

**AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES**



**CONCEIVING  
MOZAMBIQUE**

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**John A. Marcum**



# African Histories and Modernities

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# Conceiving Mozambique

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## FOREWORD

In the words of its author, John A. Marcum, the purpose of *Conceiving Mozambique* is to provide an “independent and probing review and understanding of the Mozambique struggle for independence.” The book seeks to provide a necessary starting point for national reconciliation and the construction of a more just and democratic future for the country.

Marcum was the leading scholar on the liberation struggle in Portuguese Africa. His two volumes on Angola, *The Angolan Revolution*, Vol. 1, *The Anatomy of an Explosion* (1969), and Vol. 2, *Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962–1976* (1978), have since their appearance been widely recognized as the authoritative account of the protracted Angolan liberation struggle.

*Conceiving Mozambique* is in some respects the companion piece to these two works. It is based upon authoritative documentation of the gestation period of the Mozambique liberation struggle, including archival documents, abundant unpublished letters, diaries, and verbatim records of conversations with many of the principals. Part of a much larger work which he never got to complete, *Conceiving Mozambique* is a dispassionate look at the liberation struggle. It was completed by Marcum shortly before his death in 2013.

The book is clearly written in non-academic prose and takes the form of a detailed political history of the Mozambican liberation process, with particular attention to the early years. It is intended for those interested in the history of Mozambique, ex-Portuguese Africa, and African

development. It introduces the major and many of the minor dramatis personae effectively.

For more on my role in the preparation of the manuscript, please see the Acknowledgements.

Michael Clough, the co-editor of this book, gave the manuscript its current shape, while remaining faithful to Marcum's original text. He also took the time to compare the footnotes with the materials in the John A. Marcum Papers in the Africa collection at Stanford University Library. For an overview of the Marcum Papers, please consult the website. <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/8447318>

Clough was a close friend and colleague of Marcum in the early 1980s, and is the author of "John Marcum and America's Missed Opportunities in Africa," with which this book begins. Mike was a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley and completing his dissertation on US Policy toward Revolutionary Change in Southern Africa when he and John first met. From 1980 to 1986, Mike taught at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. In 1985–86 he served as the study director for the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on South Africa. From 1987 to 1996 he directed the Council on Foreign Relations' African Studies Program. Before changing careers in 2001, Mike wrote extensively on US policy toward Africa, the domestic politics of American foreign policy, and globalization. He is the author of *Free At Last?: U.S. Policy toward Africa and the End of the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 1992). Mike is currently a criminal defense attorney and, among other clients, represents five inmates on California's death row.

Santa Cruz, USA

Edmund Burke III

## 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.

Santa Cruz, CA, USA

John A. Marcum

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### JOHN MARCUM'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe special thanks to former Mozambican students, among them nationalist pioneers such as Joao Nhambiu and Joseph Massinga, among others, for sharing their diverse experiences, insights and perspectives; to Janet Mondlane for making available personal archives housed at the University of Southern California; to Manuel de Araujo of the Centro de Estudos Moçambicanos e Internacionais (Maputo) for his encouragement; and to American actors and observers, notably J. Wayne Fredericks, George Houser, Douglas Wheeler, and Gerald Bender.

### EDMUND BURKE'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although John Marcum left a completed manuscript of *Conceiving Mozambique* when he died, a great deal of work was required to produce a clean manuscript, given that the book was written over the last decades of Marcum's life on a variety of different word-processing systems. To produce the final version of the manuscript a host of unsuspected little problems, the result of the geological deposits of each generation of word-processing, had to be debugged. Let them all be thanked according to their contributions:

Former colleagues Peter Kenez and Will Vrolman each played important roles in the first phase of untangling the Marcum manuscript, and each is here abundantly thanked. Unfortunately the untangling process was only in its infancy.

Had it not been for the amazing Candace Freiwald whose career as a typist and editor spanned the digital word-processing era, we would still be finalizing the manuscript. That Candace accomplished this with her usual combination of hard work, skill, and good humor is all the more amazing. In the process, she earned my undying gratitude and that of Gwen Marcum (as well as that of all of readers of this book).

