup>3</sup> They confirmed in general terms all of Shaykh Arabi's political activities in Zanzibar, as described in his quite nuanced 74-page-long PIDE deposition, but of course they could not speak for the Shaykh, who died two years before my fieldwork commenced.

### The founding of MANU

Historically, northern Mozambican Muslims interacted with Tanganyika, Zanzibar and Nyasaland (present-day Tanzania and Malawi) through kinship and religious ties. Many also lived, worked, studied or had relatives in these regions. As a result, many northern Mozambicans were already in the 1950s drawn by the Tanganyika African Association (TAA) and, in particular, by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), formed in 1954 by Julius Nyerere, into the debates over *uhuru* (Swahili for 'independence').

Iliffe (1987, pp. 529–530, 551) points out that Muslim reaction to TANU was probably more positive in Tanganyika and Zanzibar than that of Christians. He holds that almost every kind of Muslim supported nationalism. Muslim townsmen had been prominent in the TAA, Muslim activists helped to create TANU and Muslim trader-politicians were at first among its most influential leaders, while TANU's coastal origins and the KiSwahili language attracted some prestige among Muslims. The use of KiSwahili also gave TANU's ideology many Islamic overtones to balance those which its Western-educated leaders derived from Christianity. Sufi Orders also contributed to the independence movement in Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Their predominantly African membership, regional influence and hierarchical structures enabled a determined *khalifa* (Arabic for 'the head of a Sufi Order'), like Muhammad bin Ramiya of the Qadiriyya, to throw his whole following behind TANU (Nimtz 1980, pp. 158–162).

In the 1950s, significant numbers of northern Mozambican immigrants lived in Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Kenya and Nyasaland. Many went there to work in rural sisal plantations, but some were already second-generation immigrants established in urban areas. After the British Societies Ordinance of 1954 imposed elaborate controls on groups and associations, including 'social societies', these immigrants created several clubs called *Makonde Clubs* and *Macua and Makonde Clubs* in Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Zanzibar, Pemba, Mogororo, Mombassa and other centres (Brito 1991, pp. 54–56, Cahen 1999, pp. 33–36). The *Mozambique Makonde Union* (TMMU) in Dar es Salaam, founded in 1958, had close ties to TANU. Almost all of its founders held TANU membership cards, called *Cadi Chama Tanu*. According to Cahen (1999, pp. 33–36), the TMMU envisioned becoming an all-Mozambican political movement similar to TANU, and in 1960 it decided to change its name to MANU (Mozambique African National Union). Before MANU was officially registered, TANU recognised Mathews Mmole, a 25-year-old Makonde from Tanganyika, as the president of

MANU. In the same year, the *Zanzibar Makonde and Makua Union* became affiliated with MANU as Z-MANU. Besides having close ties to TANU and holding its membership cards, MANU affiliates also used TANU's methods of popular mobilisation. As Nimtz Jr. (1980, p. 155) emphasises, the TANU branch leaders spent 10 days to two weeks each month in the rural areas, organising mass meetings with the purposes of recruiting people and persuading them that self-determination was both desirable and possible. MANU also imitated TANU's structural organisation, consisting of District Secretary, Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. After the proclamation of Tanganyika independence under the leadership of Julius Nyerere and TANU on 9 December 1961, MANU's role as a political movement seeking the independence of Mozambique intensified.

### Shaykh Yussuf Arabi and MANU

Shaykh Yussuf was a Makua-speaker, born in the Chai region of Macomia in Cabo Delgado. Between 1942 and 1946, he studied in Mocimboa da Praia with Shaykh Omari Macama, a former student of a prominent Zanzibari Sufi leader, Shaykh Husayn bin Ramadhani (1880–1978).<sup>4</sup> In order to continue his education with Shaykh Ramadhani, Shaykh Yussuf left for Zanzibar in 1947, where he spent nine years (1947–1956). On his return to Chai in 1957, he found the Portuguese administrators to be particularly hostile to Islam, persecuting *walimu* (Swahili for 'Qur'anic teachers and Muslim healers') and other Islamic leaders, forbidding mosque prayers, closing down the *Qur'anic* schools and burning 'Muslim flags' (most likely the Qadiri banners).<sup>5</sup> After they destroyed his *madrasa* (Arabic for 'Qur'anic school') and impeded the launch of other religious activities, Shaykh Yussuf decided to return to Zanzibar in February 1962 for his and his family's safety. During the following two years (1962–1964), he became affiliated with MANU and FRELIMO and interacted closely with members of the Mozambican liberation movements in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar.

Due to the persecution Shaykh Yussuf suffered at the hands of the local Portuguese administrator, he evidently left Mozambique as an angry man, who intended to react to Portuguese repression. On his way to Zanzibar, he stopped in Lindi and contacted the MANU branch there.<sup>6</sup> He told the Secretary of MANU, Mateus Shauli, a Makonde from Mueda, about his ordeals in Mozambique. Shauli gave him a reference letter to the MANU headquarters in Dar es Salaam, where Shaykh Yussuf met MANU leaders Mmole and Lawrence Malinga Millinga.<sup>7</sup> Millinga explained that MANU was working towards a general *uhuru* of Mozambique, but its efforts were being eroded by popular perceptions that MANU was basically a Christian Makonde organisation. Because Shaykh Yussuf was a prominent *shaykh* (Arabic for 'Islamic religious leaders' and a Muslim Makua-speaker who had suffered Portuguese persecutions, Millinga suggested telling his story in order to attract other Muslims to MANU. Shaykh Yussuf's story was read to two African journalists in March 1962 and broadcast by the Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation radio service.

