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# Portugal's Wars in Africa

Ruth First

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Ruth First is the author of *South-West Africa* (Penguin African Library); *117 Days* (Penguin Special); *The Barrel of a Gun: The Politics of Coups D'Etat in Africa* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press); and the editor of *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, by Nelson Mandela (Heinemann); and with Ronald Segal editor of *South-West Africa: Travesty of Trust* (Deutsch).

This report on the Portuguese colonies in Africa has been influenced by and culled from the standard research and writing on the subject—especially the work of Basil Davidson, James Duffy and others, to whom due accreditation is made—and from the writing, speeches and documentation of the liberation movements of the African people of Angola, Mozambique and Guiné-Bissau, and their spokesmen.

# Portugal's Wars in Africa

Ruth First

*This pamphlet is published by Christian Action Publications Ltd. on behalf of the International Defence and Aid Fund to provide information on some aspects of colonialism in Portuguese Africa.*

*With the object of assisting in the development of a non-racial society in Southern Africa, based on a democratic way of life, the Fund exists to:—*

- (i) Aid, defend and rehabilitate the victims of unjust legislation and oppressive, arbitrary procedures;*
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- (iii) keep the conscience of the world alive to the issues at stake.*

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## The Areas of Conflict

	<u>Area Sq. miles</u>	<u>Population (1960 Census)</u>
Mozambique	297,846	6,578,600 (97,300 whites)
Angola	481,351	4,830,449 (172,529 whites)
Portuguese Guinea	13,948	519,229 (about 8,000 whites)

## The Liberatory Movements

FRELIMO	—	Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
MPLA	—	Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
PAIGC	—	Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Independence Party of Guiné and the Cabo Verdes)

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## INTRODUCTION

The Portuguese-held possessions in Africa comprise the last remaining colonial empire in the world. Of the 28 million people calculated by the United Nations to be still living in dependent status throughout the world, exactly half live in the Portuguese colonies in Africa—Angola, Mozambique and Guiné-Bissau.

Alone of the colonial powers Portugal refused to beat any retreat in the years of decolonisation. On the contrary, she is waging a bitter and extended war, now in its tenth year, against the demand of the African liberation movements of these territories for independence and self-determination.

Portugal is Britain's oldest ally. That alliance, which dates from the 15th century, means in today's terms that strong economic and political links with Portugal—seen above all in NATO assistance to Portugal—help to shore her up in the colonies.

Just as important as the involvement of the West in Portugal's attempts to hold on to empire is the new axis in Africa between South Africa and Portugal. It was once mistakenly thought that the Portuguese policy of assimilation (which is far from what it claims to be, as will be explained) and South African *apartheid* or race segregation were contradictory policies in the handling of subject African peoples; whatever fine differences there may be in the expressions of intent of these two colonial-type powers, these have sunk into insignificance in the face of their new alliance for continuing white domination of Africa south of the equator. They have a working alliance in the field; they do consistent joint military and intelligence planning; they are initiating long-term economic strategies in Southern Africa to preserve this crucial and wealthy southern half of the continent for white minority rule. So Portugal's policies in Africa must be scrutinised for their effect on peoples held subject by force, but also for the part they play in aiding and abetting the entrenchment and extension of white race rule and in blocking the independence and development of the African continent.

The Portuguese colonies are especially strategically situated in Africa. In the west, Angola stands astride the route from the Congo to South Africa and South-West Africa. In the east, Mozambique guards the heartland of both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. On the outcome of the freedom struggles being waged in these Portuguese-held territories, and in Guiné-Bissau on the west coast between Senegal and Guinea, will be settled not only the future of peoples grievously misused by a brutal colonialism but also the prospects of freeing those held in thrall under *apartheid* and its Rhodesian equivalent.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Portugal the Coloniser : Conquest, Slavery and Forced Labour

Portugal is the oldest—and the most intransigent—of the European powers involved in the colonisation of Africa. Her explorers were the first to round the coastlines that led to new ways to India and the riches of the East; her slavers and traders of the late 15th and 16th centuries were the first to traffic in Africa's men and gold. But throughout those early centuries the Portuguese presence scarcely extended beyond scattered forts and trading posts along the coast. The vast interiors were relatively unreached and untouched. So that although for instance in Mozambique great wealth flowed out of Africa to Portugal by virtue of her control over the flow of commerce from the interior to the coastal towns and then abroad, the claim of the Portuguese that they have been masters of Mozambique for 450 years is spurious and unreal; they had not succeeded in establishing any lasting political control over the region being plundered.

There is evidence of how feeble and thin on the ground this Portuguese empire was. In 1854 Livingstone calculated that there were only 830 whites in Luanda, the capital of Angola, and only 100 in the rest of Angola. By the 19th century there were never more than 3000 Portuguese nationals in the whole of Africa south of the Sahara.<sup>1</sup>

Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did Portugal manage a final burst of colonial activity, as part of her need to shore up Portugal's declining prestige and power in Europe. The dream had been of a Portuguese empire in Southern Africa stretching in a bold sweep from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. But it was already too late. The Congress of Berlin divided the continent between the greater powers, and Portugal was left with three African enclaves only: Angola, Mozambique and Guiné together with the Cape Verde Islands, São Tomé and the Príncipe Islands, whose total area is roughly equal to that of Western Europe.

Restricted to these areas, only now did Portugal begin her colonisation in earnest. Traders and military forces infiltrated, and some white settlers too.

Portuguese colonial policy to this day has been moulded by the early patterns of slavery, trade and pacification. It has been remarked<sup>2</sup> that Portugal's progression down the coasts of Africa produced one steady article of commerce—the slave. Angola was from an early date the most prolific supplier of slaves for the new world and though Mozambique was more important for the great *prazos* or estates whose absolute masters collected taxes or tributes or slaves in lieu of these, the cruelties of the traffic on the east coast were equal to those in the west.

In 1869 the state of slavery was abolished by decree through the Portuguese empire, but the slaves—now known as *libertos*—were not to become free; they were bound to their masters until 1878. In 1875 the status of *liberto* was abolished, but the ex-*liberto* was still obliged to contract his labour. Thus “the name was abolished and the fact maintained”.<sup>3</sup> It had never been the intention that anti-slavery legislation should bankrupt slave owners and estate owners in Portuguese Africa. The legislation had no real effect in either Angola or Mozambique.

The Decree of 1875 has been called at the same time a synthesis of anti-slavery

legislation over the previous two decades and a model for African labour laws in decades to come.<sup>4</sup> Article 4 of this Decree declared the labour of all former *libertos* to be free in order to enable them to contract for their services. Labour recruiters were sanctioned to do business in much the old way, to procure workers where they could and in any way they could, and to ship them to distant places. And the vagrancy clause under which any *liberto* judged a vagrant could be forced to labour two years for the government or a private employer opened the door for the continuing exploitation of African labour.

The principle of forced labour was endorsed by a government committee which met in 1898 to study the problems of Portuguese Africa. It stated; “The state, not only as a sovereign of semi-barbarous populations, but also as a depository of social authority, should have no scruples in *obliging* and if necessary *forcing* (the italics are the committee's) these rude Negroes in Africa . . . to work, that is, to better themselves by work, to acquire through work the happiest means of existence, to civilise themselves through work.”<sup>5</sup>

The 1875 Decree made up Portugal's first labour code in Africa; subsequent codes built on its foundations. In 1899, indeed, a decree gave official sanction once more to this smooth transition from slavery to forced labour. It stated that “all natives of Portuguese overseas provinces are subject to the obligation, moral and legal, of attempting to obtain through work, the means that they lack to subsist and to better their social condition.” If the worker failed through his own efforts to do this, the government would intervene to force him under contract.

In the interior of Mozambique and Angola, instead of the traffic in slaves, chiefs were persuaded to contract their subjects, and Portuguese colonial officials were empowered to draft labour contracts which gave the draftee little if any free choice. In this search for labour, some parts of Angola were almost emptied of their inhabitants as Africans fled deep into the interior, or across borders into neighbouring territories to escape being drafted. The rubber boom at the end of the last century intensified this hunt for workers and whole villages were regimented and marched hundreds of miles to extract the latex.<sup>6</sup>

The forced-semi-slave labour aspect of the official labour code was dramatically exposed at the beginning of this century by the Nevinson and Cadbury reports of the São Tomé contract-labour scandal. The extensive coffee plantations established on the island of São Tomé had created a demand for labour which dealers in labour in both Angola and the Congo had begun to fill. For over 40 years there had been sporadic reports that Angolan Africans were being purchased in the interior from local chiefs by merchants or their agents and shipped from Benguela to the plantations. When an order for labourers came from the coast, African villagers were taken before an official, contracted and sent off. The contract was said to be for five years but at the end of that period the workers did not return.