Rachel Hohn assisted in the process of preparing the Marcum Collection for shipment to Stanford University Press. We are grateful to her as well.

### PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We'd like to thank the owners of the photos included here for their generosity

in authorizing their publication.

-The photo of John Marcum, George Houser, and others with Kwame Nkrumah at the 1958 All-African People's Congress was kindly supplied by the family of the late George Houser.

-The photo of John Marcum with some unknown African students was taken in 1960 on the occasion of a meeting of Crossroads Africa. It is supplied by Gwen Marcum, John's widow.

-We are grateful to Ambassador Lopez Tembe Ndelane for the group portrait of the founding members of UDENAMO.

-Shannon Moeser has made available the portrait of Leo Milas printed in this book, for which we are most thankful.

# CONTENTS

1	Eduardo Mondlane	1
2	The Rise of Mozambican Nationalism	17
3	Frelimo	35
4	The Ravages of Exile Politics	55
5	OAU, UN, and USA	73
6	Mondlane in Dar es Salaam	85
7	New Contenders	101
8	Students vs. Soldiers	107
9	Mondlane's Assassination	129
10	The Collapse of Portugal	155
11	Independent Mozambique	171

<b>Bibliography</b>	189
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<b>Index</b>	197
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## ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Edmund (“Terry”) Burke III** is Research Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California at Santa Cruz. After John Marcum’s death he undertook to bring the final manuscript into publishable form as a tribute to Marcum his friend and colleague of long standing.

Burke is the author and editor of numerous books and articles on Middle East and North African history, orientalism, and environmental history. His recent books include: *The Ethnographic State: France and Moroccan Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); *The Environment and World History, 1500–2000* (University of California Press, 2009); and *Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

**Michael (“Mike”) Clough** became a close friend and colleague of John in the early 1980s, when Mike was teaching at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and completing his dissertation on US Policy toward Revolutionary Change in Southern Africa. In 1985–86 Mike served as the study director for the Secretary of State’s Advisory Committee on South Africa. From 1987 to 1996 he directed the Council on Foreign Relations’ African Studies Program. Before changing careers in 2001, Mike wrote extensively on US policy toward Africa, the domestic politics of American foreign policy, and globalization. He is the author of *Free At Last: U.S. Policy toward Africa and the End of the Cold War*. Mike is now a criminal defense attorney and, among other clients, represents five inmates on California’s death row.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACOA	American Committee on Africa
ANC	African National Congress
CEMO	Center for Mozambican and International Studies
CIMADE	Inter-Movement Committee to the Émigrés
CLM	Council for the Liberation of Mozambique
CONCP	Conference of Portuguese African Nationalist Movements
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GRAE	Guinea Revolutionary Government in Exile
KANU	Kenya African National Union
MAC	Anti-Colonialist Movement
MANU	Mozambique African National Union
MONIREMO	Movement for Unity and Reconciliation
MPLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRUPP	Mozambique Revolutionary United People's Party
NESAM	Central of African Secondary Students in Mozambique
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAFMECSA	Pan-African Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa
PAIGC	African Party of Guinea and Cape Verde
PCN	Coalition Party of Mozambique
PIDE	Portuguese secret police
RAWU	African Worker's Railways Union
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance Organization
SNASP	National Popular Security Service
SRANC	Southern Rhodesia African National Congress

TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
UDENAMO	Mozambican Democratic National Union
UGEAN	General Union of Black African Students Under Portuguese Colonial Domination
UNEMO	Union of National Mozambican Students



## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 8.1	John Marcum, Kwame Nkrumah, and others at the 1958 All-Africa People's Conference in Accra, Ghana	109
Fig. 8.2	John Marcum with African students at Lincoln University for Crossroads Africa Meeting in 1960	113
Fig. 8.3	Founding members of UDENAMO, date unknown. Right to left, among others: Seated: Daniel Malhalela, Lopez Tembe, Absalao Bahule, Lourenço Matola and Silverio Nungo; Standing: Eli Ndimene, Joao Munguambe, Diwas, Antonio Murrupa, Adelino Gumane, Urias Simango, Filipe Samuel Magaia and Fernando Mungaka	125
Fig. 8.4	Leo Milas (aka Leo Clinton Aldridge, Jr., aka Seifeddine Leo Milas)	126