Shaykh Yussuf then tried to acquire legal status in Tanganyika, but was unsuccessful. On 15 March 1962, he went to the Tanganyika Muslim Association (TMA) where he was received by Shaykh Abbas Sykes.<sup>8</sup> On his recommendation, Shaykh Yussuf and his family were taken into the home of a local Muslim TMA member. The TMA also gave him a considerable amount of money collected from local Muslim traders.

At this instance, Shaykh Yussuf wrote to Shaykh Ramadhani, expressing his desire to come to Zanzibar. With the help of the TMA, he obtained a travel permit and local Muslims again provided him with money. He arrived in Zanzibar on 18 April 1962, where he met with his teacher, Shaykh Ramadhani, former colleagues and various Mozambican immigrants residing there. Most of these immigrants were politically active and affiliated with MANU and the Afro-Shirazi Party, with a few affiliated to the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP). Shaykh Yussuf was also affiliated with the Afro-Shirazi Party, because, as he explained, it was ‘obligatory’ for African Muslim immigrants, but he also did so to secure his position within Zanzibar Muslim society.<sup>9</sup>

Some days later, Shaykh Yussuf met with the Regional Secretary of the Zanzibar MANU branch, Lucas Nchucha, a Makonde from Muatide of northern Mozambique, who introduced him to other MANU leaders and its Youth League. Mwewa Mfaume, the Zanzibar and Pemba Regional Chairman, convinced Shaykh Yussuf to formally join MANU, while Nchucha gave details on political parties in Zanzibar, describing MANU, in particular, as a party of the northern Mozambicans and denouncing the Mozambique Democratic Union (UDENAMO: *União Democrática de Moçambique*) as consisting of ‘arrogant landins’ (Portuguese for ‘Africans from southern Mozambique’).<sup>10</sup>

Nchucha told Shaykh Yussuf that many Makua-speakers were moving from MANU to UDENAMO, because they were misled into understanding that MANU was a Makonde Christian party. In words similar to those of Millinga, Nchucha described how Shaykh Yussuf’s story of an important Muslim *shaykh* harassed by the Portuguese could be useful for MANU’s objective of unifying people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds for the *uhuru* of Mozambique. On 6 May 1962, Shaykh Yussuf recounted his story at a meeting at the MANU Club, attended by more than a hundred Mozambicans.

From the late 1950s to 1961, when UDENAMO also came to the fore, popular mobilisation for Mozambique’s independence was done mostly by MANU (formerly TMMU), linked to TANU. As Shaykh Yussuf’s story demonstrates, MANU wished to become a political party of all Mozambicans with a broad ethnic and social basis and not of the Makonde alone. MANU sought to use the influence of the relevant representatives of different ethnic and social groups in a mass mobilisation campaign for a nationalist cause. The example of Shaykh Yussuf, a Makua-speaker and a *khalifa* of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* (Arabic for ‘Sufi Order’), illustrates this point.

### Muslim response to MANU in northern Mozambique

Between 1959 and 1963, MANU’s mobilisation activities in northern Mozambique began drawing the attention of the Portuguese. For example, in coastal Momba and Pebane regions they detected persistent rumours among Muslims about a ‘war against the Whites’ and that ‘Nyerere was planning to come to Mozambique’ (Branquinho 1969, p. 398). They also realised that a number of Muslim religious leaders from Tanganyika were discussing in local mosques the possible end of Portuguese colonialism, while some Muslim *régulos* (Portuguese for ‘chiefs’), like Saide of the hinterland Eráti region in contemporary Nampula province, were involved in the debates about independence with other Muslim *régulos* and *shaykhs* close to Cabo Delgado (Branquinho 1969, pp. 147, 398–399).

In 1960, PIDE arrested the chief Qadiri *khalifa* of Momba region, Shaykh Mussagy Bwana, accusing him of reading ‘subversive news’ from Tanganyika in a

mosque under the oath of secrecy taken on the *Qur'an*.<sup>11</sup> The ‘news’ included a letter stating that ‘God was angry with Whites for ruling in the land of Blacks and for collecting taxes and forcing Blacks to work in cotton fields’ (Branquinho 1969, p. 351). Subsequently, Mussagy Bwana was exiled to São Tomé. In 1961, the important Yao Muslim *régulo* Selemane Mataka and several others in Niassa District were put under PIDE surveillance because they listened to Tanganyika and Nyasaland radio stations and maintained regular correspondence with Muslims in those regions.<sup>12</sup> Some years earlier, Mataka had lived in Tanganyika for three years and in Nyasaland for four years.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the selling and seeking of *hiriz*, protective amulets with *Qur'anic* inscriptions also increased considerably among northern Mozambicans. These *hiriz*, prepared by *shaykhs* and the *walimu*, were intended to inculcate bravery and protect the owners from Portuguese bullets and other weaponry, as well as against general malevolent spirits and wild animals. As in the period of the ‘effective occupation’ in 1895–1930s, the circulation of ‘anti-bullet’ *hiriz* was an indication that Muslims were preparing for warfare. Due to their previous historical experiences, the Portuguese viewed *hiriz* as a powerful tool for political subversion of Africans. Not surprisingly, in 1961–1963 PIDE arrested various *walimu* and Muslim *régulos* with anti-bullet *hiriz* in Cabo Delgado, Angoche and Niassa, who incidentally often travelled to and received visitors from Tanganyika and Nyasaland and were in possession of anti-Portuguese pamphlets and other propaganda literature.<sup>13</sup> The money from *hiriz* sales reportedly went to Tanganyika for buying weapons.