In his book *A Modern Slavery*, published in 1906, Henry Nevinson documented these charges. He showed how the village chief, the contractor, the supplier in Benguela or Novo Redondo, the planters on São Tomé and the officials all along the line who permitted the transactions, were all part of the system.

Twenty years later, in a book of reminiscences, he recalled having seen a young African mother try to scramble up a swaying ship's ladder from a lighter loaded with *contratados*:

*“ At last she reached the top, soaked with water, her blanket gone, her gaudy clothing torn off or hanging in strips, while the baby on her back, still crumpled and pink from the womb, squeaked feebly like a blind kitten. Swinging it around to her breast, she walked modestly and without complaint to her place in the row that waited the doctor’s inspection. In all my life I have never seen anything so hellish as the outburst of laughter with which the ladies and gentlemen of the first class watched the slave woman’s struggle up the deck. It was one of those things which made one doubt whether mankind has been worth the trouble of our evolution.”*<sup>7</sup>

Nevinson’s accounts urged the British government to make representations to the government of Portugal, and suggested that chocolate manufacturers in England—especially Cadburys—should set up a boycott of São Tomé cocoa. Nevinson’s report was confirmed by others, including one by William Cadbury, which led to a boycott of São Tomé cocoa by three English and one German firm. But World War One interrupted the controversy and the campaign. By the time the League of Nations was established it began to receive reports of forced labour not dissimilar from what observers had been saying about labour conditions in Angola for half a century.

In 1925, for instance, an American sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross wrote of a particular Ambaca village:

*“ Their lot is getting harder. Things got abruptly worse from 1917 to 1918\*. The Government makes them work, but gives them nothing. They return to find their fields neglected, no crops growing. They would rather be slaves than what they are now . . . Now nobody cares whether they live or die. The Government serfdom is more heartless than the old domestic slavery which was cruel only when the master was of cruel character. Now they are in the grip of a system which makes no allowances for the circumstances of the individual and ignores the fate of the families of the labour recruits.*

*There are up to 140 huts in this area . . . For fifteen months not less than 50 (villagers) have been required to work on the roads, and some months more than a hundred. The quota is maintained by shifts.*

*When a white man applies to the Administrator for workers a soldier is sent with him to the village who calls out the chief and notifies him that so many men must be forthcoming from the village. When the men are taken for distant plantations, they are provided with a thin jersey, a **pano**, and in the cool season a blanket. Two months ago thirty from this area were taken to an unknown area . . .*

*In 1922 twenty from this area were requisitioned to work as carriers between L— and P—. Their taxes had already been paid. For six months service they got the equivalent of \$1.80. They think that the Government gets twelve dollars for every man who works for the planter six months. Somebody keeps most of it so that the labourer gets no pay.*

*The law contemplates that the labourer shall enter into labour contracts with a free will. The Ambaquistas say that they put some thumb prints on some papers, but they do not know what the papers contain, and would be flogged should they dare refuse to sign them.”*<sup>8</sup>

\*The year a number of European coffee planters arrived in the area.

In Mozambique the *prazo*, similar to great medieval estates whose largely absentee landlords presided in absolute power over their subjects, gave way in time to new controllers. The estates were auctioned to the highest bidder but the new renter was still the supreme authority on his lands. He could demand both taxes and labour from the Africans; he administered justice and had a private police force; he had a commercial monopoly within the boundaries of his territory. Later many of the estates were taken over by vast concession companies like the Zambesia Company and the Moçambique Company.<sup>9</sup>

The Moçambique Company was the greatest of these concession companies in the colony. It grew out of a mineral-exploiting concession and found stockholders not only in Portugal but also in other European countries and in South Africa. By the terms of its charter the Moçambique Company was given sovereign rights to exploit and administer more than 62,000 square miles. The government received ten per cent of the shares issued and 7.5 per cent of total net profits. In return it agreed to collect no taxes in the territory for 25 years. The company received a monopoly of commerce; exclusive mineral concessions; exclusive fishing rights along the coast; the right to collect taxes; rights for the construction of ports, communications and the privilege of granting concessions to others; banking and postal privileges and the right to transfer land to other companies and individuals. In 1891 a similar Charter was granted the Niassa Company. The third great company, Zambesia, held 80,000 square miles of land in the districts of Tete and Quelimane. Its chief investors were firms and individuals in South Africa, Germany, France, England and Portugal. Among the sub-concessions granted by this company were Sena Sugar Estates (a British firm) and the Société du Madal (with headquarters in Paris) which was involved in sugar, sisal and copra production.

Formerly African-owned land was converted into plantations and estates for growing cash crops. Forced cash cropping became the style of labour exploitation. Under this system the peasants of certain regions were obliged to use all or most of their land to cultivate a single crop, usually rice or cotton. A major exporting company with the “concession” of the area supervised the work and held the monopoly to buy the product at a price well below the world price. For instance, in the case of cotton in 1958, the crop was bought from the producers at the rate of 2.70 escudos a kilogram while on the world market it would fetch a price of 20-25 escudos per kilogram. Low payments to the producer enabled the concessionary company to make substantial profits, even selling the cotton well below the market price, with the result that cheap raw material was available for the industry of metropolitan Portugal. A peasant’s son from Cabo Delgado province described the effects of this policy on his own family and neighbours:

*“ The time of cotton production was a time of extreme poverty because we only produced cotton at a low price and we didn’t have time to cultivate our fields.”*

Another peasant from Zambesia spoke of compulsory tea cultivation:

*“ We were forced to work on tea but we didn’t know what it tasted like—we couldn’t afford it.”*<sup>10</sup>

The organisation of forced cotton production was described by Professor Marvin Harris as follows:

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Colonial Administration

In Angola by the end of the 19th century and after three centuries of involvement there, Portugal controlled less than a tenth of the country's area. Only after 1910 was European control secured over the interior regions, this in spite of bitter resistance by the African people. The eastern third of the country in fact came under effective colonial control only around 1930.<sup>13</sup> In Mozambique, Gaza (the last of the traditional African empires) was defeated in battle in 1895 and so only at the beginning of the 20th century could Portugal begin to set up her own system of administration, and only in the 1920s was armed resistance from the African population finally crushed in all areas of the territory.<sup>14</sup>

Conquest was thus a protracted affair in the Portuguese Empire. But by the beginning of this century colonial administration began to take shape.

Despite the Portuguese claim that its colonial rule is not based on race distinction, there has been from the beginning the clear separation of two administrative codes, one for Africans and one for Europeans.

Europeans were administered after the metropolitan model by the *conselho* or council; African areas were administered by the *chefe de posto* and his administrators, and divided into chiefdoms in which the chief derived his power not from traditional practice or structures but from appointment by the Portuguese authorities; these chiefs simply carried out the instructions of the administrators.

The inhabitants of the colonies fell into one of two judicial categories: they were *indigenas* or *nao-indigenas* (non-indigenas). The latter category included whites and assimilated Africans. The Native Code of 1921 defined the assimilated or "civilised" African as one who could speak Portuguese, had divested himself of all tribal custom and was regularly and gainfully employed. If he met all these qualifications he might be regarded as a Portuguese citizen; if not he was to be ruled under the *administradores*. The *indigena* had no citizenship; he had to carry an identity card and was subject to all the labour regulations; he suffered endless prohibitions such as being excluded from certain areas of the towns after dark.

In theory the *nao-indigena* had all the privileges which went with Portuguese citizenship, and on the existence of this assimilated group the Portuguese government based all its claims of non-discrimination by race. It was this method of cultural assimilation which was advocated as the answer to troublesome African nationalism, and the ultimate hope for white—or Portuguese—colonialism in Africa.