## INTRODUCTION: JOHN MARCUM AND AMERICA'S MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICA

“Knowledgeable, soft-spoken, fluent in French, and easy to get along with.”<sup>1</sup> That is how George Houser, one of the pioneers of American efforts to support African liberation movements, described his reasons for asking John Marcum, a then young professor at Lincoln University, to accompany him on a long and dangerous hike into rebel territory in northern Angola in January 1962. Houser’s description was remarkably apt. Language skills aside, the traits Houser listed explain, in part, why John was one of the very few prominent voices in the long and divisive debate over US policy toward southern Africa who was respected and warmly regarded by both activists like Houser and conservative policymakers like former US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker. But the near-universal respect that John earned from diverse political and ideological quarters was due, most of all, to his ability to combine his unceasing commitment to ending Portuguese colonialism with hard-headed, fact-based analysis of Portuguese rule and the nationalist movements in Angola and Mozambique.

John completed this book in the final months of an exceptional life. He conceived it nearly a half-century earlier, in the early 1960s, as part of an ambitious project to document the struggle to end Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique. The first volume—*The Angolan Revolution: The Anatomy of an Explosion, 1950–1962*—was published in 1969.<sup>2</sup> It confirmed John’s position as a preeminent member of the first generation of American political scientists to focus on post-colonial Africa. Nine

years later, after the sudden collapse of Portuguese colonialism, volume 2—*The Angolan Revolution: Exile, Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962–76*—was published.<sup>3</sup> John collected much of the material that this book is based on in the 1960s, but his plan for a book on Mozambique was interrupted as he was increasingly drawn into academic administration at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and, in 1990, became the director of the University of California's system-wide Education Abroad Program. In 2007, at the age of 80, he finally “retired,” and, despite battling serious illnesses, completed *Conceiving Mozambique*.

Like everything else John wrote over the course of his extraordinarily long academic career, this book was written with a larger purpose. In the brief concluding section of the manuscript, which John emailed to his wife, Gwen, in May 2013, he wrote:

By salving its wounds with an historical cleansing Mozambique can unburden its future, free itself from the straitjacket of historical mythology and dogma and enable its citizens to better comprehend how a long, harsh colonial rule negatively limited human perceptions and behavior, how centuries of educational deprivation and arbitrary rule inevitably warped views of race and ethnicity, and how the shortcomings of military intolerance and class determinism led to authoritarianism, impoverishment and unspeakable violence. The search for an unvarnished and compassionate understanding of Mozambique's past will be crucial over time to the construction of a more just and democratic future. Hopefully the narrative of the preceding pages may help to provoke such a liberating process.

It is time for the country to clear the political deck and free young minds from the delimiting outcomes of cruel history. It is time for a new generation of Mozambicans to explore, think, question, challenge and commit themselves to the long, arduous step-by-step process of reconceiving and building a new Mozambique.

The values and hopes reflected in this conclusion are remarkably similar to those expressed in *The Challenge of Africa*, a long essay John published in February 1960.<sup>4</sup> Written after the first wave of decolonization and before Africa had become a Cold War battleground, that essay clearly distinguished John from other young political scientists who were flocking to Africa to begin their academic careers. At the time he wrote this essay, there were nine independent states in Africa and six more about to become independent, including the Belgian Congo. The civil

war in the Congo, which arguably marked the beginning of the Cold War in Africa, had not begun. For most of those scholars, Africa offered a unique research opportunity—a chance to witness the birth of states firsthand, develop new theories of political development, and establish academic credentials. This group included, most notably, David Apter, James Coleman, Carl Rosberg, Richard Sklar, Immanuel Wallerstein, Ruth S. Morgenthau, and Crawford Young.<sup>5</sup> They all played leading roles in developing the study of African politics. But, with the exception of Morgenthau<sup>6</sup> and John A. Davis,<sup>7</sup> none of them became engaged in trying to shape US policy toward Africa in the ways that John did.

