

# PORTUGUESE GUINEA

## *Nailing a Lie*



by

*John Biggs-Davison M.P.*

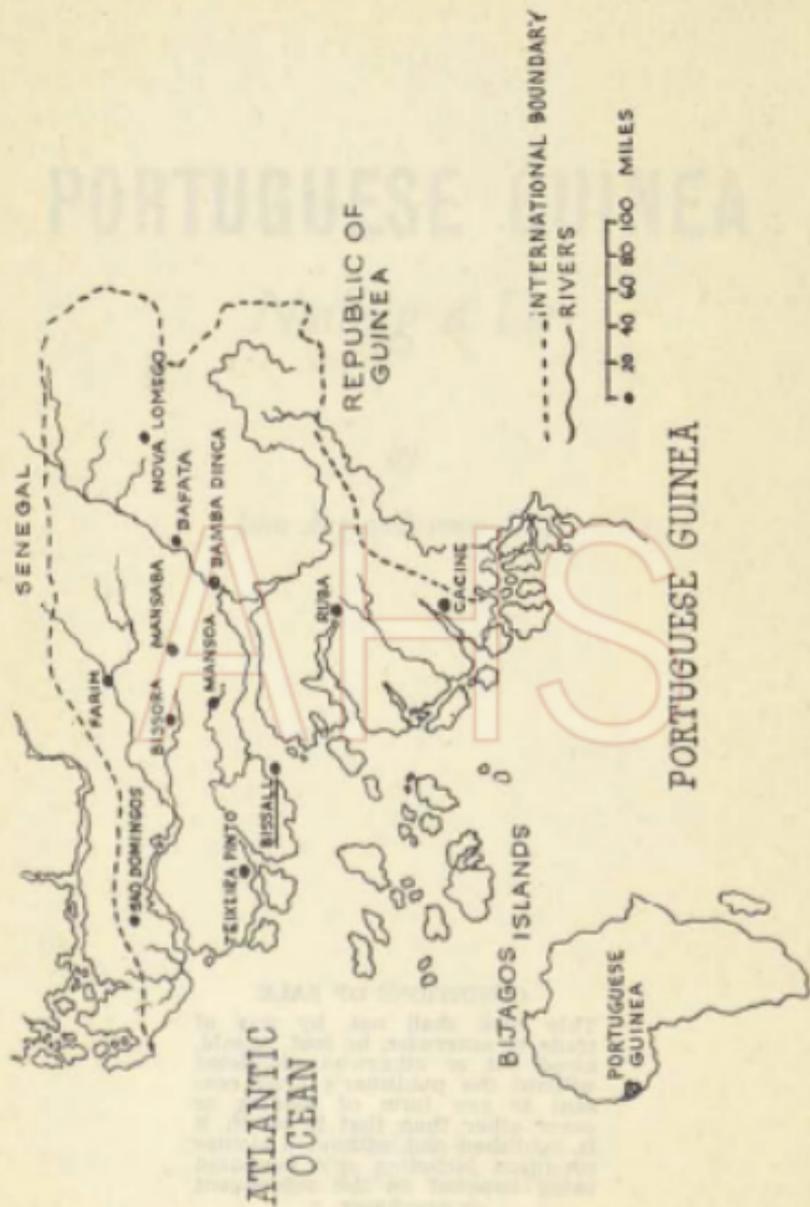
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Mr. John Biggs-Davison, seen here on one of his four visits to Portuguese Guinea (he still remains the only Member of Parliament to have visited the territory), is also an author and journalist concentrating particularly in African affairs. The first M.P. to travel to Angola shortly after the outbreak of the war in the north of that country in 1961, he has combed many of Africa's trouble spots and investigated at first hand "nationalist" claims to have taken over large areas of Portuguese Africa.

The Conservative Member for Chigwell since 1955, Mr. Biggs-Davison is the Hon. Secretary of the Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, the Vice-President of the Pan-European Union and Chairman of its British Committee. He is Chairman of the British Commonwealth Union, a co-Founder of the Pakistan Society and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

Mr. Biggs-Davison is married, with four daughters and two sons. An ex-Royal Marine officer, he has taken a special interest in subversive and amphibious warfare. The struggle in Guiné is both.