### Shaykh Yussuf Arabi and FRELIMO

In 1962, when Shaykh Yussuf met MANU leaders, there were already two other Mozambican liberation movements present in Tanganyika. One was UDENAMO, which, besides the Makua, was also attracting many Makonde to its ranks, because, as Nchucha explained to Shaykh Yussuf, this party favoured an all out war against Portugal in Mozambique.<sup>14</sup>

Some Makonde became discontented with their leaders because of the change of TMMU’s name to MANU, which sounded like a nationalist party similar to TANU and KANU (Kenyan African National Union). These Makonde wanted to maintain an ethnic ‘club’ designation, instead of belonging to a political party, which would enable them to negotiate with the Portuguese for their peaceful return to Mozambique. Despite being a Makonde himself, Nchucha opposed those who did not want the *uhuru* of Mozambique as a whole but only of their ‘own particular homeland’. However, many Makonde wanted to go to war, while the MANU leaders were still considering a peaceful transition to independence through negotiations with Portugal. Cahen (1999, pp. 38–40) believes that these factors, along with the perception that Portuguese-speaking Adelino Gwambe was more ‘Mozambican’ compared to Anglophone Mmole, played a decisive role in the process of Makonde transition from MANU to UDENAMO.

Another organisation in Tanganyika pursuing the independence of Mozambique was the Independent Mozambique National African Union (UNAMI: *União Nacional Africana Independente de Moçambique*), a small Zambezi, Tete and Niassa-based group created by José Baltazar da Costa Chagonga and Evaristo Gadaga in 1960 (Brito 1991, pp. 68–71, Hedges *et al.* 2000, p. 246). Exiled to Nyasaland after being temporarily arrested by the Portuguese, Chagonga arrived in Dar es Salaam in 1961.

On 25 June 1962, these three Mozambican movements were united into a common front: FRELIMO. Some, like Gwambe of UDENAMO, opposed the unification because they did not support the FRELIMO leader, Eduardo Mondlane, whom they suspected of being close to USA interests (Cahen 1999, pp. 43–44). Gwambe also rejected the idea of peaceful transition to independence through negotiating with Portugal. He was subsequently expelled from FRELIMO. Mmole followed TANU instructions and joined FRELIMO, even though he did not consult anybody within MANU (Cahen 1999, p. 41). He was expelled from FRELIMO in 1963 because of his associations with Gwambe. Chagonga left FRELIMO of his own volition, also in 1963.

Shaykh Yussuf recalled that in 1962 Mmole proclaimed the news about the foundation of FRELIMO at the MANU Club of Zanzibar, saying that ‘Africa was for Africans and not for the Whites’.<sup>15</sup> The meeting, attended by about 800 MANU members of Zanzibar and Pemba, almost all Makonde, deliberated and decided that the local MANU branch should be transformed into a Regional Committee of FRELIMO. Mfaume became Regional Chairman, with Sadiki Ntanga as Vice-Chairman, Nchucha as Regional Secretary and Rafael Ntuma as Treasurer. All were Makonde. According to Shaykh Yussuf, they afterwards invited Mozambican immigrants from other ethnic groups, but almost no one appeared. Besides the Makonde dominance of the Committee, it seems that the fact that they were not consulted on the dissolution of the MANU branch and foundation of a FRELIMO Committee in its place had alienated these immigrants.

The Zanzibari Committee informed the Central Committee of FRELIMO in Dar es Salaam about the prevailing situation. In 1963, the Central Committee sent Uria Simango to solve the problem. Simango arrived in April 1963 and went first to talk to the Afro-Shirazi Party, which had many Makua, Yao and other Mozambican Muslim immigrants in its ranks, asking why FRELIMO did not appeal to anybody but the Makonde. The explanation given was that the Makonde were people of ‘a lower race, who did not want to accept Islam, know nothing about hygiene, tattooed their faces and used only a cloth to cover their privates’, though there were many non-tattooed Muslim Makonde in Tanganyika and Zanzibar.<sup>16</sup> Muslims who viewed the local FRELIMO Committee as a kind of ‘Makonde Club’ did not want to join it. This situation seems to reflect the pre-revolutionary atmosphere in Zanzibar, which pitted Indian and Arab Muslims against African Muslims and non-Muslims. Coastal and Makua-speaking Muslim immigrants from northern Mozambique, with long historical religious and kinship links to Zanzibar, were better integrated in Zanzibari Muslim society than recent Makonde Muslims or non-Muslims.

Simango then invited all Mozambican immigrants for a meeting at the radio station’s Raleho Hall building. Among other things, he said that they should leave their religious and ‘tribal’ differences aside and unite for the common purpose of *uhuru* and *jamhuri* (Swahili for ‘liberation’) of Mozambique. But, after he left, the situation remained unaltered.