As he wrote in *The Challenge of Africa*, John viewed the emergence of independent Africa as part of “man’s noble but desperate struggle to build a more humane, peaceful previous esthetic society.”<sup>8</sup> His intended audience was not other Africanists. Instead, John sought to influence both “Western” policymakers and the “architects of tomorrow’s Africa”: the small educated African elite that was then in the forefront of the African independence movement.<sup>9</sup> In a passage that aptly reflected the perspective John would maintain throughout his life, he wrote:

It is not for the West to try to force its behavioral patterns, values and institutions upon an unwilling Africa. The West’s “democratic faith,” however, dictates that it make a real effort to demonstrate the worth of such Western ideals as political tolerance, democratic process, cultural freedom, equal social opportunities and limited government. Not an unimportant part of this demonstration must come through the more perfect realization of these ideals in the West itself—in the American South and the Iberian Peninsula, for example.<sup>10</sup>

After detailing the challenges and opportunities facing Africa, John concluded: “With a little wisdom, compassion, good fortune and a measure of outside help, Africans can make their continent into a symbol of man’s hopes for himself.”<sup>11</sup>

In light of the developments that followed,<sup>12</sup> it is easy to read *The Challenge of Africa* as naive and hopelessly idealistic. But that would be a mistake. John was well aware of the hurdles that would have to be overcome in order to “construct a peaceful continent of new nations.” It is only in retrospect that the possibilities that John tried to help Western policymakers and Africa’s emerging leaders imagine and realize seem not to have existed.

*Conceiving Mozambique* should be read first and foremost as part of the larger (and still largely untold) story of how US policymakers failed to meet the challenge of Africa in the early 1960s. As his conclusion reflects, it is also a testament to John's refusal to give up hope that, even if only in a future he would not live to see, Africa's political leaders would meet that challenge.

In the mid-1950s John had traveled to North Africa in conjunction with his doctoral dissertation research on French North Africa,<sup>13</sup> and his personal experiences in France during that country's bitter debate over its settler colony in Algeria informed John's understanding of the process of ending Portuguese rule in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique.<sup>14</sup> But John was not "introduced to Black Africa" until the summer of 1957, which he spent as a participant in an "Experiment in International Living" summer program in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup>

John's involvement in Portuguese Africa began in earnest in December 1958 at the All-African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana. The previous year Ghana became the first former colony in sub-Saharan Africa to become independent; and Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President, became the leading proponent of a Pan-African vision of the continent's future. In 1958–59 he received a Ford Foundation grant that allowed him to travel to West Africa, and "being in neighboring Ivory Coast at the time," he flew to Accra, where he met the Belgian Congo's tragically fated first President, Patrice Lumumba. (Because of his fluency in French, John was asked to serve as an interpreter for Lumumba at the conference.) In Accra he was also introduced to Angolan nationalist leader Holden Roberto. Some weeks later John was in Brazzaville, the capital of the French Congo, and met with other Angolan nationalists, who described "a process of slow genocide going on inside Angola." Thus began John's personal connection with the nascent political movements that would shape the struggle for independence in Angola and Mozambique.

From 1955 until 1961 John taught at Colgate University.<sup>16</sup> In 1959 he introduced a course on Africa and, as a result of his friendship with Houser, was able to arrange for some of Africa's most prominent nationalist leaders including Kenneth Kaunda, the future president of Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), to speak to his students. With money that came in part from a prize won by Colgate's "Quiz Bowl" team, John organized a scholarship program for students from Northern Rhodesia.