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## Portuguese Guinea

### NAILING A LIE

*"this is war"*

**G**UINEA in the rains—dank drizzle, alternating with deceptively strong sun that beats relentlessly through helicopter perspex. My teeth chatter uncontrollably. After a shivering flight back from the interior in a "chopper" with a shattered window, I have fever.

On a hard bench in the Military Hospital outside Bissau, I await the result of a malaria blood test. Next to me sits a tall Negro soldier with belly-ache. Surgeons and medical orderlies stand expectantly.

Suddenly, deafening din. Through the windows of the white-washed hall we can see a first Alouette "eli"—they drop the "h"—touching down. Seconds later, the first battle casualty, a subaltern, is rushed in on a stretcher.

Unchecked by surgeons or staff, by-standers, including my Negro neighbour, belly-ache forgotten, crowd around the stretcher. A medical officer stoops, pipe in mouth. He is nonchalant, but efficient. A casual attitude is part of the Portuguese imperturbability, in face of that "wind of change." The subaltern is hideously gashed, but will live.

Another stretcher is hurried in and its occupant carried straight through to the operating table. Then a third casualty, lying on his side.

"This is war," a cavalry captain murmured. Trite, but true.

### "the 'monty' touch"

I had been before to the Military Hospital. The Governor and Commander-in-Chief, General Antonio Sebastiao Ribeiro de Spínola, took me to see his wounded. He visits them nearly every day.

His approach is unsentimental, which is best. One senses him willing his soldiers to recover.

Black and white lie side by side. So do Portuguese soldiers and their prisoners.

There were civilian casualties too, one a woman with her child at her breast, for as Mr. Basil Davidson writes\*

"Civilian casualties are unfortunately inseparable from war. I think the PAIGC\*\* tries hard to keep them to a minimum."

\* *The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution* (Penguin African Library 1969)

\*\* The revolutionary *Parti do Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde*.

General Spinola is Arab-dark and spare. No chicken, he keeps himself in vigorous trim by an ascetic diet. He does not even take wine. This is a magnetic, powerful personality, not lightly to be crossed. The last No. 2 in the civil administration tried his luck—and left for Lisbon on the next flight.

The General flew me in his helicopter to Cachéu, Bula and Jete. He stood in the rain to address troops about to sail home at the end of their commission. Only once was he ruffled. That was when they turned out the guard in an operational post. Ceremonial is out. "This is war."

General Spinola was wearing his "tiger suit," plus monocle and the brown gloves and riding whip of the cavalry officer he was in Angola. Like "Monty," he cultivates a legend.

Like "Monty," he is a soldier's general. He listens to their problems and suggestions and delegates responsibility. The fat majors and colonels have been weeded out. General Spinola accepted the toughest appointment in the Portuguese service on condition that he could pick his subordinates, civil and military.

At the beginning of the struggle, there was friction between the two. Later the Governorship and the Command-in-Chief were combined in the person of General Arnaldo Schulz, who was Minister of the Interior when The Queen visited Portugal and, like his successor, served in Angola with distinction.

This year Bissau is at least as efficient as Lisbon. To anyone who knew it earlier and has endured the trials and lassitude of Guinea, where even to move is an effort, this is a sizeable miracle.

## pre-portuguese

Stone Age man was in Guinea—the principal prehistoric site is at Nhampasseré—and traces of ancient gold diggings in the Geba and Corubal valleys recall the extensive mediaeval states of the Sudan.

Portuguese Guinea has been described as an "ethnographical museum" and a "Negro Babelao". Her peoples vary widely and are easily recognisable. Dress and dwellings differ. For example, the Fulas paint their houses red, the Beafadas white.

Fugitives and exiles from Sudanic empires conquered and crumbling into Saharan sands were thrust down towards the coast to seek refuge behind the natural defences of a myriad rivers.

