

The Invention of the *Dia de Portugal*

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Introduction

The question of public holidays was a topic of discussion in Portugal recently,¹ but it is important to understand how holidays are fixed by the political authorities and the multiple meanings that they have acquired over time. We have chosen for discussion the Portuguese national day, celebrated each 10 June, which supposedly marks the death of the poet Luís Vaz de Camões, in 1580. As far as we know, it is unique that a figure of literature and culture should be chosen to represent a whole country as a public holiday. The vast majority of countries choose a date related to the foundation of the state or the ruling political system.² Independence days are abundant in a world where history was constructed around a succession of empires and colonizations which, by way of multiple cultural mixings, produced national entities and the chopping up of territories and frontiers. Next in numbers, and with very similar meanings, are the dates marking unification, the creation of a federation or confederation or the formation of a particular political system, which might be the date of a revolution, the start of a new constitution, or the inauguration of a parliament. It is generally republican regimes that need these types of date to identify themselves with the nation. Monarchies prefer to celebrate the birthday or the day of enthronement of the sovereign, while more rarely the national day is celebrated on the day of the nation's patron saint. In this way the personification is linked to the ruling monarch or with the saints behind the national saints' days. The most suggestive case is the United Kingdom, which has no national day as such, although diplomatic institutions identify it with the queen's official birthday, while the constituent nations celebrate the day of their respective saint. In Portugal, as we shall see, the nation is personified in the poet Luís de Camões, and his day has been promoted as a national day.

The institution of national days is recent, and generally goes back no further than the start of the twentieth century.³ The fixing of these days is naturally

¹ As an austerity measure, the government has suspended two secular holidays, Restoration of Independence Day (1 December) and Foundation of the Republic Day (5 October), and two religious holidays, Corpus Christi Day and All Saints Day.

² See Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Day> [accessed 7 March 2012].

³ For the French case see Rémi Dalisson, *Célébrer la Nation: les Fêtes nationales en France de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2009). For a more general approach see *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising Identity*, ed. by David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

subject to the political vicissitudes of states and to cultural changes, which leads to alterations and to polemics around the chosen dates, which are often not consensual. However, their choice forms part of the politics of memory and the construction of national identities which has been a keynote of modern states and of their leaders who thus try to identify themselves with the nation. The nation as a large human grouping defined as a community, with horizontal relationships of fraternity and identity between its members,⁴ is a historical construction with roots that can be traced to the pre-modern period. However, it is only in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that nations take on the characteristics that we now attribute to them. The sociologist Anthony Smith has defined the modern nation as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members'.⁵ And as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have shown, the construction of a common culture, with its own symbols, memories and rituals, was a deliberate process of the invention of traditions.⁶ For the case in point, the invention of the Dia de Portugal can be traced back to the nineteenth century and the transformation of Luís de Camões into the embodiment of Portugal. However, it was in the twentieth century that the day of his death became the national day, undergoing successive ideological appropriations which reflect the political and cultural changes taking place in Portuguese society.⁷ Our analysis will focus on the process of the invention and reinvention of the Dia de Portugal, up to the final year of the presidency of Ramalho Eanes, in 1985.

A Celebration of Portugal

The invention of the 10 June as a national day was a slow process. First it was necessary to fix the date. Following the researches of the Viscount of Juromenha, a leading scholar and biographer of Camões in the nineteenth century, it was decided that Camões died on 10 June 1580, despite the lack of any certainty.⁸ In fact the only document in the Torre do Tombo National Archive that refers to the date of his death is his mother's petition to the king for a pension, made some years after his death. There is no other evidence, and experts are divided on the day and even the year of his death. However, 10 June

⁴ Chris Southcott, 'Au-delà de la conception politique de la nation', *Communications*, 45 (1987), 51–67.

⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 14.

⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁷ When we use the term 'ideological' we wish to indicate that it deals with representations with an essentially political function, in the sense of transforming, or regenerating (as we often say), or conserving a particular regime. In this broader sense, they still have the political function of contributing to the unity and identity of the nation-state.

⁸ Jordão de Freitas, 'Morte e enterramento de Camões', in *4º Centenário do Nascimento de Camões, 1524 — 1924*, ed. by Pedro de Moura e Sá ([Lisbon]: Comissão das Festas Camonianas, [1924]), p. 14.

became a point of reference for collective memory, and a 'place of memory' for the nation, and the poet became a national symbol and embodiment of Portugal, as was described by Oliveira Martins.⁹ A true romantic icon, the life and work of Camões had all the necessary ingredients to fire the imagination of writers and to make him a popular figure.¹⁰ In 1867 his statue was the first — apart from that of D. José — to be erected in a public square in the capital, and a few years later the proposal for a commemoration of the tercentenary of his death brought together monarchists and republicans, Roman Catholics and lay people, elites and popular classes in one great national celebration. The national and regional press played a crucial role in promoting the festivities and helped make known the history and work of the poet. That tercentenary, in 1880, was a key moment in the consecration of Camões as a symbol of nationhood, as has been documented in a number of scholarly publications.¹¹ As part of these commemorations, the remains attributed to Camões were exhumed from the church at the Convent of Sant'Ana and moved to the Monastery of the Jerónimos, in Belém, raised to the status of a National Pantheon.

After the formation of the Republic (1910), the Lisbon City Council decided that its municipal holiday should be moved to 10 June. In this way, the councillors revived the glorious memory that republicans had of the tercentenary celebrations, and found an alternative to the traditional religious festivals of popular saints with which municipal holidays were generally associated. Portuguese republicans thus sought to create their own pantheon of national values, with a secular character, that could serve as examples for the common people. This holiday was first celebrated in the capital on 10 June 1911. Given the proximity to the holiday for Saint Anthony (Santo António), the capital's patron saint, on 13 June, there was a 'confusão incrível' [incredible confusion] between the two celebrations, in the view of a columnist in the *Ilustração Portuguesa*, and Camões became 'o novo santo de Lisboa' [Lisbon's new saint].¹² There was a civic procession, with speeches and the laying of flowers at the base of his monument, but the popular celebrations consisted of ballads and dances, illuminations and fireworks. That is, the popular tradition resisted the imposition of new symbols and absorbed them into the festive rituals associated with the popular saints.

⁹ Oliveira Martins, *Camões, Os Lusíadas e a Renascença em Portugal*, 4th edn (Lisbon: Guimarães Editores, 1986) (follows text of 2nd rev. edn of 1891), p. 249. We use the term 'place of memory' created by Pierre Nora (*Les Lieux de mémoires*, Tomo I, II & III (Paris: Gallimard, 1984, 1986, 1992)).