The test of assimilation was the individual's absorption of Portuguese culture; any other culture was dismissed as not part of "civilisation". *Assimilados* were expected to break all their associations with their traditional culture and society and to be ranked in the narrow Portuguese ethnocentric world according to their education by Portuguese standards and their acceptance of these standards. As Eduardo Mondlane commented, the *assimilado* system was designed to produce not citizens but servants of Portugal.<sup>15</sup>

But the *assimilado* group in the Portuguese colonies formed a small and hardly growing minority over the years. In Angola by 1960 at most 0.75 per cent of the African population, that is some 30,000 out of over 4 million Africans, had become

"In this modern serfdom, the role of the medieval lord is exercised by twelve Portuguese companies, each of which has received monopolistic concession rights over cotton production in vast areas of Mozambique. Indigenas within the concession areas of each company are assigned cotton acreage by the administrative authorities. They have no choice in the matter and must plant, cultivate and harvest cotton wherever they are told. They must sell the raw cotton to the concession company of their area at prices which are fixed by the government far below those available on the international market . . . In 1956 there were 519,000 African cultivators participating in the cotton campaign . . . the actual number of men, women and children being forced to plant cotton (on acreage taken out of food production) probably exceeds one million. In 1956 the 519,000 sellers received an average of \$11.17 per person as their family's reward for an entire year of work."<sup>11</sup>

In Mozambique there was no traffic in men to any São Tomé cocoa plantation, but there was a barter arrangement with the South African government for an annual quota of contract labourers to be sent to the Witwatersrand gold mines in exchange for a fee for each labourer so sent, and a certain percentage of South African railway traffic through the port of Lourenço Marques. The 'deal' is particularised in the Mozambique Convention which was concluded at the beginning of the century and has been renewed several times since. It is still in operation. This is a highly organised and controlled export of labour through the giant recruiting organisation the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association which combs Southern Africa up to the equator in search of cheap mine labour. Mozambique's quota is its most important and regular stand-by. It is an international project of the system of contract labour, which is itself a stepchild of forced labour, and before that of the slave labour system which "stripped to its essentials, has regarded the African as a working hand, call him slave, liberto, contratado, voluntario or what you will."<sup>12</sup>

*assimilados*; the rest remained *indigenas* without political or civil rights.<sup>16</sup> More important, there was little prospect of any change for as late as 1956 only about one per cent of the African school-age population was attending school. In Mozambique by 1950 there was a total of 4,353 *assimilados* out of a total population of 5½ million Africans.<sup>17</sup>

The tests and the standards set the *assimilado* were most stringent. He had to be at least eighteen years old and able to prove his ability to speak Portuguese. He had to demonstrate that he could earn a sufficient income for himself and his family. He had to be of good character and possess those qualities necessary for the exercise of the public and private rights of the Portuguese citizen. They were tests that many Portuguese could not pass.

And even in the case of *assimilados*, the favoured, it must be noted that though they escaped some of the legal disabilities of the *indigena*, they did not find themselves in a position of equality with the whites in the colonies. The economic position of the *assimilado* is markedly inferior, for there is a very considerable differential in salaries for whites and assimilated Africans. Even if an African does the same job as a white, his job is given a different title or description so that the income differential can be preserved. Mondlane gives one example of how this works in Tete Province, Mozambique:

*Raul Casal Ribeiro: "I also worked in the mine store doing the accounts, where I earned 300 escudos. When a Portuguese came to do the accounts, he earned nearly 4,000 escudos, and did less work than I had done. I was alone while he had an assistant, but he still earned thirteen times as much as I did. In fact, it was his African assistant who did all the work; he just signed it. The African got 300 escudos a month like me; the Portuguese got 4,000."*<sup>18</sup>

The existence of this tiny group of *assimilados* or honorary Portuguese was thus largely irrelevant to the condition of the African people in the Portuguese colonies, except for the use made of it by Portuguese Colonial propaganda. It was a highly selective system which in a quarter of a century affected the legal and political status of less than one half of one per cent of the African population. What it did do was illuminate the degraded status of the rest, the great majority, of the African population.

A 1954 statute defined the *indigena* as a person of the Negro race who is governed by the customs of his own society and has not yet evolved to the state of civilisation which would permit him to be governed by the same laws as a Portuguese citizen. So the great majority of the African population was not granted political rights in "non-indigenous institutions" and the special status of the *indigena* carried with it the implication that he could not be "civilised".

The *indigena* status also carried with it far-reaching economic and social implications. The African was obliged to work and, through the operation of the labour laws, frequently subjected to forced labour both for public and for private enterprise, as in the forced cultivation of cotton, which at one time involved 500,000 Africans in Mozambique.

As important are the restrictions on land ownership. In general Africans cannot acquire title to land. The unassimilated African may not engage in any commercial activity and he does not have the educational opportunity to enter a profession. He can work as an agricultural or wage labourer. In theory Africans considered still to

be living in their tribal organisations (the *indigenas* in other words) are "guaranteed . . . the use and development, for their crops, and for the pasture of their cattle".<sup>19</sup> In theory also, traditional lands, (as distinct from land under white settlement), belong to the Africans. But under the heavy pressure of European settlers in Mozambique for instance, the Portuguese government expropriated much land, often without compensation, and it was given over to plantations or for the settlement of white immigrants from Portugal. Mondlane cites some direct testimony from some of the people affected:

*"Natacha Deolinda (Manica and Sofala Province): At Buzi (Beira) the Portuguese bought all the land. There were some villages on the land, and the people in them were driven out and had to leave their homes, their land, and look for another place to live. They received no compensation for their houses; they were just driven out. In our area we were forced to leave, abandoning our fields, and the Portuguese planted sugar cane everywhere. We were not allowed to use the wells we had dug; all the water was reserved for the cane. If one of us was found with some sugar cane, they arrested us and made us pay fifty escudos for a tiny piece of it. They said we had stolen it, and if we didn't have the money the administration made us work for a week in the plantation, supposedly to pay for the bit of sugar cane."*<sup>20</sup>

In all the Portuguese colonies the African labour force was ruthlessly exploited as one of the colonial resources for the unquestioned benefit of Portugal. It was Basil Davidson who showed how forced labour is the economic flywheel in Angola.<sup>21</sup> One particularly damning exposé of neo-slavery in that territory was written by Captain Henrique Galvao, who had been an official in the colonial service and a deputy for Angola in the metropolitan parliament; the report was suppressed by government but subsequently published by Portuguese opposition forces. Once again this investigation confirmed the consistency between the older pattern of slave labour and the newer ones of forced and contracted labour.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Salazar's Corporate State and the Colonies

In the 1930s, after the advent to power of Dr. Antonio Salazar's dictatorship, Portugal tried to change the image of her colonies. Salazar had political reasons for trying to revive a Portuguese imperial consciousness, and so a colonial mystique was created of a Pan Lusitanian community, scattered over the globe, but said to be held together by spiritual bonds peculiar to Portuguese culture.

From 1930, and that year's Colonial Act which was drafted by Salazar himself when he served that year as Minister of Colonies, there came a spate of overseas legislation which set out general principles for the control of the colonies.

Salazar's theory of the corporate New State—or *Estado Novo*—envisaged and needed the close integration of the metropole and the colonies. This led to the inauguration of closer administration of the colonies by the metropole—thereby countering an earlier trend towards some administrative and political autonomy—but above all the closer economic integration of the colonies with Portugal's own economy to the advantage of Portugal herself. The provinces (or colonies) could no longer initiate foreign loans without Lisbon, and all charter concessions had to be arranged by the metropolitan capital. This meant closer government control over the activities of the chartered companies, and the start of three decades of an isolationist and introverted Portuguese economic relationship with her colonies. So economic developments in the colonies became a function of developments in the Portuguese economy, and Portugal's own needs decided the raw materials required and the availability of capital to invest in obtaining them. In other words, political control, and the new mystical relationship of Portuguese colonies with Portuguese motherland, were directed towards direct and immediate gain by the colonial power.

This is best illustrated in the case of cotton grown in the colonies and Portugal's textile industry. In 1925 it was officially estimated that Portugal's annual requirement of raw cotton was approximately 17,000 tons of which only 800 tons came from Mozambique and Angola. In 1926 the Portuguese government decided to establish cotton as an African peasant crop—as has been described above—by a regime of forced cultivation. Cotton became an obligatory crop for Africans living in areas designated cotton-producing, and concessionary companies held the monopolies for the purchase of the crop while local administration officials saw to it that the peasants concentrated on cotton to the detriment of their own subsistence crops.

A system of price control, compulsory quotas to Portugal and restrictions on local textile production ensured Portugal a supply of raw cotton at prices which gave her textile industry an advantage in the world market. At the same time the colonies provided a secure market for a large part of the industry's output. For Portugal the scheme was highly successful. In 1960 she received 87 per cent of her raw cotton requirements from the colonies and ranked twelfth among European producers of cotton thread and cloth, with an industry comprising 419 factories employing a total of 70,000 workers. In 1963 cotton goods provided an export revenue of 1,500 million escudos, about one eighth of visible exports. The growth of one of Portugal's most important industries can thus be traced directly to a conscious policy of colonial exploitation in which forced cultivation was an essential part.<sup>22</sup>

The advantage of the "New State" approach was that this exploitation could be carried out under cover of a theory on the supposed one-ness of the colonial people with the metropolitan centre: the so called common interests of the Lusitanian community—though the larger part of the community was held there by colonial force.