In the summer of 1960 John returned to Africa as a leader of a Crossroads Africa school-building project in Senegal. Crossroads Africa was established in 1958 by Dr. James H. Robinson as a pioneering effort to “build bridges of friendship to Africa” and was called “the progenitor of the Peace Corps” by President John Kennedy. In 1961 Edward R. Murrow and Howard K. Smith of CBS News produced a film—*Crossroads Africa: Pilot for a Peace Corps*—that reflected the spirit of pragmatic idealism that motivated and influenced John’s early involvement in Africa. While he was in Senegal, John received a call from the USA asking him to accompany former Governor of New York and Ambassador to the Soviet Union W. Averell Harriman on a fact-finding mission to West Africa on behalf of Democratic presidential candidate John Kennedy.

In 1961 John moved from Colgate to Lincoln University, the first degree-granting historically black university in the USA. Its alumni include Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikwe, Nigeria’s first president. When John arrived at Lincoln, the Kennedy administration seemed to be on the verge of embracing the winds of change that were sweeping across the African continent, identifying the USA with African nationalism and taking a strong stand at the United Nations against both Portuguese colonialism and apartheid in South Africa.

In July 1957, as a young Senator from Massachusetts, Kennedy sharply criticized the Eisenhower administration’s “dismal” record on the Algerian issue and called for policies that would shape “a course toward political independence in Algeria.”<sup>17</sup> After he was elected, Kennedy made three appointments that seemed to signal a dramatic change in the direction of US policy toward Africa. Former presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson, who was the leader of the liberal internationalist wing of the Democratic Party, was appointed to be the USA’s Ambassador to the United Nations. Chester Bowles, another Democratic Party leader, who had served as Ambassador to India, was appointed to be Under Secretary of State, the number two position in the Department. (In 1956 Bowles, a prolific author, had written what is possibly the first major book on US policy toward independent Africa—*Africa’s Challenge to America*.<sup>18</sup>) And G. Mennen (“Soapy”) Williams, the former Governor of Michigan, was appointed to be Assistant Secretary of State for Africa.<sup>19</sup> Stevenson, Bowles, and Williams were fervent liberal internationalists in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson, Sumner Welles, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Unfortunately, Senator Kennedy’s Algeria

speech and the appointment of Stevenson, Bowles, and Williams raised hopes that were not realized.

When President Kennedy was inaugurated in January 1961, the USA was uniquely positioned to support and shape the emergence of the Africa John had imagined in his 1960 essay: a peaceful, democratic, and developing continent led by a new and growing generation of African leaders. The USA's advantages in post-colonial Africa included the leading role that Washington had played in championing self-determination at the end of the First World War and in creating the United Nations after the Second World War, the lack of direct association with Africa's colonial past, the international goodwill created by Kennedy's election, and the unparalleled economic and other resources at the disposal of American policymakers. Another important factor was the establishment of African studies programs at universities such as Northwestern University (1948), Howard University (1953), and UCLA (1959) that eagerly became involved in training future African leaders such as Eduardo Mondlane and supporting the development of colleges and universities in Africa. Finally, and not to be underestimated, was the enthusiasm of the Crossroads Africa volunteers John led in Senegal in 1960 and the young Americans who rushed to join the Peace Corps. US policy toward Africa was also inextricably tied to Africa by our country's history of slavery and the struggle for racial equality, which was becoming a powerful force in American society just as Africa was becoming independent.

Tragically, American policymakers failed to meet the challenges John identified in his 1960 essay. The opportunities that existed at the dawn of the African independence era were squandered as result of Washington's inability to see through the fog created by the Cold War. Instead of promoting peaceful transitions from colonial rule to independence, the USA intervened in Africa—politically and militarily, overtly and covertly—in ways that undermined movement toward democracy, exacerbated political and military conflicts, and promoted and entrenched some of the most dictatorial regimes that came to power in Africa, including, most prominently, Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (the Belgian Congo).<sup>20</sup> And, in an unfortunate twist of history, the USA came to be viewed by many Africans as an ally of Lisbon and the white rulers in Rhodesia and South Africa. The full story of the tragic failure of US policy in Africa in the early 1960s has yet to be told. But John's short book tells that story in microcosm.