¹⁰ See Jorge Borges de Macedo, 'Camões em Portugal no século XIX', *separata* of the *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*, 33 (1985).

¹¹ On all these points see Fernando Catroga, 'Ritualizações da História', in *História da História em Portugal sécs. XIX–XX*, ed. by Luís Reis Torgal, José Amado Mendes and Fernando Catroga (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1996), pp. 551–55; repr. in 2 vols (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 1998), II, 226–30. I also touch on the same topic in my *Memória e Império: as comemorações em Portugal, 1880–1960* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, 2002), pp. 52–55 and 525–37.

¹² *Ilustração Portuguesa* (Lisbon), 2nd series, vol. XI, pp. 780–81.

The commemorations on 10 June varied over the years according to the political circumstances, and the day was even celebrated as Allies' Day, in 1917, when the War held everyone's attention. After the War, there was an attempt to restore the civic character and give a new splendour to celebrations. As Sebastião Magalhães Lima remarked in 1911:

Invocar o seu nome é ressuscitar a nossa passada grandeza, continuar a nossa história, reatar a nossa tradição, glorificar a nossa raça, celebrar o nosso povo, afirmar a consciencia nacional, viver enfim para o progresso e a prosperidade da nação.¹³

[To invoke his name is to revive our past grandeur, to continue our history, to reconnect to our tradition, to glorify our race, to celebrate our people, to affirm national awareness, to live then for the progress and the prosperity of the nation.]

The poet was an inspiration to the young Republic, and the following year the writer Guerra Junqueiro recalled his verses at the next celebration of his day:

Libertámo-nos. Banimos para sempre os 'fracos reis que fazem fraca a forte gente', os déspotas e os tiranos 'cuja vontade | Manda mais que a justiça e verdade'. [...] Demos corpo concreto e realidade ao que ontem foi sonho e aspiração. Criemos juntos, no trabalho comum, a Pátria Nova. Invocámos Camões para a libertar; moldemo-la então à sua imagem. Façamo-la heróica e grande como a epopeia.¹⁴

[We have liberated ourselves. We have banished for ever the 'weak kings who make a strong people weak', the despots and tyrants 'whose will | overrules justice and truth'. [...] We have given concrete form and reality to what yesterday was dream and aspiration. Let us create together, by our common labour, the New Fatherland. We have invoked Camões to liberate it; let us mould it then in his image. Let us make it as heroic and great as his epic.]

In 1924 the quatercentenary of Camões' birth was also celebrated, though also on 10 June, because the exact date was not known. At a difficult time for the republican regime and for Portuguese society, the nation's lay saint was called on once again. The celebrations in the capital lasted six days, and had repercussions in other parts of the country, and abroad, especially in Spain.

In the press, the expression *Festa da Raça* [Festival of the Race] was used to refer to the Camonian celebrations. The meaning of the term 'race' was vague, and in general it was used to refer to the Portuguese people, as the descendants of illustrious forefathers who had a distinguished place in the annals of human history. The story of this 'race' was to be found in Camões' narrative epic, *Os Lusíadas*, as well as in the example of his own life. The 'race' was partly a matter

¹³ *O Século* (Lisbon), 11 June 1911.

¹⁴ Guerra Junqueiro, *Prosas dispersas* (Porto: Lello & Irmão, n.d.), pp. 99–100 (first edn 1921). His quotations are from the *Lusíadas*, Canto III, verse 138, and Canto X, verse 23, respectively, slightly adapted.

of hereditary traits of biology and blood-line, but also a sense of superiority, of an elect that had been formed over time by the valorous acts that distinguished the Portuguese. The term was also related to a collective psychology and the 'soul' that led the nation to distinguish itself from the rest of the world, as a force for civilization and the progress of humanity. From an ideological perspective, the work of colonization was understood as Portugal's greatest contribution to modern civilization. This meant that in order to measure up to their history and their destiny, the Portuguese needed to be better educated, to develop their country, and to draw level with more advanced countries. The celebrations thus fitted into the democratic, liberal and patriotic ideological framework that inspired the leading mentors of the Portuguese First Republic.

It was in the context of the celebrations of the birth of Camões that the Senate approved a decree, on 6 June 1924, stipulating that 'é considerada nacional a Festa de Portugal que se celebrará no dia 10 de Junho de cada ano' [the Festival of Portugal is considered national and will be celebrated on 10 June every year].¹⁵ To that end an organizing committee would be nominated, also annually. The decree does not state explicitly that it is a public holiday, but that became the custom, at least in the public services. The decree was promulgated only in 1925, after the Senate had sent it a second time to the President.¹⁶ The justification for turning a municipal holiday into a national one is to be found in the weight that the republicans always attached to Camões as a symbol of Portugal and the Portuguese. It made no sense for it to be relegated to a mere local holiday, even for the country's capital — it was necessary to make it into a national occasion.

Race and Empire

After the military coup of 28 May 1926 which put an end to the First Republic, the annual celebrations of 10 June continued. And while, unsurprisingly, the date passed almost unnoticed in that year, it was revitalized in 1927 by the Historical Society of National Independence, and it was on that occasion that the statue of Adamastor, in the gardens of the Alto de Santa Catarina, was inaugurated. The evocation of the mythological figure of Adamastor, created by Camões in Canto V of *Os Lusíadas*, recalled the audacity and heroism of the Portuguese navigators who had to confront unknown seas and huge challenges to achieve their aims, and above all the feat of passing the Cape of Storms, later known as the Cape of Good Hope. However, the inauguration of a statue was an exceptional element in the official programme of celebrations, which usually amounted to a 'solemn session' of the Geographical Society, attended by the President of the Republic, other leading figures, and the diplomatic corps. The civic procession typical of the First Republic was replaced by a pilgrimage

¹⁵ República Portuguesa, Senado, 6 June 1924, AHPR/SG/AG/AG0101/AG010102/002/066.

¹⁶ *Diário de Governo*, I série, nº 114, 25 May 1925.

of schoolchildren to the poet's statue, situated in the square in Lisbon bearing his name, which was joined by local people and the authorities. In some years veterans of the Great War also took part.

When in 1929 the country's public holidays were fixed, the date of 10 June was kept as the *Festa de Portugal*.¹⁷ The day became integrated with the rest of the nation's regular holidays of a religious or civic nature, such as Restoration Day (1 December) or Republic Day (5 October). In 1937 the pilgrimage to the statue could not take place, even though people had gathered at the site, because the organizers had not received permission from the Civil Government.¹⁸ The times were not right for gatherings and marches. By contrast, public gymnastic displays by young people were well received by the authorities; later they would become the *Festival de Juventude* [Festival of Youth], organized by the *Mocidade Portuguesa* [Portuguese Youth], in the national stadium, inaugurated in 1944. Theatricals, concerts, lectures and exhibitions were held occasionally, particularly in the *Ateneu Comercial*, the *Voz do Operário*, and other venues associated with republican culture.