In 1951 the colonies were suddenly transformed into "Overseas Provinces". The revised Political Constitution of the Portuguese Republic proclaimed that it was "intrinsic in the Portuguese nation to fulfil its historic mission of colonisation" and to "diffuse among the populations inhabiting (the Overseas Territories) the benefits of (Portuguese) civilisation" since these territories were an "integral part of the Portuguese State". In part, this constitutional change was in anticipation of Portugal's defences against United Nations strictures upon the treatment of the people in the colonies. Thus when in 1956, after Portugal had joined the United Nations a year earlier, she received the standard letter to new member states inquiring whether they had any territories which did not fully govern themselves\*, Portugal had an answer ready. She replied that she had no such territories, that the territories she administered were in fact integral provinces of metropolitan Portugal, and that under Portugal's new unitary constitution the European and "overseas provinces" were under the same organs of sovereignty and had exactly the same status from both a legal and *de facto* point of view. It argued that although political rights in the territories were dependent on certain qualifications, these qualifications were the same for all inhabitants, regardless of race or situation.

This response led to four years of debate in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly to determine whether the territories in Africa were non-self-governing in accordance with the Charter. Finally, on December 15, 1960, the General Assembly decided that the Portuguese colonies were non-self-governing.<sup>23</sup>

France, trying desperately some years earlier to retain Algeria in her shrinking colonial empire, had tried to obscure the realities of her colonisation of Algeria by the argument that Algeria was France, and France Algeria. Portugal was to try the same approach, but it was to prove equally spurious.

In 1961 Portugal made a further attempt at reform, following upon the outbreak of the first armed resistance in Angola. The most important of the new measures was the repeal of the Native Statute as a result of which the African inhabitants of the three African colonies were recognised as Portuguese citizens and no longer had to meet certain requirements to achieve citizenship status or to comply with the procedures for obtaining it. According to Portugal all "Portuguese" people would henceforth be subject to a political law that would be the same for everyone. But the declarations of reform on paper and the real position in the colonies bore little resemblance to one another. Even after the 1961 reforms different identity cards were issued to those who had been citizens before 1961 and the great majority who had not. The new law on paper allowed political representation to Africans in the "overseas provinces" but in fact there was a clause which prevented this applying to the African population, for it said "transitorily in regions where the economic and social development deemed necessary has not been reached, municipalities may be replaced by

\*Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter obliges member states to accept a series of obligations towards territories administered by them.

administrative districts . . .". In practice this meant that all areas inhabited by Africans were governed as before by Portuguese officials under the old authoritarian system.<sup>24</sup>

The figures for the 1964 election in Mozambique show the effect, or lack of effect, of any changes. Out of a total population of 6,592,994, there were only 93,079 qualified voters. Since the total *assimilado* and non-African population was 163,149, it is clear that not even everyone in this group had the vote and that therefore virtually no "indigenous" African was enfranchised.

Even for that tiny proportion of persons whom the new law does affect, it does not provide for much local autonomy. The source of all authority remains Lisbon. The Portuguese government may still legislate by decree for the territories, or for individual provinces. The Overseas Minister still nominates, demotes, transfers all administrators in the colonies. Most important of all, general economic policy, including questions of settlement, displacement and labour, is still decided and conducted by government in Lisbon. Even if there was a significant body of enfranchised Africans in the colonies, they would gain no worthwhile political power.

Inside the colonies the practice of colonialism is infinitely worse than even the theory. Schools are few and far between; it is no exaggeration to say that there is virtually no provision at all for popular African education. In Mozambique the elementary schools are open only to assimilated Africans; but of 7,634 students in these schools in 1954 (and these were elementary schools) only 322 were African.<sup>25</sup> The education system, where it does exist, uses the schools as agencies for the spread of Portuguese language, culture and influence and is thus calculated to induce servility in the African child. Health services are virtually non-existent.

The colonial administrative system penetrates into every village and maintains an unceasingly close surveillance over the population. The use of "reliable" or pliable chiefs and informants as police and petty chiefs is the hub of this system of close administration; and where surveillance and control fail, there is generous use of corporal punishment and correctional labour. The *palmatoria*, a wooden paddle with holes in the striking surface which is used on the open palm of the offender is well known as Portugal's weapon of colonial correction.

The minimal requirements of the labour laws, even where these have been reformed on paper, are not met. There is illegal pressure on Africans to accept work contracts, illegal extension of contracts, and employment malpractices are numerous. The government, like private enterprise, continues to use pressure on the *chefe de posto* for fulfilment of the labour quota. The booklet which every African must carry to record his tax and labour record must be produced on demand and continues to coerce into service those Africans who do not emigrate or escape into neighbouring countries; there is a huge clandestine emigration of Africans fleeing the Portuguese labour system which is estimated variously to be as high as half a million for both Angola and Mozambique, or even as high as one million for Angola alone.<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Agostinho Neto—who returned to Angola after a decade of absence abroad and was soon to become President of the new resistance movement, the MPLA—found that forced labour was still the order of the day.

He wrote:

**" Tin sheets nailed to poles  
fixed in the earth  
make a house  
Rags complete  
the intimate landscape  
The sun penetrating cracks  
awakes each occupant  
Afterwards ten hours of slaving work  
Break stone  
cart stone  
break stone  
cart stone  
in the sun  
in the rain  
break stone  
cart stone  
old age comes early  
a coarse mat in the dark nights  
suffices for him to die  
grateful  
and of hunger."<sup>27</sup>**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Resistance

By the middle fifties clandestine movements were at work in all three territories. For a while there had been attempts by the educated or assimilated Africans to try to work in collaboration with the colonial administration. But there were really no channels for protest, let alone change. The 1961 transformation of the colonies into Portugal's "overseas provinces" made it little short of treason to demand African independence of Portugal. No consistent political activity of any kind was allowed. As discussion groups were formed, they were banned, in accord with the government policy of blocking all legal channels for protest.

The turning point came first in Angola.

The MPLA had been founded in 1956 but anyone caught active in this movement was liable to imprisonment or deportation. In 1959 there was a massive round-up by PIDE, the Portuguese political police and intelligence apparatus, of suspected subversives. The arrests led to three sets of secret trials during 1960. The accused included Father Joaquim Pinto de Andrade who has been in imprisonment or detention ever since. Agostinho Neto was arrested in the same police round-up. PIDE was by now the real power in Angola. It could arrest anyone without charge for undefined periods of time. This was surely the precursor of the 90 day detention practice in South Africa, and certainly the torture methods of the apartheid political police—which included "torture by standing"—were used in South Africa after the example set in the Portuguese colonies. PIDE was attacking all known critics of the government, and infiltrating opposition movements from within. Its attacks were so devastating at the time that opposition had to be organised by exiled Angolans outside Angola for the time being.

On June 8, 1960, Dr. Neto was once again arrested, flogged before his family and taken off to jail. His arrest prompted protests to the administrative centre at Catete to demand his release. According to a report that reached London four months later, the district officer learned of this forthcoming protest, and brought to Catete from Luanda some two hundred soldiers equipped with sten guns. A week after Neto's arrest, approximately two thousand villagers arrived in Catete to demonstrate peacefully, but the troops fired on them, killing and injuring over two hundred. On the following day these soldiers went to Icolo and Bengo and killed or arrested everyone who was found in the two villages, which were then set on fire.<sup>28</sup>

Nothing of this appeared in the Portuguese press. In November of the same year eight political prisoners were shot without trial in the yard of the Luanda military jail. A 14-year-old African boy who heard the shooting and climbed the wall to see what was happening was shot dead on the spot, and a passing African motor cyclist who tried to carry the boy's body away was arrested and beaten.

The following February widespread disturbances broke out in the capital Luanda. Groups of Africans armed with batons, pistols and guns simultaneously attacked the military detention centre, the civil prison and the city police station.

At the same time there were serious incidents in the Malanje district. In this region cotton growing was organised on the basis of a manpower raiding system under which Africans, women and children included, were hauled out of their villages and

obliged to grow cotton on prescribed patches of land. At the end of the season there were no wages but the villagers were forced to sell their product at low prices to the Portuguese-Belgian firm holding the concession in the area. On this occasion a large number of workers protested at these abuses. Their demonstrations were followed by severe reprisals by the security forces, including the bombing of a number of villages and mopping-up operations in areas not reached by the bombings.<sup>29</sup>

After these events a state of official panic followed in Angola. The Portuguese government dispatched large reinforcements of troops in April; Portuguese women and children were evacuated, except from the large towns, and European settlers were organised into militia units.

By mid-April Portuguese military communiqués admitted that African opposition was now armed, and in control of portions of Portuguese territory of a sizeable area.

By this time the UPA—União das Populações de Angola—and the MPLA were both in the field, committed to direct action.

Guiné-Bissau was next to launch armed struggle, in 1963. The turning point in this small country on the West African coast had been on August 3, 1959. On that day the dock workers at Pidgiguiti went on strike for higher wages. The strike was smashed by the Portuguese police and troops opening fire on the workers and killing more than fifty. The PAIGC had by then been in existence for three years. The killings showed the futility under Portuguese repression of trying to organise openly, and that the non-violent methods tried in other countries and under distinct political conditions would be suicidal in this colony. The PAIGC there and then began to organise underground, on a nation-wide basis.

