

## PREFACE

Anti-colonial struggles in Africa during the 1960s fascinated me as a young academic and director of a scholarship program for African refugee students. One result was a two-volume study of the Angolan Revolution. The exigencies of an ensuing academic career delayed a similar account of the burst of nationalist awareness and activity that constituted the initial, conceptual phase of the struggle for independence in Portugal's other major African colony, Mozambique. From the fringes of that drama, I witnessed contesting ideas and conflicting ambitions within a conflict that ended in the collapse of Portuguese rule and a brief but bloody triumph of Marxist dogmatism, replete with forced collectivization, military dictatorship, and civil war.

Sequentially, a Eurafican fantasy gave way to nationalist espousals of liberal nationalism, black populism, and orthodox Marxism. Drawing on ephemeral documents, personal interviews, and verbatim excerpts from the unpublished or buried words of key players, this historical narrative attempts to go beyond the myths, simplifications, doctrinal hyperbole, and hagiography that may accompany and obfuscate accounts of an anti-colonial insurgency. With divergent ethnic and regional identities, ambitions, ideologies, educational levels, and strategic priorities Mozambique's founders competed for political power. Their aspirations intertwined, combined, dissembled, hardened, and shaped the struggle. Much of the history of the early years of the independence struggle has been distorted, blurred, or buried by the dictates of political

convenience. My goal has been to recover, reconstruct, and reveal a more accurate account of what happened.

Today as a contemporary Mozambican polity fashions the country's future in a global digital age, the legacies of the formative period of conceptual clash, exile politics, and Cold War intrusion remain vital to an understanding of what caused a bloody civil war to follow independence yet ultimately to lead a war-weary society to a fragile political reconciliation and a corruption-flawed but increasingly democratic state.

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