In the 1930s and 1940s the new regime did not seem much committed to the Camonian celebrations, as they were closely linked to the republican tradition. Furthermore, the 10 June continued to be overshadowed by its proximity to the feast of Saint Anthony, the patron saint of the capital, diverting public attention. In 1932, the popular costume parades took place for the first time, and the municipal celebrations came to be associated with that festival. The bard of Portuguese letters had a limited public resonance, within cultured circles, though the City Council continued with the ritual of placing flowers on his monument throughout the *Estado Novo* (1933–74).

In 1940, the year of the 'double centenary' (the quatercentenary of the death of Camões and the eighth centenary of the foundation of the nation), the day was marked by a 'solemn session' of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, on the 'Glorification of the Portuguese Language'.¹⁹ The session was opened by the Academy's president, Júlio Dantas, with a hyperbolic and strongly nationalistic speech, followed by the philologist Rebelo Gonçalves with a lecture on the 'Imperial Language'. Intellectuals who supported the regime extolled the poet as a symbol of empire, and valorized the role of the Portuguese language in this process. Underlying the same idea was a text by the Brazilian writer, Afrânio Peixoto — read out because he could not attend the ceremony — on the 'Common Language', in which he emphasized that 'a vida de Portugal, "em pedaços repartida", é recordada pela língua que se ouve em todos os cantos do planeta' [the life of Portugal, 'divided into pieces', is recorded by the language that is heard in every corner of the planet].²⁰

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I série, n° 174, 1 August 1929.

¹⁸ *O Século* (Lisbon), 11 June 1937.

¹⁹ Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, 'Glorificação da Língua Portuguesa', Sessão Solene na..., em 10 de Junho de 1940, *Separata do Boletim*, vol. XII, June–July 1940.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32. The quotation alludes to *Canção IX*, ll. 26–30.

In the post-war years there were hopes in opposition sectors for political change. The creation of the MUD (Movement for Democratic Unity) and internal political agitation confirmed that a special moment had arrived. In 1948, the political relaxation caused by the forthcoming presidential elections and hopes for a move towards democracy led to a celebration of 10 June on republican lines: a popular demonstration and a march around the monument, with the participation of schoolchildren, and the laying of flowers in honour of the epic poet.²¹ But the initiative was not repeated.

In the 1950s public attention turned to the gathering of thousands of children and young people at the Jamor national stadium, just outside Lisbon, where they would be an open-air mass and gymnastic displays. In other cities too there were also 'festas da lusitanidade' [festivals of Lusitanianism], which had a considerable impact on account of the number of families of *lusitos* that attended. At the Geographical Society, the Head of State presided at a ceremony for the close of the academic year, and awarded some primary school teachers the Order of Public Instruction. This ceremony was repeated every year, and the number of teachers decorated increased each time, so that it became necessary to move to larger premises. In some years it took place in the Liceu Camões, the symbolism of which was duly emphasized. During the Estado Novo, therefore, the commemoration of Camões Day remained linked to the youth and the value of public instruction.

In a 1952 decree establishing holidays, 10 June became officially designated as the *Dia de Portugal* [Portugal Day]. It was expressly stated that Camões' day was chosen 'pelo alto valor nacional e pela projecção universal da obra do nosso grande épico, na qual se consubstanciam as maiores glórias dos Descobrimentos' [for its high national value and for the global projection of the work of our great epic poet, in which are united the greatest glories of the Discoveries].²² In line with this notion, the government decided to transfer the date of the annual presentation of compliments to the President of the Republic, as Head of State, from the New Year to the Dia de Portugal, with effect from 1958.²³ The diplomatic ceremony was marked by a reception in the presidential palace, at Belém, and by the traditional presentation of compliments, which was extended to the provincial and district capitals and to the Portuguese embassies abroad. The celebrations reported in the press were of a civic character, based on protocol, and the mobilization of the young *lusitos* continued to be the most animated part of the festivities. The more popular element dating from the First Republic had disappeared, and civic processions were inconceivable.

With the start of the colonial wars there was a change to the ritual of the Dia de Portugal, which came to be associated with military ceremonies at which officers and soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the colonies were

²¹ *O Século* (Lisbon) 11 June 1948, p. 2.

²² *Diário do Governo*, I série, n° 1, 4 January 1952, Decreto n° 38.596.

²³ *O Século* (Lisbon), 12 June 1958.

decorated. As a newspaper indicated in its headline, it was the day on which the regime celebrated ‘a firmeza, a abnegação, o estoicismo dos heróicos defensores de África e da Índia Portuguesa’ [the firmness, the abnegation, the stoicism of the heroic defenders of Portuguese Africa and India].²⁴ The ceremony would take place in the capital, in the privileged setting of the Praça do Comércio, or in some years in Belém, and was extended to the headquarters of all the military zones, in mainland Portugal, on the Atlantic islands, and overseas. The number receiving decorations was increasing and reached high numbers, particularly for the Cruz de Guerra.²⁵ Many medals were awarded posthumously, and were received by their mourning families. Africans belonging to local contingents of the Portuguese military were also decorated. As the war intensified, local recruitment increased, to reach nearly half of all the men mobilized, most of them black Africans.²⁶

The objective of such ceremonies is obvious: to mobilize and enthuse the population and to make ideological propaganda justifying the wars, in an emotional atmosphere. In the official speeches the colonial wars were presented as a new Portuguese epic against the enemies of western civilization. In the concluding speech made on 10 June 1973, the President, Admiral Américo Tomaz, referred variously to the ‘mundo estonteante e estonteado’ [the dizzying and dizzied world], to a ‘decomposição progressiva’ [progressive decomposition], to the corruption of societies, and to the ‘caos em que a civilização ocidental se está precipitando’ [chaos into which western civilization is being thrown headlong], undermined by communism.²⁷ He also affirmed that ‘temos de nos manter em estado de alerta e prontos a imitar Cristo’ [we have to keep ourselves in a state of alert and ready to imitate Christ]. The religious language of sacrifice and a new crusade for the defence of western values and the territorial integrity of Portugal, from the Minho to East Timor, became central to the speeches, especially when appealing for unity and a pride in being Portuguese. On another public occasion Américo Tomaz had demanded ‘que nunca esqueçam termos um Passado a defender e uma História a respeitar’ [that you should never forget that we have a Past to defend and a History to respect].²⁸

²⁴ *O Século* (Lisbon), 10 June 1963.