Lack of modern development has preserved the old Negro and Arabic cultures. Here are people of dignity and fine physique. The women who go "topless" have nothing to be ashamed of.

The wood carvings of war canoes made in the Bijagos Archipelago are inspired by their raids upon the Beafadas for slaves to sell to the European mariners. Once the Beafadas appealed for protection to Philip III of Portugal (II of Spain). In vain.

The Mandingos, light skinned, intelligent, sensitive featured, have something of the imperial mien of golden Mali (or Melli), where Leo Africanus and mediaeval Europeans identified Mansa Musa, who ruled in Timbuktu as "Lord of the Negroes of Guinea," with Prester John, Muslim and *Haji* though he was. The fourteenth century Arab writer and historian, Ibn Batuta, noted his subjects' hatred of injustice.

## *fulani invasion*

When the Portuguese arrived, the Mandingo empire of Mali had reached its furthest bounds and ran from the Gambia mouth to the Lower Geba. Invading Fulani pagans crossed the Gambia and Cabu in the last quarter of the fifteenth century but were worsted by the Beafadas who continued, with the Mandingos, to dominate the interior of Guinea, exacting tribute from the Fula (or Fulacunda) cattlemen.

Eighteenth century revolution brought Muslim Fulas to power in the massif of the Futa-Jalon. These invaded what is now Portuguese Guinea and enslaved the Mandingos and Beafadas, who in their humiliation became known as Black Fulas.

Only Portuguese occupation halted the Fula raids on the pagans of the coast north of the Geba river. To the south Beafadas and Nalus succumbed.

## *the discoveries*

Today Portugal takes more seriously than some of her allies the Communist design of enveloping Europe from Africa. By irony of history, this Eastern turning movement against the West is the converse of Portugal's circumnavigation, and penetration, of Africa. This was part quest for gold and slaves and fame and knowledge but part also an outflanking of the Saracen in a last mediaeval crusade. A league was sought with Prester John, the legendary Christian emperor. The Arab hold on the Eastern trade was to be broken.

The Portuguese led. Others, including England, had a finger in the pie. In the year of Agincourt English knights took part in the Christian conquest of Ceuta. So was the half-English Navigator Prince, who from Lagos, near his castle and observatory at Sagres, sent forth the caravels of Christ.

Some then believed that the Rio Doro, the "River of Gold", lay somewhere south of Cape Bojador. From thereabouts one of Prince Henry's squires called Gil Eannes brought back in 1434 a sprig of rosemary, thus breaking the spell of superstition that had bound seafarers with terror of the seas beyond. In 1456 Diogo Gomes was exploring the estuaries of Guinea.

Next year the *Infante* Henrique died. He bequeathed Guinea "with all its islands" to his nephew, Dom Fernando. The legacy embraced five of the Cape Verde Islands. The rest were soon discovered, too, and in 1466 all received a royal charter and special privileges. In 1469 the Guinea coast between the Senegal river and Sierra Leone was reserved for the dwellers in Cape Verde and their trade.

The history of Guinea and Cape Verde is thus bound up together. They were long under the same ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction. Today they form the single objective of those who wage, and back, the subversive war.

## *allies and rivals*

Not only were English knights at Ceuta but English knights helped liberate Lisbon from the Arabs and there enthroned a Sussex priest as its first bishop. English

bowmen had fought at Aljubarrota where our oldest alliance was born.

The treaty signed at Windsor in 1386 was "for ever" and committed the two thrones to the defence of each other's interests and territories "wherever they may be." Yet Anglo-Portuguese dealings in Africa have not run smooth.

Hakluyt records that Edward IV acceded to the Portuguese Ambassador's request "to stay" and sent an English expedition to "the seigneury of Ginnee". The sea-dog and slaver, John Hawkins, sacked Cachéu, the oldest Portuguese settlement in Guinea—I flew there with General Spinola and our helicopter angled low over the ancient fortress—and captured slave caravels lying in the broad river.