The liberation struggle is furthest advanced in Guiné. It controls two-thirds of the land area and the 40,000 Portuguese troops stationed there have been confined to the urban areas and a few fortified bases. Inside the liberated areas, schools have been set up in all the villages and the PAIGC has its own teacher-training centre where it produces new textbooks and methods of teaching adapted to the conditions and problems of Guiné-Bissau. In the liberated area agriculture is being diversified and expanded; and new economic and political structures are being developed so that villagers may at last participate in their own government and in charting their future.

In Mozambique the key moment was June 16, 1960 and the key incident the massacre at Mueda. This was the period during which a number of small but effective clandestine activities were being carried on in the villages and small towns, though it was various groups of Mozambicans temporarily working in neighbouring territories who finally banded several opposition groups together to form FRELIMO. But in June 1960 it was clear that Portugal would turn her face sternly against any African representations for redress, and it was at Mueda that this point was brutally made.

Let Alberto-Joaquin Chipande, one of the earliest FRELIMO guerilla commanders, take up the story:

*"My father was a capetao mor (a village lineage leader) . . . Sometimes the Portuguese used to give their orders through him although he wasn't a regulo (regulos were the chiefs imposed by the Portuguese to run their administration and labour recruitment). Twice my father was taken to see Lisbon, once in 1940 and again in 1946, and you could see that in a way he was even a member of the Portuguese administration. But he was secretly against them, and in 1962 he became a secret member of FRELIMO when we were still working underground in Delgado.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The State of the Wars

What is the current state of the war in these three Portuguese colonies, and what are the perspectives for the future?

There is little dispute that in Guiné-Bissau, the smallest of the three territories, the PAIGC has grown from strength to strength until it today controls two-thirds of the country, so that at least half of the population of 800,000 is living not under Portuguese domination but under the new village democracy built from the base by the liberation struggle.

For the success of the struggle against Portugal is measured not in square miles of territory but in the ever-growing, active and voluntary involvement of the peasant population not only in the fighting which is the essential preliminary stage, but in what comes next: the building of an alternative society free of bondage. The story of the seemingly humble beginnings and then the strong growth of this movement has been told by Basil Davidson\*. He writes, and it is worth repeating here, that the men and women who founded and have led the PAIGC "had no desire for this war. They knew it would be hard and long in human cost, and they were neither fools nor adventurers. If they did not shrink from the cost, it was not because they lacked intelligence, moderation, or a sense of responsibility towards other people, but because they were convinced that any worthwhile future could be achieved only by a revolutionary change of institutions: by that independence and self-determination which the Salazar regime had consistently denied and continued to deny, or even to discuss". And PAIGC leader Amílcar Cabral had himself said: "The objective of this struggle is not only to drive the foreign troops out of our country and to eliminate colonial domination; it is rather to lay the bases of our independence and of the economic, social and cultural progress of our people . . .".

What Portuguese colonialism has not in centuries brought to her African subjects, the PAIGC has helped them build themselves in less than a decade. Only two years after the liberation war began the PAIGC issued directives for the creation of schools and the spread of education in all liberated regions. For the year 1965-6 the PAIGC had 127 primary schools in Guiné with 191 newly trained teachers and 13,361 pupils. In the following year 1966-7 there were 159 schools, with 220 teachers and 14,368 pupils. Each year the numbers grew. As with education, health services installed by the PAIGC were in a few years superior to the entire record of the colonial period.

Above all the PAIGC bent to the tasks of economic reconstruction. This meant not only increases in agricultural production, but also its diversification from a largely subsistence agriculture, and the building of a new marketing system in place of the Portuguese colonial one. New lands are brought under production, new crops raised, new methods of farming introduced. Small local industries are started.

The work of rebuilding the country goes on apace, even as the war continues and villages face bombing attacks from the air for, having lost control on the ground, the Portuguese rely heavily on their air force.

The Portuguese know that they hold Guiné by a mere thread. Their control is so slender that although the country was formerly an exporter of rice, they cannot

\**The Liberation of Guiné*—Penguin African Library, 1969.

*I myself decided to join the struggle because every man should be free or, if he has to, should fight to be free. Ever since I was a child I saw the meaning of Portuguese rule; even when I was twelve and at primary school they took me and forced me to work in Mueda cleaning up the town.*

*And then when I was older the Portuguese began to track down my family. Two brothers got away to Tanzania. They escaped after arrest for shibalo (a form of forced labour). They were supposed to work for six months for a landowner called Joao Vieira Batista who had cotton plantations. They escaped . . . That was in 1947. I was nine. Then in 1954 my sister and her husband also ran away from shibalo. But I stayed at school. I passed examinations. I became a teacher . . . It was in Mueda that the provincial governor decided to make an example of village headmen known or suspected of having supported one of the movements that was a forerunner of FRELIMO."*

Alberto Joaquin continues:

*"These headmen made contact with the authorities and asked for more liberty and more pay . . . After a while, when people were giving support to these leaders, the Portuguese sent police through the villages, inviting people to a meeting at Mueda. Several thousands came to hear what the Portuguese would say. As it turned out, the administrator had asked the governor of Delgado to come from Porto Amelia and to bring a company of troops. But these troops were hidden when they got to Mueda. We didn't see them at first.*

*Then the governor invited our leaders into the administrator's office. I was waiting outside. They were in there for four hours. When they came out on the verandah the Governor asked the crowd who wanted to speak. Many wanted to speak, and the governor asked them all to stand on one side. Then without another word he ordered the police to bind the hands of those who had stood on one side, and the police began beating them. I was close by. I saw it all . . ."*<sup>30</sup>

When the crowd nearby saw these actions by the police a demonstration followed. This was the signal for the troops brought to the scene to act. The Mueda massacre followed.

Alberto Joaquin was one of the first volunteers for armed action against the Portuguese. It began on September 25, 1964, with a series of small actions in the northern and north-western provinces. At first the fighting groups had to reach the country from the outside; soon FRELIMO was drawing its recruits from the villages and training the great majority of them on the spot. During the first three years of the war, from 1964-7 fighting was confined mainly to the northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa. By 1965 FRELIMO had liberated an area about one fifth the total area of Mozambique. In this region the Portuguese forces were restricted to their bases and were constantly ambushed when they ventured outside their fortified areas. In 1968 a new phase began when FRELIMO opened a new front in Tete.

obtain sufficient quantities to feed the army and are forced to import it. It has been suggested, even in some Lisbon circles, that the Portuguese hold over the country is by now so slight, that Portugal should cut her losses and withdraw in order to concentrate all her forces in Angola and Mozambique. Portugal resists this pressure for two principal reasons: any withdrawal would weaken her case for a presence anywhere in Africa and her claim that the African territories are not colonies but an integral part of the state of Portugal. Secondly, there is the strategic importance of the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of Guiné-Bissau. These have been an important card played by Portugal in her winning of NATO support; without them she could not so easily involve NATO and South Africa (which uses the islands as a staging point for its civil airline) in her African wars.

In Angola and Mozambique, both far larger territories and extremely strategically placed in Africa, extensive regions have been liberated but a prolonged struggle still lies ahead.

In Angola a new Portuguese tactic is the use of chemical defoliants and herbicides. This phase of the Portuguese offensive began in May 1970 and an MPLA doctor was a witness to one operation: "It was 10 o'clock. Five enemy planes flew low over the banks of the Luena River. Two of the bombers circled the area trying to detect signs of human life. The three other planes began to spray the fields with chemical poisons. From time to time the bombers dropped incendiary bombs on the gardens and camouflaged houses in the forest. The chemical agents acted very quickly on the cassava leaves and on branches and on sweet potatoes, causing them to become completely dry in less than two days. The toxic poisons were also attested to by the badly burned trees in the forest, which looked as if they had suffered a violent fire. These chemicals, deposited on the leaves (and perhaps also on the soil) penetrated quickly the roots and tubers, causing a progressive deterioration from the exterior to the heart of the plants. Soon the cassava roots and sweet potatoes became soft and mushy; they turned black, as if they had been soaked in bad water for several days. The result was the total destruction of all crops affected. Tubers eaten in this poisoned condition caused severe abdominal colics and diarrhoea."<sup>31</sup>

The resort to chemical warfare is a measure of Portugal's desperation in Angola. There, from seemingly insurmountable difficulties in a far-flung country where supplies have to be carried by foot for anything from six to eight weeks; where the population is desperately poor and almost totally without services of any kind, here too in Angola, village society is being reconstructed even while the war is fought.