²⁵ See Estado-Maior do Exército, Comissão para o Estudo das Campanhas de África, *Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África*, vol. 5, Tomo I to VIII, Lisbon, 1990–97.

²⁶ Pedro Pezarat Correia, ‘A participação local no desenvolvimento das campanhas’, in *Estudos sobre as Campanhas de África (1961–1974)* (S. Pedro do Estoril: Atena e Instituto de Altos Estudos Militares, 2000), p. 155.

²⁷ AHPR, Palavras proferidas por Sua Excelência o Chefe de Estado na cerimónia comemorativa do Dia de Portugal, em 10 de Junho de 1973, Base de dados: <www.\\Zeus\DSDABib\Intervencoes\pdf\at\1973\at1973303.pdf> [consulted on site].

²⁸ AHPR, Discurso pronunciado no Palácio Nacional de Belém por Sua Excelência o Chefe de Estado, na cerimónia comemorativa do Dia de Portugal, em 10 de Junho de 1972, Base de dados: <www.\\Zeus\DSDABib\Intervencoes\pdf\at\1972\at1972314.pdf> [consulted on site].

One might ask why Camões' day was chosen for awarding military medals. In the first place, it is important to remember that the poet's fame and position as national icon resulted primarily from his being the author of *Os Lusíadas*, and thus his connection with empire. He himself was a soldier and went to Africa, India and Macau. The epic tale of discovering the sea route to India, as well as the sense of crusade present in Camões' work, could be appropriated by the Salazar regime to propagandize the defence of the empire, which the change in the post-war landscape put at risk of independence and decolonization. Nor was the idea of the Day of the Race, identified with 10 June, unfamiliar, as we discussed with reference to the quatercentenary of the birth of Camões. The concept of race continued to be used in an imprecise way, although the idea of Portuguese superiority was quite clear. Where the regime most wanted to see that superiority was in the field of military affairs, and in Portuguese soldiers' capacity to face the 'enemies' of the empire-nation, which, according to propaganda, stretched from the Minho to Timor.

Some years later, in 1966, decorations were extended to civilians who had distinguished themselves in the public or cultural life of the country. At a ceremony held in the Belém Palace, the insignia of honorary orders were awarded to eminent citizens. In an editorial, a journal wrote, under the heading 'Uma raça que se distingue' [A race that distinguishes itself]:

Não é um grupo étnico, é uma raça bem definida e constituída por vários grupos étnicos em que um, por superior, dirige, orienta e impulsiona. A Raça Portuguesa — caso raro na história da Humanidade nunca teve nem tem em conta as características geográficas, a cor da pele, os graus de civilização. Tem os outros grupos étnicos como parte de uma Humanidade que deseja ajudar a melhorar e mais seguros movimentos de valorização e progresso [...]. A nossa raça distingue-se pelo carácter, pelo idioma, pela unidade e pelo ideal.²⁹

[It is not an ethnic group, it is a well-defined race, and constituted of various ethnic groups within which one, by being superior, leads, guides and presses forward. The Portuguese Race — a rare case in the history of Humanity that never has nor does depend upon geographical characteristics, skin colour, degrees of civilization. It treats other ethnic groups as part of Humanity that it wishes to help to improve and more certain activities for valorization and progress [...]. Our race distinguishes itself by character, by language, by unity and by ideals.]

From this perspective, the 'race' is a kind of lineage which has a civilizing mission in the world and exercises it within a Christian and humanistic ethic. The idea of a multiracial Portugal, without discrimination, in which everyone was equally Portuguese and able to identify with a great common fatherland, formed part of a rhetoric that looked to the notion of Lusotropicalism, formulated by the Brazilian sociologist, Gilberto Freire, for additional ideological

²⁹ *O Século* (Lisbon), 5 June 1968, p. 1.

justification. The ideas he developed on the special capacity of the Portuguese for miscegenation and the creation of a hybrid sociological formation, of a Lusotropical kind, were used to defend the idea a greater overseas nation, united by the ties of a long common history. For this reason the awarding of medals to African soldiers played an important part, because they were the living proof that they too were animated by patriotic sentiment, and a reason to continue the struggle to maintain the Portuguese empire. To this end, the newspapers recorded such events with banner headlines and photographs — for example the decoration of a Guinean soldier in 1969, who received the military medal of the Torre e Espada.³⁰ As the war dragged on and demoralization of the troops became more evident, the authorities increased their investment in the Dia de Portugal as a symbolic expression of the greater nation, united and indivisible.

Empire was by now a term that was banished from the official lexicon. In the legislative revision of 1951 the terms *Ultramar* [Overseas] and *Províncias Ultramarinas* [Overseas Provinces] had been adopted. In an international context in which decolonization was the order of the day, the Salazar regime clung to nationalist and imperialist values, but adapted the discourse and official language in order to defend the greater Portugal. Thus, the Camonian myth reclaimed him as a soldier and man of faith who could serve as an example for the present generation. Converted into the ‘herald of Lusitanianism’, Camões too had been a soldier in Africa and had celebrated in his verses the Race and the Faith.³¹ National history was presented as a crusade, and the lesson drawn for youth was that the Portuguese took to the seas ‘para fazer cristandade lusitanizando outros povos’ [to realize Christianity by Lusitanizing other peoples], that is, to create ‘amorosamente novos Portugais’ [new Portugals, lovingly].³² On 10 June 1973, the headline of a national newspaper underlined that ‘Hoje é o dia da Pátria — una e indivisível’ [Today is the day of the Fatherland — united and indivisible].³³ However, the regime was inexorably nearing its end.

Fatherland and Communities

The coup d’état of 25 April 1974 was primarily motivated by discontent in the military with the long-running wars in Africa, and the impact upon their lives and professional careers. The political aims of the movement were vague, but its leaders were inclined to a change in the political regime towards democracy, the economic development of the country, and the opening of negotiations to reach a solution to the colonial problems. Events moved swiftly, and after

³⁰ *O Diário de Notícias* (Lisbon), 11 June 1969, p. 1.

³¹ Fernando de Aguiar, ‘Camões, Arauto da Lusitanidade’, in *Gil Vicente, Revista de Portugalidade* (Guimarães), vol. IX, 2ª série, 7–8 (July/August 1958), p. 112.

³² Francisco de Paula Leite Pinto, *A lição de Camões à juventude de hoje* (Lisbon: Ministério da Educação Nacional, 1960), p. 29.