In 1578 Drake sacked Cidade Velha, in Praia, which was then the capital of Cape Verde. This was Europe's first settlement in Africa and you may see there the ruins of Africa's only Gothic church.

In 1600 the Guinea coast was annexed to Cape Verde. Captains-Major were stationed at Cachéu and Bissau, now the capital. Portuguese sovereignty was exercised in various fortified *praças* and the policy was ordained of friendly treatment of the natives, propagation of Christianity, control and settlement of *lançados* (outlaws) and a national trade monopoly.

For centuries, however, the Portuguese writ ran little beyond the coastline and river banks. The native chiefs feared that if Europeans were allowed inland they would discover the source of their slaves and become interlopers. Not that the European of the era before quinine could easily survive in the dense rain forest that pressed hard upon the coast.

## *negro governor*

In 1792 300 English merchants attempted to colonise the island of Bolama but quarrelled with the inhabitants and gave up. Portuguese authority only became undisputed after the arbitration of President Grant. A statue in the American's honour stands on the Graham Greenish waterfront at Bolama, which in 1839 became the capital of what, under the overseas reorganisation done by the Liberal regime in Lisbon, was known as the Guinea district under Cape Verde.

Portugal was fortunate in having an outstanding Governor to defend her territorial claims. Honorio Pereira Barreto was a Negro of Cachéu. His statue stands in the *Praça Honorio Barreto* in Bissau.

## *the capitals*

Bissau became the capital during the Second World War. Between 1879 and 1942 it was at Bolama, now ghostly with departed splendour.

Bissau, with a population approaching 30,000, has wide avenues, modern buildings, some of architectural merit, a fascinating museum, an imposing club for the business community, a cinema, a whitewashed Cathedral and the old fortress of São José de Bissau, known colloquially as Amura and still a barracks. On the outskirts, towards the airport at Bissalanca, stands a superb housing estate, constructed under General Schultz, complete with market, mosque, church and social services.

## *pacification*

In 1886 the Casamança was ceded to France in exchange for Congo territory now within Angola and the definitive frontiers were drawn. The "scramble for Africa", a phrase popularised in a *Times* leader of 1884, was on. To assert her sovereignty, Portugal must show "effective occupation." She must pacify the virtually unadministered tribes of the interior. To this end were fought a series of little wars, which ended only in 1915.

Old men can still remember the pacification. Carlotta Peres, proprietress of an excellent restaurant at Nhacra, near Bissau, was mistress of Captain Teixeira Pinto, who with native troops combed the Oio forests free of hostiles in 1913. In 1962 Madame Peres performed her own pacification. Single-handed, she suppressed the local revolutionaries with the thickness of her stick and the strength of her personality. She was invited to Lisbon and met Dr. Salazar.

The PAIGC is active in Oio today.

## *tourism?*

Late in August, 1969, I returned from Cape Verde and a fourth tour of Guinea. My first visit was in October, 1962, not long after the guerrilla war began; I returned in February, 1966, and again in May, 1968. I have received the fullest access to classified information by the Army, Navy and Air Force.

I once told a colleague where I was going. "Ah, Portuguese Guinea," he sagely replied, "that's in South America, isn't it?" But then few British have ever gone

there, apart from some Protestant missionaries. There is no British consul. The Consular Corps consists of an able Frenchman—his country is concerned for Senegal next-door—and a Portuguese acting for Belgium.

Guinea has had, and can provide, tourist attractions. But it is no honeymoon haunt in 1969. Much of the buffalo, wild pig, gazelle, crocodile, lion and leopard which would formerly attract the hunter, has been killed or driven off in six years of war and aerial activity. I did sight, and miss, a basking croc. from a LDM (medium landing craft) escorting a convoy down the Rio Cumbija.

In the slime on the banks were terrorist footprints. Men now hunt men in Guinea.

## *climate and country*

I have now sampled every season, except the cool weather round Christmas. The climate of Guinea may be summed up as humid heat, punctuated by tornadoes. Malarial and unhealthy, it is yet a beautiful country. White settlers are few; there are not many large plantations; there is no railway except in the dockyard at Bissau.