In 1968 the MPLA was able to announce that it had moved its centres of control and government inside Angola itself, into the liberated zones which are now divided into five political and military regions. Eye witness accounts<sup>32</sup> of journeys deep into the liberated zones have testified that in both Angola and Mozambique, as in Guiné-Bissau, the liberation movements are deeply established in large regions from which the Portuguese forces, however strongly reinforced by aerial bombardment and chemical warfare, are entirely unable to unseat them. After a recent journey inside Angola, Basil Davidson described how the MPLA army is organised in mobile detachments of 25 men each which have strong control of the countryside outside a few hundred yards' range of Portuguese posts. The detachments ambush and harry Portuguese patrols and posts, mine the roads, safeguard villagers who have fled to the forests for protection, and finally they steadily penetrate the country from Eastern Angola where they are well entrenched, into the relatively rich and populous districts of

Bié, Huambo and Malange, and then close to the capital and the Atlantic.

But in Angola, as in Guiné-Bissau, even as the liberation war inches forward from the five liberated zones, and even as Portugal counter-attacks by aerial bombardment of villages and a campaign of terror against the populace, the work of building a new life in the liberated areas goes on. In wide areas of the country the first medicines and school books these people have ever had have been provided in the course of the liberation war. Agricultural production in these areas is increasing for people are being organised in collective work groups to grow rice, cassava, potatoes, millet and maize, and trading centres and co-operatives are being established.

Though begun a decade ago in 1960, the struggle in Angola went through many vicissitudes before the opening of the new MPLA offensive in the eastern provinces in 1966. In the north of Angola, bordering the Congo the UPA, led by Roberto Holden had not only settled into a prolonged stalemate in the regions under its control, without any strategy for extending its actions, but had balked all attempts to achieve organisational unity for the achievement of Angolan liberation. But after 1966, if the principal site of action moved into entirely new regions, it made rapid progress there so that Davidson was able to conclude: "There is no doubt, I think, that the Portuguese have lost the strategic initiative in the east, retaining only the brief tactical initiatives of the kind they exercised when I was there (aerial bombing raids). When judged only by the key area of Muie, and its surrounding forests, guerilla penetration to the west is real and effective."<sup>33</sup>

In Mozambique FRELIMO's first actions were in the thinly populated expanses of the economically underdeveloped northern territory in the provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. In rapid time a trained force of 10,000 had been built and one fifth of the colony taken under liberated control. In July 1968 FRELIMO was able to hold its second national congress inside one of these liberated zones. In 1968 a new front was opened in Tete Province. In these zones bush schools now provide primary education for 20,000 pupils. In Tanzania a hospital has been built to deal with serious cases and to train medical aides to work in the health centres in the FRELIMO liberated areas. As an immediate result of the war the concessionary companies were forced to withdraw from the two northern provinces so that both forced labour and forced cultivation came to an end. But so too did what trading and other infrastructure there had been. FRELIMO began to reorganise agriculture and trade on a co-operative basis. The result has been an overall increase in food production, while 80 per cent of the land under cultivation is being farmed for the first time; and the establishment of small-scale local industries to reduce the goods which need to be imported.

FRELIMO has now moved its offensive into Tete Province, which is a highly strategic region in view not only of its agricultural richness but also the fact that it is to be the site of the Cabora Bassa Dam and an intensive white immigration project. The hydro-electric plant and its subsidiary operations are planned not for the greater benefit of the people of Mozambique, but to strengthen minority white power, both Portuguese and South African, in this crucial area of Southern Africa.

Both Angola and Mozambique are valuable prizes which Portugal will do her best to hang on to. By the 1950s Angola had become a great economic asset. She is rich in minerals and foreign interests are deeply entrenched. Mozambique has been crucial in the concerted defence planning and economic strategy of Portugal and South Africa and has great economic potential.

So the wars drag on, inflicting enormous hardships on the common people, but unable to break their resolve that this has proved to be the only way to end the horrors of Portuguese colonialism. Meanwhile Portugal herself is not unaffected by her three colonial wars.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Portugal and Allies

Portugal is the poorest nation in Europe. She produces a lower gross national product per capita than Brazil, her former colony. The majority of her population of poverty-stricken peasants are still working a largely subsistence economy. Yet Portugal maintains a standing army in the colonies that has reached a grand total of 170,000—70,000 in Angola, 60,000 in Mozambique and 40,000 in Guiné—and she spends 48 per cent of her national budget on defence.

With few natural resources, an overall unfavourable balance of trade, and heavy debts to the hard currency countries there are nevertheless two reasons why Portugal struggles on with her colonial wars. In the first instance, as costly as these wars are, the colonies and what they render to the metropolitan centre still make them worth while in terms of hard economic benefit. Thus the metropolitan trade deficit for 1969 was wiped out by an overall balance of payments surplus within the escudo zone. Most of the credit for this must go to Angola, and Angola's trade surplus mainly to her coffee, diamonds, iron ore and oil exports. Angola's mining industry increased by 64 per cent in 1969, and her oil production jumped three fold over 1968, and has since risen again. Portugal also earns substantial sums from Angolan ports and railways: Benguela Railway, though a British-owned concession, handed over half a million pounds to Portugal in 1969; Angolan roads carried goods from land-locked African territories to the sea; and Luanda was a strategic staging post for aircraft to southern Africa. Portugal continues to keep a tight economic control over the products of her colonies, buying them at low fixed prices for resale at higher prices or use in her own processing industries.

The second reason Portugal has been able to carry on in the colonies is that Portugal has revised the New State policy of discouraging foreign investment in her colonies and creating high tariffs against foreign imports; instead of the old isolationist policy that bound Portugal and her colonies together and discouraged outside capital, there is now a new open door policy which has involved international interests in both Portugal and her African colonies. Moreover, although the territories earn surpluses with foreign countries and thus in valuable foreign exchange, the territories do not have control over their own foreign exchange earnings; the latter are cleared to benefit Portugal's own account. The Portuguese concept of "economic integration" therefore means that diamonds produced in Angola are sold by Diamang to Portugal, who resells them on the international market and earns the foreign exchange. Deprived of these foreign exchange earnings and the profits, the territory in turn has to borrow from Diamang and receives a loan in escudos.

The new open door policy was a response to the outbreak of colonial resistance in the early 'sixties. In 1961 *Die Zeit* recorded the change:

*"In a kind of last-minute panic Portugal has in the past few months opened wide its hitherto almost hermetically closed doors to foreign investments. The reason for this changed course is . . . the knowledge that Portugal will inevitably lose the struggle now beginning for its colonial empire if it is not able in time to win powerful allies for itself in the struggle . . . In this dangerous situation Salazar has radically*

*changed his economic policy. Without much noise, with a minimum of publicity even, he set out economically to internationalise to the greatest possible extent his empire. It is in particular the Americans, the Germans and the Japanese who are called upon in connection with the industrial development in Portugal's underdeveloped . . . possessions . . . Latterly there has been a growing realisation that the involvement of foreign capital in Portuguese Africa has its effects on the attitudes of foreign governments to the nationalist revolts.*"<sup>34</sup>

Portugal's legislation of the 'sixties therefore opened up the colonies to foreign investors. Today the foreign firm is given guarantees in fact better than the potential investor from Portugal itself, such as guarantees for the repatriation of capital, profit and dividends, and customs exemptions on plant and raw materials.

In Angola by far the largest foreign investment has taken place in the extractive industries, particularly iron and oil. (There has of course long been foreign involvement in the communications sector, through British Tanganyika Concessions' control of the vital Benguela Railway; and in the mining industry run by DIAMANG). The huge Cassinga iron ore mine is ostensibly owned by a Portuguese company Mineira do Lobito, but in 1958 this company was financed to the tune of \$100 million by a giant banking consortium comprising West German, British, American, Danish and Swiss capital, and also the Krupp Empire of West Germany which was the real power behind the arrangement. Most of the ore is exported to the Krupp steel mills. Other huge deposits are also currently being studied for possibilities of exploitation in West Germany.

The most important single project controlled by foreign capital is the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company. Up to 1965 there were only two oil companies in Angola—the American Cabinda Gulf Oil and the Cia de Petroleos de Angola (Petrangol) owned by the Belgian firm Petrofina. Since that year several more companies have obtained extensive concessions. One is the French dominated Angol, which also operates a joint concession with Portugal and with a South African consortium. In 1969 in addition to a request by Petrangol-Angol for a new concession area, there were 17 applications for concessions awaiting a decision by the Portuguese government. Meanwhile investments in other minerals are increasing: Tenneco of Houston, U.S.A., has been given sulphur rights near Benguela, Picklands Mather have formed a joint company with Portuguese interests to develop sulphur deposits in Cabinda, and two new diamond concessions have been given in the south-west to Portuguese groups with United States financing. Japanese interests are working to prospect copper. There is French capital in an aluminium plant, a United States run tyre company, a Swedish car assembly plant. With the Cabinda oil finds Angola has become Africa's fourth most important oil producer, and the twentieth most important in the world. South Africa is of course banking on these Angolan oil finds to supply the needs of Southern Africa as a whole in the face of any effective sanctions or oil blockades.