³³ *O Século* (Lisbon), 10 June 1973, p. 1.

many decades of censorship, a police state and political repression, the country entered a period of great instability and revolutionary tendencies. The order of the day was a radical transformation of Portuguese society in the direction of socialism, despite the understanding of what that meant being very different in different political movements. The situation was only clarified after the military interventions of 25 November 1975 and the first free elections to the Assembly of the Republic of 25 April 1976. The country moved to a representative democracy, and on 27 June 1976 Ramalho Eanes was elected President of the Republic.

It is notable that the *Dia de Portugal* was not forgotten in the turmoil of 1974, which shows that it had become rooted in the public consciousness. In fact, a march in support of the Armed Forces took place in the capital, leading to the *Praça de Camões*, where flowers were placed around his statue.³⁴ In the *Mercado da Primavera*, the Democratic Movement for Plastic Artists put on cultural celebrations and painted a panel referring to the 25 April. In his reporting of the celebrations, the writer Urbano Tavares Rodrigues noted that sections of the left still cherished the patriotic ideals of the 10 June, but identified now with the people and revolutionary uprisings:

Dia do povo e não da raça. Dia da liberdade e da fraternidade, dia de Portugal restituído à liberdade e à vocação democrática dos heróis anónimos do cerco de Lisboa descritos pela pena colorida de Fernão Lopes, à grande tradição patriótica, vinculada às massas, das insurreições do Alentejo e de Lisboa, em 1640, contra o domínio castelhano, das grandes batalhas do liberalismo, em 1820. Dia das mães unidas, da imaginação à solta, da convergência das artes, da profunda expressão de reconhecimento e solidariedade do Movimento Democrático dos Artistas Plásticos com o Movimento Libertador das Forças Armadas, ao qual se deve a dignificação do país, seu ingresso num convívio internacional, de que estava justamente segregado, devido à imagem da ditadura fascista.³⁵

[Day of the people and not day of the race. Day of liberty and fraternity, day of a Portugal restored to liberty and to the democratic calling of the anonymous heroes of the siege of Lisbon, described by the colourful pen of Fernão Lopes, to the great patriotic tradition, linked to the masses, of the insurrections in the Alentejo and in Lisbon, in 1640, against Castilian domination, to the great battles for liberalism, in 1820. Day of mothers united, of imagination set free, of convergence of the arts, of the profound expression of gratitude and solidarity of the Democratic Movement of Plastic Artists with the Liberating Movement of the Armed Forces, to whom is owed the dignifying of the country, its entry into international relations, from which it was rightly excluded, due to the image of the fascist dictatorship.]

Neither the official nor the popular celebrations took place in the two agitated years that followed, and the Lisbon City Council limited itself to

³⁴ 'As Comemorações do Dia de Portugal', *O Século* (Lisbon), 10 June 1974.

³⁵ 'Dia da Arte e do Povo no Mercado da Primavera', *O Século* (Lisbon), 12 June 1974, p. 4.

ensuring that flowers were laid on Camões's statue.³⁶ After the election of General Ramalho Eanes as President of the Republic, it was understood that it was necessary to maintain the Dia de Portugal, but to give the celebrations a makeover. The decree-law no. 80/77, passed on 4 March 1977, established that it would be the Dia das Comunidades [Day of the Communities], the day when the country would remember the thousands of diaspora Portuguese scattered around the world, and they in turn, in the 'communities', would celebrate their connections with their country of origin. As the decree states, Camões seemed 'na expressão vincadamente portuguesa e de projecção universal da sua obra' [by his markedly Portuguese expression and the global projection of his work] to be the appropriate figure for this purpose. So the Dia de Portugal was reinvented as the *Dia de Camões e das Comunidades Portuguesas* [Day of Camões and of the Portuguese Communities]. Immediately, though, there were complaints from various quarters, including the emigrants themselves, that it should not cease to be the Dia de Portugal. The solution, introduced in 1978, was to change the name to the *Dia de Portugal, de Camões e das Comunidades Portuguesas*.³⁷

According to the law, the commemorations had to take place annually in a district capital designated by the President. In this way it was decentralized, as well as being extended to the Portuguese 'communities' abroad, through the network of embassies and consulates. The coordination was in the hands of an organizing committee and a commissioner, each nominated annually. During the presidency of Ramalho Eanes, the position remained with Major Victor Alves, who had been part of the organizing committee and executive of the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (MFA — Armed Forces Movement), had been a minister in various governments, and was a member of the *Conselho da Revolução* [Revolutionary Council].³⁸

The Major, from the moderate wing of the MFA, was thus responsible for the democratic celebrations of 10 June. The first clear break with the previous regime was the civil character of the event. The armed forces were present only as part of the Presidential guard of honour, in aerial displays by the *Asas de Portugal* [Wings of Portugal], and in performances by military bands. The main ceremony was a 'solemn session', marked by speeches by the President of the Republic and invited figures from Portuguese cultural life. However, one point of continuity with the Estado Novo was the awarding of the insignia of the honorary orders to selected persons by the President. Apart from that, a variety of initiatives attempted to give a simultaneously cultural and popular character to the celebrations, now spread over several days of shows and sporting contests.

³⁶ *O Século* (Lisbon), 12 June 1976, p. 9.

³⁷ Decreto-lei nº 37-B/78, de 2 de Março, in *Diário da República*, nº 51, Suplemento Série I, de 2-03-1978.

³⁸ *Diário de Notícias* (Lisbon), 'Óbito Vítor Alves — Perfil', 9 January 2011, online at <http://www.dn.pt/inicio/portugal/interior.aspx?content_id=1752876> [consulted 19 March 2012].

The organization of the festivities required close cooperation between the national committee and the local subcommittees, which were linked to the municipal councils and the embassies and consulates. In their reports, the diplomats complained of the difficulties: the division within the 'communities', with Portuguese clubs refusing joint initiatives; the distances and dispersion, in the case of America and Australia; the lack of officials and adequate facilities for those kinds of events.³⁹ Despite these problems, the 10 June commemorations came to be celebrated in thirty-nine countries where there were groups of Portuguese emigrants. In some cases this was no more than a banquet or a lunch for invited guests in the embassy, but in many places, with larger 'communities', the festivities were more extensive, with processions, shows, lectures, exhibitions and the traditional gastronomic gatherings. Victor Alves's express objective was to 'traditionalize' the celebrations amongst emigrants,⁴⁰ and so an important part of the organizing committee's effort went into supporting the various initiatives and in sending books, with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, along with medals, posters, exhibitions and films. The sending out of artists and writers to give lectures formed part of the effort to promote Portuguese culture abroad.