In June 1963, the FRELIMO Central Committee in Dar-Es-Salaam sent Paulo J. Bayeke, a Makua-speaker from Massassi, to Zanzibar to develop a propaganda campaign among Mozambicans and to prepare for Mondlane’s visit in October 1963.<sup>17</sup> Many residents of Zanzibar, along with Mozambican immigrants, went to greet him at the airport. Several Muslims considered important by FRELIMO, including many Makua-speakers, were invited to a meeting held in the local FRELIMO Committee office. Among them were Shaykh Yussuf and his wife, Mariamo Omar.

Shaykh Yussuf testified that Mondlane said immediately that they should all join FRELIMO. Later, a Makonde named Ntalama got into an argument with Mondlane, which illustrates how some Makonde felt about FRELIMO and its leader.<sup>18</sup> In particular, Ntalama expressed his impatience to start the independence war as quickly as possible. Mondlane called for patience and calm in order to avert a repetition of events like the 1960 Mueda massacre.<sup>19</sup> He concluded his conversation with an agitated Makonde, saying that the land was Mozambican, but there was a place there for everyone: Blacks, Whites, Arabs, Indians and others. Shortly after Mondlane left for a meeting with the Afro-Shirazi Party, Ntalama commented: 'this one is not an African anymore, he is White; married to a White, he is probably a Portuguese government spy'.<sup>20</sup>

Following Mondlane's visit, Mfaume asked Shaykh Yussuf and his wife to join FRELIMO, telling them that they, as important Muslims and Makua-speakers, were very valuable to the movements. Having agreed, Shaykh Yussuf became a District Chairman and his wife the President of the Women's League. As Shaykh Yussuf pointed out, they worked hard to mobilise Mozambicans and to wage a propaganda war against the Portuguese, targeting, in particular, the northern Mozambican Muslims. The news about the Portuguese burning down mosques, *madrasas* and religious literature and harassing and persecuting Muslims in northern Mozambique was brought to Zanzibar along the existing historical religious and ethnic networks. The stories were then broadcast on radio and written in pamphlets and letters to be sent back to northern Mozambique, calling on Muslims to join FRELIMO. In fact, one of Shaykh Yussuf's letters was intercepted by PIDE in April 1964 (Branquinho 1969, p. 403). In it, the Shaykh addressed fellow Muslims as a *khalifa* of the Qadiriyya and a FRELIMO official, describing Muslim grievances under Portuguese rule and inviting them to join the liberation movements because it was 'God's will'.

In Zanzibar, he and his wife, like many other Mozambicans, grew frustrated with the Makonde, who, being mostly Christians, mistrusted Muslims in FRELIMO.<sup>21</sup> Makonde were also annoyed by payments of the monthly quota to FRELIMO while 'nothing was happening' and they caused instability by continually questioning the party leadership's political capacities. Consequently, some Makonde left FRELIMO and joined the re-launched MANU in Mombassa; others entered a new *Makonde Afro-Shirazi Union* in Zanzibar.<sup>22</sup>

There were historical animosities between slave-raiding Muslims and victimised non-Muslim Makonde since the nineteenth century, but it seems that the political atmosphere in Zanzibar contributed to mutual Muslim-Makonde apprehensiveness and fed into Makonde anxieties. The 1961 elections and the 1963 British concession of Zanzibar autonomy both perpetuated the Arab Sultanate and the political superiority of Arabs, Indians and coastal Muslims, as opposed to African non-Muslim immigrants from the mainland, such as the Makonde (Crozon 1991, pp. 180–181). The Makonde became involved in the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution. Shaykh Yussuf mentioned that John Okello, a Ugandan mercenary and one of the former leaders of the Mau Mau revolt, instigated immigrant workers, including hundreds of Mozambican Makonde, to join the revolution, promising them material assistance for the *uhuru* of their homeland in Mozambique in case of revolutionary victory.<sup>23</sup> According to Shaykh Yussuf, Okello had a personal Makonde paramilitary group.

On 12 January 1964, the Sultan was deposed and Abeid Amani Karume was proclaimed the President of the newly-born Zanzibar Republic. The 'revolutionaries'

committed atrocities against the population, such as rape, murder and sacking and looting of the island (Crozon 1991, pp. 179, 183–184). After the arrival of police troops from Tanganyika and a return to relative calm, Okello was declared *persona non grata* and returned to Uganda. The Makonde, who, along with other Zanzibari lower classes, had occupied Arab properties during the revolution, and Arab lands in particular, were expelled from those properties by the new government.<sup>24</sup> Shaykh Yussuf did not know whether the Makonde received anything from Karume, but they went to see Abdurrahman Muhammad Babu to ask for jobs and assistance. Babu said that at the moment there were no jobs, except in the police or the army, but until the end of March 1964, the Makonde's situation continued to be dire. Then they asked for a camp for military training for the *uhuru* of their homeland, which, though promised, was soon forgotten by the new government. The majority of the Makonde gradually became disillusioned and began leaving for Mozambique. The PIDE noticed that significant numbers of Makonde were returning from Tanganyika to Mozambique as early as 1963.<sup>25</sup> In August 1964, Makonde loyal to MANU decided to start the independence war in Mozambique on their own by raiding the Nangololo Catholic Mission in Cabo Delgado, where they killed a Dutch missionary (Cahen 1999, p. 45).