In Mozambique the sugar industry was for long the virtual monopoly of a British company, Sena Sugar Estates; of late there has been a great increase in the acreage under cultivation, much of it linked to new sources of capital from South Africa and Rhodesia. Likewise there is heavy foreign investment in the cashew and copra plantations. New manufacturing industries have attracted a host of foreign companies: a Firestone tyre plant, a Japanese car assembly plant, a Rhodesian steel plant, a combined French and South African fertiliser complex, a telephone equipment plant

by America's Standard Electric, a bicycle factory to be built by French contractors.

As in Angola, the largest investment to date has been in oil. Two United States companies, Gulf Oil and the Pan American oil company, are the largest participants in the oil drive.

And so the list goes on and on.

It amounts to a concerted drive on Portugal's part to invite foreign capital into her colonies which is, after all, only a continuation of what has been happening to Portugal herself, which since the end of World War Two has had foreign control permeating all major sectors of her economy except agriculture, so that Portugal is virtually a colony of Western Europe.<sup>35</sup>

## **Portugal and NATO**

This foreign involvement in Portugal and her colonies is in itself an expression of Portugal's membership of and dependence on the NATO area. Portugal was admitted to NATO in 1949. It was not so much her own strategic position that NATO was interested in as her Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, for these are regarded as the key to the southern Atlantic, and on the air route to the South Americas. The NATO area, as defined in the North Atlantic Treaty, lies north of the Tropic of Cancer, thus NATO funds and equipment should not be used by Portugal in Africa. But this distinction has fallen by the way.

Portugal survives on huge loans from her NATO partners, principally West Germany and the United States; on their substantial imports from Portugal and her colonies (the United States buys more than half Angola's coffee and West Germany a considerable if not greater part of her iron ore); and also on the supply of substantial quantities of war material under the pretext that Portugal has to be assisted to meet her NATO commitments.

Thus in 1966 West Germany announced the sale to Portugal as a NATO partner of 40 Fiat G91 aeroplanes, subject to a clause that the planes were to be used "exclusively in Portugal for defence purposes within the framework of the NATO pact". A spokesman of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry said: "The transaction was agreed within the spirit of the North Atlantic Pact. It was agreed that the planes would be used only for defensive purposes within Portuguese territory. Portuguese territory extends to Africa—Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guiné." (*Reported in Flying Review International, April 1966*).

Under NATO's Mutual Aid programme Portugal's army, navy and air force have been equipped with the most modern weapons and her forces trained in their use and maintenance. NATO supplied planes are used to bomb Angolan, Guinéan and Mozambican villages with NATO supplied bombs and napalm. Alone of the NATO powers France makes no bones at all about her ready supply of weapons without any restriction, however verbal, on their use. Though the others veil their assistance with avowals that they will supply to no "tension" areas in Africa (West Germany's statement), the assistance flows generously all the same.<sup>36</sup> Portugal is virtually running her African wars on NATO supplies, and at the same time her NATO partners accept that Portugal has withdrawn almost all her units from the NATO force so as to use them in her colonies.

Portugal's gains from NATO membership are summed up as follows:

*“Portugal's policy must largely be seen as following the goal of increasing her share of military assistance from the Alliance, of legitimising her regime by this close international association with a group of powers, and, if not of enlisting support, at least of deterring active allied interference with her colonial policy.”*<sup>87</sup>

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Britain and Portugal

Britain is Portugal's biggest trading partner. She buys 19.1 per cent of Portugal's total exports. In 1966 she was also the fifth biggest buyer of goods from Mozambique. Almost all Mozambique's sugar is produced by a British-owned sugar company whose profits have risen steadily. In 1967 loan agreements were signed between London merchant bankers and the Portuguese steel monopoly for steel plant and iron manufacturing equipment.

The British-Portuguese military alliance dates back several centuries to 1373 and it was to this treaty that Britain referred when she wanted to establish a base on the Azores during the war. On the conclusion of this agreement Portugal received several million dollars worth of war material from Britain. Co-operation between Portugal and Britain was especially close with respect to the Navy. Before the war the British navy founded a number of modern naval schools in Portugal and supplied a great number of ships. After the war Britain continued to be the most important supplier of warships and many officers of the Portuguese navy received their naval training in the Royal Navy. Britain continues to co-operate with Portugal over the Azores base.

After the outbreak of the war in Angola the British government, under some pressure from Parliament, decided to stop the export of weapons to Portugal for use in the colonies. But supplies of weapons for NATO use were continued and, as everywhere, this has been the loophole. At the time Britain supplied Portugal with two warships which were promptly sent to the colonies. From 1961-1964 Britain supplied 150 light aircraft, most of which went to the Portuguese air force and were also used in the colonies. In 1963 Britain supplied spares for these planes; the payment by Portugal fell under “special expenditure for the forces overseas”. In 1965 Britain supplied 200 Austin jeeps for the Portuguese army, a year later a frigate for the navy. A letter from the Foreign Office on April 24, 1968 stated that “Membership of the alliance (NATO) does not imply any approval of the form of Government of other members” and on June 4, 1968 another letter added, “While Portugal is a member of NATO it would therefore be unjustifiable to deprive her of the arms necessary for her to carry out her obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty.”

Finally, far from bringing pressure, whether no more than diplomatic, on the Portuguese government for its role in Africa, not least the part it plays in aiding the Smith regime to evade sanctions, Britain votes with Portugal at the United Nations on resolutions concerning the African territories. In November 1967 a General Assembly resolution reaffirmed the inalienable right of the peoples of the territories under Portuguese domination to achieve freedom and independence under General Assembly resolutions, and the legitimacy of their struggle to achieve that right. The resolution requested all states particularly Portugal's NATO allies to dissociate both militarily and economically from Portugal. The resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. Britain voted against, together with America, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Australia and the Netherlands.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The Unholy Alliance: South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia

NATO is Portugal's European alliance for fighting her African wars. On the African continent there is her axis with South Africa and Rhodesia (a rather junior partner) in what has become known as the Unholy Alliance.

The economic links between the white minority regimes of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal are becoming increasingly strong. They must, however, be seen in the context of the total political as well as economic strategy the three have devised for Africa south of the equator.

South Africa's Prime Minister, Mr. B. J. Vorster expressed this strategic intent in an interview he gave during 1966. "In many respects", he said, "we have with respect to much of Africa south of the Sahara, a responsibility which the United States has undertaken on a much larger scale with respect to the underdeveloped areas of the world as a whole."<sup>38</sup>

Both South Africa and Portugal, separately and together, accept this "responsibility". Mr Vorster has denied the existence of a military pact between South Africa and Portugal, but he added: "No treaties are needed between friends." Evidence of their combined defence and intelligence co-operation in the field is overwhelming. Staff personnel of their various defence and air forces meet regularly. A South African para-military force has been in action in Rhodesia, and South African troops have been in Mozambique, and South African helicopters on reconnaissance and counter-insurgency duty in Angola.

Commander Spartacus Monimambu, who was in command of the Angolan Peoples Liberation Movement (MPLA) forces in the Eastern Region of Angola since that front was opened in May 1966, said it was no secret that South Africa was helping the Portuguese with helicopters and soldiers. In an interview with Don Barnett in Dar-es-Salaam on March 21, 1968, he said:

*"It has now been proven that South Africa is involved in the Angola struggle. First of all they see our liberation movement as a security problem for the whole of southern Africa. These racialists and white settlers want to keep South Africa, South-West Africa, Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola safely in their hands. They want these countries to remain under their control for economic and political reasons. You know that Mozambique and Angola occupy two strategic points. The South African racists know that if Mozambique and Angola become free, the liberation forces will use them as a base from which to attack the apartheid regime.*

*We have already found young South African soldiers among the Portuguese troops. At Karipande, which was open to people coming from Zambia to shop, we found soldiers who spoke only Afrikaans but no Portuguese. Then in Bié they use Afrikaner soldiers to guard the South African-owned Kassingé mines. South African helicopters also come in to supply their soldiers with ammunition, food etc., and to do reconnaissance for the Portuguese. As you know, there is an agreement between South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal. They meet every month to study how to stop the 'terrorism' in southern Africa, how to carry on counter-guerilla actions against the liberation movements . . ."*<sup>39</sup>

Of particular significance are the growing economic ties between South Africa and Angola and Mozambique. All these Unholy Alliance tendencies and their grand strategy come together dramatically in the project for the giant hydro-electric Cabora Bassa Dam. The intention, which is central to the expansion of the economic base of a Southern African regional bloc, is to hook the countries of the south into an integrated power-using area spanned by the Dam on the middle Zambesi. The Dam is being built in Mozambique's Tete Province, which is the centre of the most crucial battles of the war between Portuguese troops and FRELIMO, and it will stand at the strategic conjunction of Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia. This project, devised by South Africa and financed by a giant international consortium of South African, French and West German capital, will become not only the largest hydro-electric generating station in Africa, but will provide for irrigation schemes, interlocking projects for mining and industrial development, and new road and railway networks. In doing so it will provide for the economic unification and centralisation of a vast region across the boundaries of a dozen different states—but on South African and Portuguese terms, and in such a way that the economic needs and strength of the white-minority regimes will prevail over the needs of the smaller African states searching for a genuine independent strategy. Cabora Bassa is to be a centre not only of hydro-electric power but also of white power in Southern Africa. Portugal has announced a scheme to settle one million white immigrants along the Zambesi to strengthen the manpower resources of the white-minority states of the south.