From the beginning, an important element of the programme was the bringing of emigrants living in different parts of the world to Portugal to visit the country and to participate in the official ceremonies. Externally, the emphasis was on spreading the commemorations, but it is important to note that internally the first three cities chosen were in the interior of the country, in poor regions far from the seats of power, namely Guarda, Portalegre and Vila Real. The fact that the city chosen for the first such celebrations, in 1977, was the advance guard in defending Portugal's land frontier, set in a very conservative region that had seen heavy emigration, set the tone for the efforts of the local authorities in these celebrations.

In that year, in his speech to the 'solemn session', the President of the Republic spoke of a 'crisis of identity', caused by the end of an empire 'more dreamed than realized', of the dramatic sacrifices of the 'displaced' and the unemployed, and of a 'national reconciliation' around values that 'sendo património de gerações, estão depositados na consciência de cada português' [being the heritage of generations, are deposited in the conscience of each Portuguese].⁴¹ Once again the aim was to unite the nation around the memory of its epic poet, in the belief that through him they could celebrate the 'valores perenes da nossa identidade' [perennial values of our identity] and Portugal's 'vocaçao universal' [global vocation].⁴²

³⁹ AHPR/DP/DP0202/0863 a 0917 — Comemorações nas Comunidades Portuguesas.

⁴⁰ Comissão organizadora das Comemorações do Dia de Portugal de Camões e das Comunidades Portuguesas, Relatório 1981, AHPR/DP/DP0101/0806.

⁴¹ *Dia de Camões e das Comunidades Portuguesas*, Discursos proferidos na cidade da Guarda, durante as comemorações nos dias 9 e 10 de Junho (n.p.: Secretaria de Estado da Comunicação Social, Direção-Geral da Divulgação, [1977]), pp. 56–58.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

The commemorations continued in the following years, in mainland Portugal and in the Atlantic islands. The year 1980 was the quatercentenary of the death of Camões, but it was not officially celebrated and the planned first congress of the communities did not take place, as the government was grappling with a serious financial crisis. The annual celebrations did take place, though, in the city of Leiria, and the proceedings were enhanced by a number of initiatives, amongst them the inauguration of a statue of Luís de Camões, rather poorly executed.⁴³ In 1981 the statue *Homage to the Portuguese Emigrant*, sculpted by Dorita Castelo Branco, was inaugurated in front of Lisbon's Santa Apolónia railway station, from which so many had set out for France and other destinations. Over the following decades further monuments to emigrants were inaugurated by councils around the country, normally on the initiative of town councils or emigrants' associations.

Even in a post-colonial context, leading elites did not seem resigned to a reduction of the country to the narrow limits of its peninsular territory and the Atlantic islands. In their minds they heard the echo of a lost grandeur that they did not think of as lost, because it could be reconstructed through the idea of a fatherland based on the Portuguese emigrants scattered around the world. This is what the President of the Republic, Ramalho Eanes, asserted, as early as 10 June 1977:

Libertos da angústia colectiva que as grandes fracturas da história geram no inconsciente dos povos, redefiniremos na base das comunidades lusíadas um novo conceito de povo e de Pátria. São os homens e não só os territórios que definem os povos. É a cultura e o empenho de construir um futuro solidário que a cada momento fazem as pátrias.⁴⁴

[Freed from the collective anxiety that the great breaks of history create in the unconscious of peoples, let us redefine on the basis of the Lusitanian communities a new concept of the people and the fatherland. It is men and not territories that define peoples. It is culture and a dedication to constructing a future of solidarity that at each moment make fatherlands.]

In this way the fatherland could rediscover itself as an 'ecumenical' and 'universalist vocation' of its past, and reinvent itself as a great nation, open to the world. In another speech, in 1982, in Figueira da Foz, the President evoked writers and poets to affirm that 'o passado morto deve ser um estímulo, um caminho para um Portugal ressuscitado' [the dead past should be a stimulus, a pathway to a revived Portugal].⁴⁵ The fatherland is above all a spirit, a collective will, a living solidarity between all Portuguese, wherever they live. It is also a past that should not be rejected, and which reinvents itself as an 'adventure', a

⁴³ Governo de Portugal. Direção Regional da Cultura do Centro. Monument to Luís de Camões, online at <<http://www.culturacentro.pt/museuit.asp?id=116>> [accessed 22 December 2014]. The sculptor was Fernando Pereira Marques.

⁴⁴ *Dia de Camões ...*, [1977], p. 58.

⁴⁵ *Dia de Portugal, de Camões e das Comunidades: discursos oficiais comemorativos do dia 10 de Junho*, Figueira da Foz (n.p.: Direção-Geral da Divulgação, [1982]), p. 24.

capacity to open up new worlds to the world, to relate to different peoples and cultures, to blend into others and to develop fraternal relations.

In some ways this type of speech echoes Lusotropicalism and a self-image of the Portuguese as a people with an exceptional capacity for adaptation, being friendly and cordial. The empire had been dissolved, and the Portuguese no longer deluded themselves with the 'mito guerreiro da raça' [myth of the warrior race].⁴⁶ The aim was to create a 'renewed' Portugal, based on the values of democracy and tolerance. In the presidential speeches between 1977 and 1985, the past is not rejected; rather, it is stated that there remain reasons for the Portuguese to see themselves 'nessa herança sem preconceitos nem complexos' [in that heritage with neither preconceptions nor complexes].⁴⁷ However, the focus is on the present, on the difficulties, the anxieties and the debts that have to be overcome in order to create the new fatherland. It is an essentially pedagogical speech, looking to the future, reaffirming the principles and values on which it is intended to base the identity and the unity of all the Portuguese.

Some words from the President are an essential part of the day's ritual when the nation is celebrated. As the country's highest official it falls to him to outline the values by which the Portuguese should see themselves and produce a discourse of national unity which, while not neglecting the past, looks particularly to the future that they wish to construct. This understanding of the role of the President on the Dia de Portugal has been the keynote of the various presidential interventions, despite personal differences in style. But during the presidency of Ramalho Eanes the participation of writers and intellectuals was a fundamental part of the ceremonies, widely reported in the mass media. As early as 1977, in the city of Guarda, the writers Virgílio Ferreira and Jorge de Sena spoke, and others followed in later years, helping to update the image of Camões, to redefine patriotism and the very idea of fatherland, to rethink national identity and the representation of Portugal and the Portuguese.⁴⁸

Of the many images of Camões the one that stands out in the speeches is the impossibility of reducing him to an unambiguous idea, given that the poet's genius consisted precisely in the complexity and plurality of his thinking. Camões speaks in many voices: he is a 'plural poet' as David Mourão-Ferreira

⁴⁶ *10 de Junho de 1978, Dia de Portugal, de Camões e das Comunidades Portuguesas: mensagens presidenciais e discursos proferidos nas comemorações, Portalegre* (n.p.: Direção-Geral da Divulgação, [1978]), p. 14.