After the revolution, foreign immigrants were forbidden to hold political meetings in Zanzibar, and FRELIMO activities were stalled. Finally, Shaykh Yussuf decided to leave the island. On 17 February 1964, he arrived at the FRELIMO headquarters in Dar es Salaam and spoke to Simango, who arranged for him to be sent to Mtwara and introduced him to Mtwara District Chairman, Lazaro Nkavandame. During his stay at Mtwara, the Shaykh saw many people coming from Mozambique to the FRELIMO office, including at least 12 Makonde students from various Christian missions along with some southerners and Makua-speakers. He was asked to write a letter targeting, in particular, those Muslims who collaborated with the Portuguese and denounced FRELIMO mobilisers. The mobilisers then took the letter to Mozambique and used it to convince Muslims to support the independence movement.

Shaykh Yussuf, however, grew tired and wanted to leave for Mozambique, because he could not find a job and had no money to support his family. The environment in Tanganyika and Zanzibar had become difficult for Mozambican immigrants. He asked Nkavandame for money, only to be taken aback when he accused him of being a PIDE spy. Shaykh Yussuf complained to various *shaykhs*, saying that he did not understand why FRELIMO had invited him and now accused him of being a spy. His requests to Muslims for money were unsuccessful. He left for Mozambique, staying in the homes of various Muslim religious leaders along the way. At Mocimboa da Praia, he and his family stopped at his uncle's house and he went to the Portuguese Administration to ask for a travel permit to Chai. That afternoon, PIDE arrested him with masses of FRELIMO paperwork, including a party bulletin in KiSwahili and Portuguese, pamphlets, letters and other documents. He was held at Ibo Fort prison for some months and then transferred to Machava prison in Lourenço Marques, from which he was released during the Transition Government in 1974.<sup>26</sup> After the independence, he attempted to join the police force, but his request was declined by the new government. He subsequently became a *mwalimu* and imam of the Qadiriyya mosque in the Mafalala neighbourhood of Maputo city, as well as one of the leaders of the national Muslim umbrella organisation, the Islamic Congress, created in 1983. In the mid-1990s, he moved back to his native Chai in Cabo Delgado, where he died in 2005.

### The role of chiefly and Sufi networks in mass mobilisation

During the early stages of the popular mobilisation, FRELIMO agents were recruited from among ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in which they subsequently worked (Brito 1991, pp. 155–160). The enlistment of important religious leaders, such as Shaykh Yussuf, by MANU and later FRELIMO also paved the way for popular acceptance by Muslims of these movements' political messages. Shaykh Yussuf's story demonstrates that FRELIMO noted MANU's previous clandestine networks of mobilisation and tapped into existing social networks in order to broaden the movement's popular support base (Bonate 2007). They knew that the most effective way of popular mobilisation in northern Mozambique would be through the involvement of the 'traditional authorities', including Sufi Orders and the institution of African chieftainship, consisting of the *régulos* and their entourage of *apia-mwene* (Emakhuwa for 'female branch of a matrilineal chieftainship'), *mahumu* (Emakhuwa for 'lesser subordinate chiefs and advisors to the *régulo*') and healers. Both the chiefly and Sufi networks extended to Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Most Muslims of northern Mozambique involved in the liberation struggle were affiliated with Sufi Orders, in particular the Qadiriyya, and to a lesser degree the Shadhuliyya (Bonate 2007). JAG de Mello Branquinho (1969, p. 147) points out that FRELIMO mobilisation occurred along routes previously approved by Islamic leaders of northern Mozambique in coordination with those residing in Tanganyika and Zanzibar. As mentioned earlier, the involvement of northern Mozambican Muslims in the liberation movements through MANU and the Qadiriyya networks had been detected by the Portuguese in Memba and other regions in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Some of these Muslims were imprisoned, tortured, killed and exiled, methods which PIDE applied even more ruthlessly in the mid and late 1960s.

The most important basis for northern Mozambican Muslim mobilisation came from the Muslim chiefly networks. Modern scholarship tends to view Islam and 'traditional authorities' in northern Mozambique as two separate and autonomous domains. West and Kloeck-Jenson (1999, p. 472), Meneses (2006, pp. 100–n24) and Rafael da Conceição (2006, p. 188) acknowledge that the response by 'traditional authorities' to FRELIMO mobilisation was not monolithic; some sided with FRELIMO, while others collaborated with the Portuguese. Conceição (2006, p. 188), however, whose research focusses on Muslims of Cabo Delgado, finds that while attitudes of the 'traditional authorities' can be traced relatively easily, those of Islamic religious leaders remain 'ambiguous'. Similarly, the Portuguese Secret Services wondered in the early 1960s about whether northern Mozambican Muslims became involved in the liberation movements through Islam or through kinship connections. But Branquinho (1969) and, especially, Monteiro (1993, pp. 113, 151) recognise that in Muslim regions of northern Mozambique 'the Islamic hierarchy coincided with the traditional socio-religious hierarchy'. In other words, Islamic religious authorities, especially the Sufi one and local African 'traditional authority' or the chieftainship were linked to each other.