This is explicitly stated by the planners of the scheme. One of South Africa's most influential economic planners has stated that Cabora Bassa is viewed not only as a source of cheap power for South Africa's growing needs, but as the focus for "a closely knit Southern Africa . . . which implies a signal contribution of an outward-looking South African Republic to all the African countries clustered in the South."<sup>40</sup> In other words, this is seen as an expansion of apartheid power north into Africa, in alliance with Portugal fighting her desperate rearguard action in her colonies, and with European capital involved in the financing of the project. Neither the Cabora Bassa scheme nor its partner on the west side of the continent, the Kunene project between Angola and South West Africa, (likewise a joint South African-Portuguese project) could be planned or constructed were it not for the active participation and support of Western business and finance groupings and their governments.

Cabora Bassa will help make South Africa and Portugal the economic power-house of Africa south of the equator, while the white settlers flowing into the area will be an attempt to create fresh reserves of white opposition to African freedom and thus to hold the line against the African freedom movements.

Portugal's African wars are prolonged by these manoeuvres by Portugal to find allies and economic resources.

In recent times as much as over the centuries, Portugal has shown that she is deaf to the unassailable right of peoples to govern themselves. She has consistently turned her face against any change and has insisted that the colonies continue to live in the past when the white man ruled by right of conquest. The brutalities of forced labour, the indignities suffered by the African populations, the ruthless plunder of the economic resources of the colonies—all these are the products of a colonialism which the people of the Portuguese territories are defeating by their own efforts.

In some quarters there may be hopes that after Salazar and with the coming to office of Dr. Marcello Caetano, long-overdue reforms can be expected. Caetano's

own statement made on April 8, 1970 does not offer much reason for confidence, he dismissed self-determination (which) "cannot be expressed by small scraps of paper (voting cards) put into the hands of savannah savages". The greater autonomy proposed for the African colonies in a set of reforms before the Portuguese National Assembly, talks of "developing the overseas provinces". But once again this is to be done under Portuguese administration. And Portuguese administrative control and African rights of self-government have always been a cruel mockery in the African territories.

It should be clear from the descriptions of Portuguese colonialism that the ruthlessness of that policy was the work not of any one man, whether Salazar or another, but that it arose from the role of Portugal as a whole as a colonial power. Thus the replacement of the Salazar regime by the Caetano regime, and any so-called reforms initiated in Lisbon can be a superficial change only; any real change for the peoples of the African territories will come as a result of their own challenge to the fundamentals of this colonial system, and as a result of their own efforts.

For the present, as Eduardo Mondlane wrote shortly before his death at the hands of an assassin:

*"The war is an agony; it makes people homeless, causes famines, diverts energy and talent from development projects; because of it, people die and are injured. We do not choose war as our path to national independence. War was forced upon us . . . Liberation is to us not simply a matter of expelling the Portuguese; it means reorganising the life of the country and setting it on the road to sound national development. Taking political power out of the hands of the Portuguese is a necessary condition for this, since the Portuguese have consistently opposed social progress and have encouraged only those economic developments which could benefit a small, almost entirely foreign elite. But the liberation movement will not be able to claim success until, through it, the people achieve what the Portuguese denied them: a tolerable standard of living; education: the conditions for economic and cultural development; the opportunity to participate in their own government."*<sup>41</sup>

## Appendix

### Portuguese Deserters

A feature of Portugal's colonial wars has been the rate of desertion of Portuguese conscripts, not only from Portugal into neighbouring European countries to escape military service, but also from the Portuguese army in the field in Africa. An example: in December 1968 FRELIMO published a leaflet addressed to soldiers of the Portuguese army in which three deserters and two prisoners described their treatment in FRELIMO hands, and urged their companions who were disillusioned with the war to follow their example and desert. As a direct result of this appeal on March 15, 1969 three soldiers deserted, numbers 48978/67, 41543/67 and 65428/67. Here are the stories they told after deserting from Mocimboa da Praia at 2.30 a.m. on the night of March 15, crossing the river Nango, and making their way to a village where they met a FRELIMO detachment of the people's militia. They gave up their weapons and were taken to a FRELIMO base.

**Eusebio Martinho da Silva** is 23 years old and comes from Moscavide in Lisbon district. His father died when he was eleven and his mother married again to a man called Antonio Pedro Lopes. Neither of them can work any longer as they are both sick, and they are supported by Eusebio's brother, aged 21. However, he too is due to be conscripted shortly. They own no property and have "only the night to rest and the day to work." (Eusebio's words).

He has only studied up to the third primary class. His first job was in a factory where he was lubricating machines. At the age of 18 he became a bricklayer. He was conscripted into the army on July 17, 1967, and was sent to Mozambique on December 20, 1967. He was a private and served as a bodyguard to a lieutenant called Ribeiro. In Mozambique he earned about 900 escudos (\$32) per month, (but in Portugal, like all the other recruits, he only received 3 escudos per month). His company, commanded by a captain, Oscar Antonio Gomes da Silva, was based at Nambude and acted in the zones of river Nangu, of Bandazi, and between Nambude and Marere. When they went out on operations, their main aim was to capture the local people, and they had orders to shoot anyone who ran away. During his service in Mozambique he had suffered two FRELIMO ambushes and two attacks against posts where he was stationed: one on March 24, 1968 at Nambude (where a friend of his, Fernando dos Santos Rosa, was taken prisoner), and the other on October 28, 1968 at Ntadola.

**Jose Antonio Ferreira da Mata** was born on June 15, 1946 in Carreiras, Portugal. He is a carpenter and was educated up to the fourth primary class. He was conscripted into infantry regiment No. 7 on April 18, 1967 in Leira. He was later sent to Porto for training in radio telegraphy. He arrived in Mocimboa da Praia on January 31, 1968 and was first put into company No. 2304, then transferred to No. 2305 in Shitolo. His commander was a captain Nuno Alvares Pires Afonso.

**Jose Augusto Lopes** was born in Vila Boa Do Mondego in Guarda, Northern Portugal, on July 29, 1945. He is a bricklayer. He never went to school and is completely illiterate. All his family are working in France except for his mother and sister who are in Portugal. When he was 18 he also went to France to work. He returned to Portugal in 1967 to visit his mother and sister. On June 12, 1967 he was caught by the police and sent to the military headquarters at Viseu where, a week later, he

was conscripted. After his arrival in Mocimboa da Praia he was sent to Nambude where he stayed for 7½ months, then he was sent back to Mocimboa da Praia for another 4 months. Then his unit, commanded by Oscar da Silva, was sent to Shitolo. On the way they were ambushed by FRELIMO. A corporal called Pereira and two privates were killed; eight privates were wounded. They later suffered two more ambushes on the same road. He was also in Nambude during the attack when Fernando dos Santos Rosa was captured.

Like previous deserters, these three men gave as their reasons for leaving the Portuguese army the harsh treatment of the ordinary soldiers by the officers, and poor conditions, but also because they had gradually realised that they did not know what they were fighting for. They felt they were fighting in a foreign country against the people to whom the country rightfully belonged. They had also discovered that they had been told false statements by their commanders about the intensity of the war, and they no longer had any trust in them. Their distrust grew stronger when they read the statement, distributed by FRELIMO, by Fernando dos Santos Rosa, who had been captured in Nambude, whom two of them knew well, and whose account of his treatment at the hands of FRELIMO was in sharp contradiction with what their officers had told them.

(Taken from *Mozambique Revolution*, March-April 1969, issued by the Department of Information of the Mozambique Liberation Front, Dar-es-Salaam).

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