⁴⁷ *Dia de Camões ...*, [1977], p. 57.

⁴⁸ In 1983, the Organizing Committee for the Commemorations of the Dia de Portugal published a book of the earlier speeches, suggestively entitled *Camões e a Identidade Nacional* [Camões and National Identity], bringing together interventions by the following writers: Virgílio Ferreira and Jorge de Sena (1977); Fernando Namora (1978); Vitorino Magalhães Godinho (1979); David Mourão-Ferreira and Eduardo Lourenço (1980); Agustina Bessa-Luis (1981); and José Azeredo Perdigão (1982). Apart from these, it was possible to access speeches by Prof. Ferrer Correia (1983) and the poet Natália Correia (1984), in typescript copies at AHPR. In 1985, commemorations took place in Porto, where a speech was given by the journalist and ambassador Mário Neves, but we have only a newspaper report of it (*Diário de Notícias* (Lisbon), 11 June 1985, p. 5).

emphasizes.⁴⁹ The poet has recourse to every type of verse and the whole poetic arsenal of his time, but he also adopts various ‘masks’, in an atomization of personalities and voices that bear comparison with Fernando Pessoa. This means that there is not one Camões, but many, according to the authors and the visions constructed by him. The diversity of his work also allows a multiplicity of interpretations and constructions, which make him a living and active element in contemporary society.

In this line of thinking, Jorge de Sena speaks of his Camões, ‘um Camões profundo, um Camões dramático e dividido, um Camões subversivo e revolucionário, em tudo um homem do nosso tempo’ [a profound Camões, a dramatic and divided Camões, a subversive and revolutionary Camões, in everything a man of our time],⁵⁰ who could be linked to the spirit of the 25 April 1974. Other speakers, such as Virgílio Ferreira, Fernando Namora, Azeredo Perdigão and Mário Neves, do not go so far in updating the image of Camões, but there is clearly a democratic notion of the poet who berated the rich and the powerful, who was a victim of the Inquisition, who would not remain silent in the face of injustice, and who suffered all the sorrows of a wandering life, of exile far from home — and even within it, by not being in accord with mean-spirited souls. Natália Correia sees the poet as the ‘Trinca-Fortes de convulsões que desmancham a ordem dos adormecidos, a apontar o caminho de tomarmos novas qualidades’ [ring leader of convulsions that disturb the order of the sleeping, pointing the way for us to take on new qualities].⁵¹

Camões is also seen as the best expression of being Portuguese. For Jorge de Sena, in a very personal interpretation, the poet is the ‘exemplo de ser-se português, em exílios e trabalhos, em sofrer incompreensões e injustiças’ [example of being Portuguese, in his exiles and labours, in suffering misunderstandings and injustices], in being exiled physically and morally, ‘mesmo na própria Pátria, sonhando sempre com um mundo melhor, menos para si que para todos os outros’ [even in his own Fatherland, dreaming always of a better world, less for himself than for everyone else].⁵² But for the majority of speakers Camões’s exemplarity lies in the possible identification between the poet and the Portuguese citizen: like him, Camões is plural (Mourão-Ferreira) and shares a universalist and humanist world-view (Ferrer Correia).⁵³ The notion is of the Portuguese as someone who does not submit, who always blazes new trails, who, in a spirit of openness and tolerance, makes his mobility and his relationship with others into a way of life. The association with emigrants is

⁴⁹ ‘Camões, poeta plural’, in *Camões e a Identidade Nacional* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional — Casa da Moeda, 1983), pp. 79–93.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵¹ Alocução de Natália Correia na Sessão Solene do Dia de Portugal, em Viseu — AHPR/DP/DPo2010/0814.

⁵² *Camões e a Identidade Nacional*, p. 36.

⁵³ Discurso proferido pelo Prof. Ferrer Correia, em 10 de Junho de 1983, Lisboa — AHPR/DP/DPo2010/0813.

inevitable, and they appear as an archetype of the Portuguese. For the professor and poet Eduardo Lourenço, many nations see themselves in their great poets, but none identifies with them in the way that Portugal does with Camões. According to him, the poet traced out a mythical and idealized image of Portugal and the Portuguese, one that still has a powerful attraction. So what is repeatedly celebrated is ‘a imagem camoniana de nós mesmos, a nossa imagem épica, sublimada ou mesmo sublime, tal como “Os Lusíadas” a configuraram há quatro séculos e continuam a irradiá-la até ao presente’ [the Camonian image of ourselves, our epic image, sublimated or even sublime, just as the *Lusíadas* configured it four centuries ago and continue to radiate it up to the present].⁵⁴

Camões is still a symbol of patriotism, by the connection he maintains with his country of birth and by the way he transformed his love for it and the longing of one who is far away into an unparalleled poem. In the words of Virgílio Ferreira, ‘Camões surge assim como o símbolo mais alto de uma reintegração dos presentes e dos ausentes, num destino comum, numa pátria comum’ [Camões thus emerges as the highest symbol of a reintegration of those present and those absent, in a common destiny in a common fatherland].⁵⁵ The fatherland is not a territory, but neither is it to be confused with the state. It is something immaterial, made of will, of spirit, of a sense of continuity and permanence, but above all a vision of life and of a common future: ‘ela é assim menos o que *é* e muito menos o que *foi* — do que aquilo que a define na *responsabilidade do que há-de ser*’ [it is thus less what *is* and even less what *was* — than that which defines it in the *responsibility for what is to be*].⁵⁶ Fatherlands are immortal, emphasizes Azeredo Perdigão, following Pascoais: ‘as pátrias, como agregados de tradições, de usos, de costumes e de maneiras de ser e de estar no Mundo sobrevivem ainda que as circunstâncias obriguem os que as compõem a dispersar-se por outros países’ [fatherlands, as aggregations of traditions, usage, customs and ways of being and existing in the World survive even when circumstances oblige those who comprise them to disperse themselves among other countries].⁵⁷ This repeats the idea that, like Camões’ life, Portugal too, the fatherland of great maritime voyages, of discoveries and empires, a land of emigrants, should be ‘pelo mundo em pedaços repartida’ [divided in pieces around the world].