The Portuguese often thought that the Ekoni-speaking Makua (Muikoni) chiefs were dragging other Muikoni into the liberation movements. But it is clear that the ethnic identity of those involved was diverse, because the formation of the chiefdoms in the regions of Muikoni influence during the height of the international slave trade at the second half of the nineteenth century involved absorbing different ethnic groups and establishing kinship ties with Muslim chiefs of other ethnic groups of northern and even central Mozambique, such as Marave (Medeiros 1997, pp. 65–71, 95–96).

Most Muslim chiefs of northern Mozambique were perceived to be kin, both by Africans themselves and by the Portuguese, and were part of historical chiefly networks, formed at the second half of the nineteenth century owing to their involvement in the international slave trade, who shared a common Muslim religious identity.

As Feierman (1990, p. 212) points out, the great appeal of the African nationalists of the liberation period, such as Nyerere, was that they 'said openly what many common people knew, but what other leaders feared to say, that the European rule needed to end so that Africans could govern themselves'. Mozambicans also joined the liberation movements because they wanted the end of colonialism (Brito 1991, pp. 160–161). Africans in general, and chiefs especially, due to their relationship to land and territory, upheld a grassroots, culturally based nationalism, which provided an additional ideological basis for their support of the liberation movements. For they perceived that 'the land was theirs and not of the whites', and that 'people from Tanganyika would come to wage a war against Whites to liberate us and our land'.<sup>27</sup>

### **Muslim response to FRELIMO in northern Mozambique**

In 1963–1966, the positive response to the nationalist mobilisation both by Sufis and, especially, chiefs and their entourage became apparent not only to FRELIMO but also to PIDE, which began taking a detailed notice of mobilisation activities by the chiefs. Recruitment as a rule occurred in a *banja*, the assembly of the prominent members of the community, when mobilisers from Tanganyika arrived. The *banja* was accompanied by rituals that provided the process of recruitment with a 'traditional' legitimacy. One of these rituals was of sacrifice to the ancestors, to extend the blessing and protection of the ancestor spirits upon the armed insurgence groups (Monteiro 1993, p. 151). Another ritual was the oath of secrecy on the *Qur'an* and reading of the *Sura Yassin*, followed by a distribution of *hiriz* in exchange for payment of membership quota (ranging from 20 to 100 Escudos) and the distribution of FRELIMO cards. When an authoritative *shaykh* of the region or a visiting one from Tanganyika or the East African coast was involved, the ceremony took place in a mosque, following regular prayers or Sufi rituals. After the first *banja*, FRELIMO expected mobilisation to continue and intelligence to be collected.<sup>28</sup>

The most spectacular support of the liberation movement occurred in those regions where forced labour and cotton production were brutally imposed. When explaining the quasi-total adherence to FRELIMO of the 'traditional' and Islamic authorities in some regions, Branquinho (1969, p. 132) emphasises that local administrators used to apply ruthless corporal violence against the plantation labourers. Some administrators forced Africans to buy goods in shops run by the administrators or their accomplices and prohibited them from buying in other shops. People were resettled by force in villages along the roads, far from ancestral homes, family lands and water resources. Therefore, not surprisingly, although the northern Mozambican Muslims in general were influenced by the political stance of Muslims in Tanganyika and Zanzibar with regard the liberation struggle, their involvement in the struggle was much more intensive in the regions of acute colonial abuses than in other regions.

### **PIDE purges of 1965–1968**

Between 1964 and 1968, the PIDE, together with local administrators, undertook arrests of Africans supporting liberation movements. A significant number of northern

Mozambican Muslim leaders were detained, including the famous chief Abdul Kamal of Megama. Many were brutally tortured and murdered, or exiled to São Tomé and other places. Kamal was imprisoned at Ibo Island, sadistically tortured and murdered (João 2000, pp. 119–121). Mosques, *madrasas* and religious literature were burned and *shaykhs* were forced to eat pork and renounce their faith; Islamic religious activities were forbidden. In Muíte region in 1965, PIDE tortured and killed 15 representatives of the Islamic religious elite, including Shaykh Bwanamire, the chief *khalifa* of the Qadiriyya in the region (Branquinho 1969, p. 350).

Simultaneously, attempts were made to co-opt Muslims to the side of colonial rule (Monteiro 1993). Between 1968 and 1972, the Portuguese regime undertook psychological actions aimed at winning the hearts and minds of Muslims against the onslaught of African nationalism. In particular, colonial authorities displayed public respect for Islam and Muslim leaders, facilitated Islamic practices and rites and took steps to improve the living conditions of Africans. These measures, however, did not alienate some of the northern Mozambican Muslims from the liberation struggle as much as FRELIMO's internal skirmishes from 1966 onwards, involving ethnic and regional contradictions, in particular, between northern Mozambicans, representing mostly the interests of rural peasantry, and the southern urban *assimilados* (Portuguese for 'people assimilated into European/Portuguese culture') (Brito 1991, pp. 91–99, 110–127). FRELIMO started envisioning post-independence Mozambique in a Marxist vein as entailing 'collective production' and the construction of a socialist country (Brito 1991, p. 161). It proposed an agenda that involved creating a completely new society from scratch, a new man and a new nation, which would discard 'tribalism' and the old colonial structures centred on chiefs, who were denounced as clinging to 'traditions' in order to maintain their power as servants of the colonial rule (Brito 1991, pp. 162–163).

Darch and Hedges (1996, pp. 139–141) maintain that these changes within FRELIMO were dictated by the worsening military situation and the abuses of power for personal enrichment on the part of FRELIMO officials with strong 'traditional' credentials. The militarisation of the regions that FRELIMO liberated from the Portuguese (the 'liberated zones') meant that military cadres were given control of food and logistical supplies in these regions to the detriment of the 'traditional' structures undertaking these activities before 1969 (Darch and Hedges 1996, Brito 1991, p. 123). Though FRELIMO continued to rely on 'traditional' structures to facilitate these processes, distrust of them was already in place. FRELIMO viewed its dealings with 'traditional' and religious 'structures' as a temporary measure shaped by the war situation. In post-independence Mozambique, the affiliations of 'tribes' and 'region' associated with the 'traditional structures' would have no place. These ideas were promoted by FRELIMO cadres in the 'liberated zones' and therefore became known among *régulos* and Muslim religious leadership.

The FRELIMO mobilisation groups also abandoned TANU-inspired structures and methods and instead integrated a socialist, single military command hierarchy, led by Party Secretaries (West 2005, pp. 141–142). Local delegates of FRELIMO departments of Health, Education, Culture, Production and Commerce formed various councils and committees, to which members were centrally appointed by the Party leadership. To prevent easy identification of the members by PIDE/DGS, FRELIMO suspended the issuing of party cards in some locations (Henriksen 1983, p. 73). Though not always as unequivocal as in 1950–1968, Muslim mobilisation and involvement in the independence war in northern Mozambique nevertheless continued.

## Conclusion

This paper has focused on the support of northern Mozambican Muslims for the two main liberation movements, MANU and FRELIMO. Their adherence to the independence message stemmed primarily from a culturally rooted nationalism, for they wished to end colonialism and recover their land from the Portuguese. Muslims of northern Mozambique were well suited to support these movements, because Islam and chieftainship were, in northern Mozambique, linked to each other. Chiefs were believed to be the ‘owners’ and ‘stewards’ of the land and a majority of Muslim leaders were from the chiefly clans.

The Muslims most active in the struggle were from the regions of intense forced labour, especially of compulsory cotton production, where the abuses of colonial administrators included physical violence against Africans and the persecution of Islam and Muslims, which served as one of the motives for Muslim participation in the liberation movements. The close historical-cultural, kinship and religious ties that Muslims of northern Mozambique had to those of Tanganyika and Zanzibar played a decisive role in their support of MANU and FRELIMO. The involvement in TANU of Muslims in Tanganyika and Zanzibar and the launching of MANU and FRELIMO in these regions inspired the adherence of the northern Mozambican Muslims to the independence message. In addition, the Qadiriyya Sufi Order was active in TANU. This Order was historically connected to its branches in northern Mozambique and used this connection to expand the nationalist ideology. The story of Shaykh Yussuf provides a concrete human story and a firsthand account of these observations.

From the late 1950s until 1968, Muslims were active in popular mobilisation and support of the liberation movements in northern Mozambique. However, from 1969 onwards, their support became less visible. In part, this was due to the 1965–1968 PIDE purges of Muslims involved in the liberation movements, which ended with massive arrests, torture, brutal murder and exile of numerous prominent Islamic leaders and Muslim chiefs. This might have deterred some from further partaking in the liberation movements. But the most important factor seems to have been FRELIMO’s adoption of an almost doctrinaire radical Marxism in the period after 1969 and the militarisation of its cadres in the liberated zones, where, though FRELIMO still relied on ‘traditional’ and Muslim religious leadership, it also began manifesting distrust towards it.

Those who survived PIDE tortures and were released from prison were not always reconsidered by FRELIMO, which suspected them of being co-opted and recruited by the Portuguese Secret Services as *comprometidos*. West (2003, p. 354) points out that ‘even those former political prisoners who had remained in prison until the end of the independence war were treated with suspicion by the post-independence FRELIMO state’. They were thus denied a place in the history of the independence war and, in most cases, erased altogether from ‘FRELIMO’s triumphant historical portrait’ (West 2003, p. 356). Groups who did not fit the portrait of secular and militant Marxist revolutionaries were also excluded from this history. Consequently, the participation of the northern Mozambican Muslims in the liberation movements, and particularly in FRELIMO, tended to be officially forgotten. This paper has attempted to recover important aspects of the history of their participation in the struggle against colonialism.

## Notes

1. For religion in general, see Michel Cahen (2000a, 2000b); for Christianity, see Teresa Cruz e Silva (2001), Alda R. Saúte (2004, 2005), Carlos Serra *et al.* (2000), David Hedges *et al.*