For the historian Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, ‘Portugal é, antes de mais, um porto, para onde desceram os serranos e daí se espalharam através de todo o mundo’ [Portugal is, first and foremost, a port, to which the mountain-dwellers descended, and from there spread out over the whole world].⁵⁸ And he recalls its history in broad brushstrokes, emphasizing the importance of cultural encounters which forged an identity of contrasts between north and south,

⁵⁴ *Camões e a Identidade Nacional*, p. 101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

coast and interior, or between seaside folk and country folk or shepherds, lost in the mountains, that for centuries made up the greater part of the population. The Portuguese are more a people of merchants than warriors, ‘que não desdenha, se for preciso, o roubo, a pirataria, a aventura, também representada nessa obra extraordinária que é a “Peregrinação”, de Fernão Mendes Pinto’ [who do not disdain, if necessary, robbery, piracy, adventure, also represented in the extraordinary work which is the ‘Peregrination’ of Fernão Mendes Pinto].⁵⁹ He also says that Portugal ‘tem que ser projecto’ [must be a project], with a will to create in the country a ‘Pátria que sirva a todos os portugueses’ [Fatherland that would serve all Portuguese].⁶⁰ Modernization, social justice, scientific investigation and cultural creation are the elements that make up the idea of a better future.

In her turn, the poet Natália Correia places emphasis in her intervention on the land which forms the ecological basis of the culture of the Portuguese communities. Rurality and rootedness are fundamental, as is very clear in Portuguese literature. But, on the other hand, there exists ‘o atlantismo, o cosmopolitismo, a comoção centrífuga que encorajou os descobrimentos e continua a germinar nas comunidades portuguesas no mundo’ [Atlanticism, cosmopolitanism, the centrifugal agitation which encouraged the discoveries and continues to germinate the Portuguese communities in the world].⁶¹ National identity is constructed from this duality and from an emotional tendency in Portuguese culture that ‘não entende o conhecer sem o sentir’ [does not conceive of knowing without feeling].⁶² So in her vision of the future she emphasizes that it is necessary to value imagination and to place poetic, artistic and ethical concerns alongside science and technology.

Despite the diversity of styles and sensibilities, there emerges from these public speeches a redefinition of the Portuguese as a people, and of Portugal as a nation that is supported by its past but is above all focused on the construction of a new destiny. The country remained confined to its ‘pequena casa lusitana’ [little Lusitanian home] and it is time to look within, to look for ‘Portugal in Portugal’, as Manuel Alegre put it,⁶³ but without forgetting the thousands of Portuguese scattered around the world. As Jorge de Sena points out, ‘celebrar as comunidades portuguesas no dia do santo nacional que celebrou a expansão imperial do País é, ao mesmo tempo, um belo ideal e um cálculo muito prático’ [to celebrate the Portuguese communities on the day of the national saint who celebrated the imperial expansion of the Nation is, at the same time, a fine ideal and a very practical calculation], because everyone knows the importance of the financial remittances that they make to the ‘*santa terrinha*’ [blessed little

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶¹ Alocução de Natália Correia na Sessão Solene do Dia de Portugal, em Viseu, p. 2 — AHPR/DP/DPo2010/0814.

⁶² Ibid., p. 4.

⁶³ Cited by Azeredo Perdigão, in *Camões e a Identidade Nacional*, p. 135.

land].⁶⁴ Whether this dissemination of its people around the world represents good housekeeping or an elevated ideal, what is important to note is the fact that Camões remains a symbol of reference that feeds the construction of narratives about identity and national memory.

In a post-colonial political context we reencounter the ideas of the universality of Portugal and of a people with a special vocation for cultural contacts. The State may have suffered an amputation of its territory, but the fatherland is not to be confused with that. As the collective memory of a common past, as a collection of traditions, as culture and as a project for the future, the Portuguese fatherland survives, and renews itself with each successive year. That, in the end, is the ideological message of the Dia de Portugal, 'o dia que escolhemos para, em cada ano, nos ratificarmos como povo' [the day we choose, each year, to ratify our existence as a people], in the words of the writer Fernando Namora.⁶⁵ In any case, the message is still passed on to the Portuguese, even though it is always difficult to know the impact that the commemorative speeches and the celebrations make on the population as a whole.

Summary

We have tried to show how the 10 June was invented as the Dia de Portugal, the day believed to be that of the death of Camões, and as such associated with the celebrations of the poet. The historic pathway traced has led us to the nineteenth century and the creation of the romantic myth of Camões, and his consecration as a symbol of nationality and the embodiment of Portugal. Since that time until today, four political regimes have celebrated Camões, and his day has become part of the nation's regular festivals.

In each new political regime and ideological conjuncture, the Camonian myth renewed itself and took on new clothing. Camões's plasticity has been enormous and it was used by positivist and liberal republicans, both in its struggle against the monarchist regime and in power. He was one of the great figures in Comte's positivist calendar, in the month dedicated to the modern epoch, and a symbol of a nation that, through the discoveries, had contributed to the 'progress' of humanity. The civic values dear to republicans, particularly the struggle against tyranny, the defence of public education and the spirit of solidarity, could be linked to Camões, and were made key features of the Camonian celebrations during the First Republic. During the transitional period of the military dictatorship, the emphasis on education was upheld, with the giving of awards to primary school teachers on 10 June, which coincided with the end of the school year.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 30–31.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

The Estado Novo would give a new twist to the 10 June, consecrating it as the Dia de Portugal and associating it with civil and military ceremonies through which it attempted to celebrate the value of the Portuguese 'race'. At the same time, the Salazar regime used its reading of the *Lusíadas* to reinforce ideas that fitted in with its conservative, Christian ideology, and with the notion of a crusade against the enemies of the faith, at that time confused with the enemies of western civilization. On the other hand, this conception did not exclude from official discourse the idea of a multiracial nation, capable of harmoniously integrating different peoples under the aegis of Portuguese culture.

The democratic regime would in turn reinforce the 10 June, renamed in 1978 the Dia de Portugal, de Camões e das Comunidades. It was through the speeches of the President of the Republic and the invited intellectuals and writers at the official ceremonies that the image of Camões was reinvented, and connections made between the poet and national identity in a post-colonial era in which Portugal tried to affirm itself as a modern European nation. Despite the ideological differences between the different periods and political regimes, the perennial element of the Camonian myth in the 10 June celebrations was the idea of his being a symbol of a Portugal transcending its national frontiers and spreading around the world, a global nation, with the audacity to cross oceans and to build bridges with unknown worlds. It thus constructed an identitarian narrative that rested on the past and the national epic to imagine a future that could be equally brilliant.

Translated from Portuguese by Richard Correll

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