- (2000) and E. Morier-Genoud (2005); for Islam, see Fernando A. Monteiro (1993) and Edward A. Alpers (1999).
2. 'Relatório das conversações havidas em Porto Amelia, de 1 de Junho de 1964 à 7 de Junho de 1964, entre um dos adjuntos dos SCII e Yussuf Árabe' (78 pages), in Instituto de Arquivos Nacionais de Torre do Tombo (hereafter, IAN-TT), Lisbon, the SCCIM Collection (hereafter, SCCIM), Caixa (Box, hereafter Cx.) 60, No 408.
  3. Interviews with Shaykh Abu Dale, 13 July 2007, Maputo, and Mr. Nasurullahi Intizane Dulá, 31 March 2008, Pemba city.
  4. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 132). Shaykh Ramadhani was a renowned Qadiri *khalifa* (Arabic for the leader of a Sufi Order) of African origin, born in Zanzibar to Zigua parents from mainland Tanganyika. He received his *ijaza* (Arabic for 'religious certificate') from another Zanzibari *Qadiri* of African origin, Shaykh Abdallah Mjankeri 'Abd al-Khayr. Shaykh Abdallah Mjankeri was regarded as the successor of Shaykh 'Uways, who spread the Qadiriyya into rural areas of Zanzibar and Pemba, attracting many Africans of slave and servile status. Shaykh Husayn Ramadhani had his own *Qur'anic* school and a Qadiriyya centre in Zanzibar since 1910 (see Issa 2006).
  5. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 132).
  6. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 134).
  7. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 134).
  8. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 138).
  9. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 138).
  10. SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 138). Barnabé Lucas Ncomo (2004, pp. 86–87) mentions that relationships between MANU and UDENAMO were not good because MANU had a very limited ethnic Makonde-orientation.
  11. Direcção dos Serviços dos Negócios Indígenas, Processo Administrativo No 4/1960, 'Administração da Circunscrição de Memba, elementos extraídos destinam-se ao Centro de Informação', IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 156, No 1071, 1960–61, Processo 2/9/10/9, 'Atitudes Individuais Subversivas, Suspeitas ou Susceptíveis de Subversividade, Distrito de Moçambique' (pp. 6–7).
  12. Comando Territorial do Norte, Relatório I/172/61, 19 de Julho de 1961, in IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 60, No 418, Processos 02/11/1959-28/10/1965 (p. 388).
  13. Governador Basílio Pina de Oliveira ao SCCIM, Número do BI 3/62, 29 de Dezembro de 1962; Ivens-Ferraz de Freitas ao Comando da Região Militar, 1 de Fevereiro de 1963, Lourenço Marques; António Enes, 29 de Janeiro de 1963, Secretário de Governador do Distrito de Moçambique, Nampula, No 11/SDI/63, in IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 60, No 418, Processos 02/11/1959-28/10/1965 (pp. 327, 339–342). Distrito de Niassa, Vila Cabral, Agosto 17, 1962, Chefe do Gabinete, João Maria Bento ao SCCIM; Nota No 985/61/GOV, de 22.12.1962, Governo de Cabo Delgado, extracto; Distrito de Quissanga, Posto-Sede, 'Fetichismo e subversividade', in IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 221, No 1444, 1960–64, 'Subversão política e social no Ultramar Africano', Processo L/9, 'Fetichismo e subversividade' (pp. 44, 188, 210–212, 228).
  14. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 138).
  15. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 165–166).
  16. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 166–167).
  17. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 166–167).
  18. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 170–171).
  19. The Mueda Massacre happened on 16 June 1960 in Circumscription of the Makonde, when the colonial administration opened fire against the demonstration of African peasants against Portuguese colonialism, killing and subsequently arresting many of them (see Gentili 1993, Adam and Dyuti 1993, Borges Coelho 1993).
  20. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 170–171).
  21. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 177–179).
  22. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 177–179).
  23. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (p. 153).
  24. IAN-TT, SCCIM, 'Relatório das conversações' (pp. 162–163).
  25. 'Extracto de (BI) Boletim Informativo No 27/63, de 25/9/63, Palma', IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 60, No 418, Processos 02/11/1959-28/01/1965 (pp. 282–284).
  26. Interviews with Shaykh Abu Dale, 13 July 2007, Maputo and Mr. Nasurullahi Intizane Dulá, 31 March 2008, Pemba city.

27. PIDE, Relatório de Informação No 146, Distrito de Cabo Delgado, 30Set/1966, Assunto: Actividades Terroristas; Montepuez, BI No 1/1966, de 1 de Julho de 1966; SCCIM, Governo-Geral de Moçambique. 13 de Setembro de 1966, Relatório da Situação No 13, Distrito de Cabo Delgado No 4, período de 1 de Abril a 31 de Julho de 1966. In IANT-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 61, No 410, 'Islamismo' (pp. 268–273, 308–316, 359, 362–370, 385–386); Serviço de Acção Psicossocial, Comissão Distrital de Informação. 7 de Dezembro de 1964, Processo Ni 437/A/44, IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 60, No 418, H/9 'Islamismo' (pp. 30–33); PIDE, Informação No 895-SC.CI(2), 3/10/66, Assunto; Detecção de agitadores no Concelho de Montepuez, and PIDE, Informação No 902-SX/CI(2), 7/10/66, Assunto: Islamismo como veículo da subversão não violenta, in Arquivos da PIDE/DGS, IAN-TT, Processo 6037–CI (2), 'Unitários ou Wahhabitas'.
28. 'Relatório da PIDE, 14/9/66, Porto Amélia, No 590/66 – GAB, 27/9/66, Islamismo como veículo da subversão não-violenta', and 'Relatório da PIDE, 8/8/66, Porto Amélia, No 447–GAB', IAN-TT, SCCIM, Cx. 61, No 410 (pp. 359, 362–364).

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