Both the old capital and the new are on islands and the Bijagos Archipelago fringe the mainland, which is pancake flat until it reaches the foothills of the Futa-Jallon. The view from the air is of dark green mangroves, emerald green rice paddies, sub-Saharan savannah.

The territory is minutely dissected by tidal rivers, negotiable by frigates in what is an amphibious war, and a multitude of lesser streams. Measuring 13,948 square miles which is about the size of Holland, but substantially less at high tide—some 1,500 square miles are periodically flooded—this is a land where there is said to be more

water than land. "Guiné," according to the 1913 *Boletim* of the *Sociedade de Geografia*, "does not require roads because there are many navigable rivers"!

It is an enclave hemmed in by Senegal and the Republic of Guinea (Conakry). In 1905 a former *adjoint* to the Mayor of Dakar called M. J.-E. Giraud, full of the *mission civilisatrice*, addressed the *Société de la Géographie*, of which he was a member.

*"Souhaitons même que dans un avenir rapproché notre pays puisse acquérir pacifiquement les deux enclaves de la Gambie anglaise et de la Guinée portugaise, dont le rôle naturel paraît d'être rattacher à notre Soudan occidental dont la cohésion serait ainsi complète."\** France and England have left. Portugal remains.

## the people **A L I S**

Portuguese Guinea, with half a million folk, is densely inhabited by African standards. The population increased substantially between 1950 and 1960, owing to better health and rising living standards.

There are more than 30 tribes, and, apart from Lebanese traders, ubiquitous on the West Coast of Africa, a permanent white and mulatto population of about 7,000 supply lighter threads in the ethnic tapestry.

The natives may speak *Creolo* or one of many dialects but will describe themselves "Portuguese," which in law they all are.

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\* "Let us even wish that in the near future our country may be able peacefully to acquire the two enclaves of English Gambia and Portuguese Guinea, whose natural role appears to be attached to our Western Sudan, of which the close cohesion would thus be complete."

From the Bijagós Archipelago through Senegal to the Gambia are Felupe (more correctly Dyola), an assortment of tribes described as "typically Negro." Matrilineal, they worship a god of the sky and the rain.

The Arab culture of the Fulas, who form 20 per cent of the population, is apparent in their music and dances, their gowns, turbans and tarbooshes.

## *religion*

The Fulas, Futa-Fulas and Mandingos (12.5 per cent of the population of Guinea) are Muslim. Among the Balantas (30 per cent), Manjacos (14 per cent) many are Animist, as is more than half the entire population. Seven other tribes account for about five per cent of the population of Guinea.

As elsewhere in West Africa, Islam makes many more converts, more easily, than does Christianity. Only five per cent of the population is recorded as Christian, mostly Catholic.

In 1940 Guinea achieved ecclesiastical independence of the see of Santiago de Cabo Verde. In 1955 it became an Apostolic Prefecture. This is mission territory. Portuguese and Italian Franciscans are among the religious and secular clergy who preach, teach and care for the lepers, the sick and the orphans—including war victims from both sides.

At Bor, near Bissau, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary have run a famous children's home and nursery since 1935. Their girls are taught cooking, sewing, embroidery and other home crafts, and are in high demand as wives.

## *faith against communism*

The Muslim Fulas are a sword arm of Catholic Portugal. The Army builds and repairs mosques. The dazzling new *mesquita* at Bafatá is celebrated in Islam. The Government fly *hajis* (pilgrims) to Mecca and Medina.

When in Aldeia Formosa (Quebol), I call on Cherno Raschid, a holy man whose spiritual sway extends to the Republic of Guinea. I remain the only non-Portuguese white man with whom he has conversed. Amílcar Cabral, the leader of the nationalist party, the PAIGC, sent him an emissary, but the Cherno keeps the peace for Portugal.

## *agriculture and industry*

The tribespeople till, and herd, semi-nomadically, under tribal custom. Only a third or so of the country is cultivated but it was self-sufficient in rice, the staff of life for many, until terror and conflict disrupted agriculture and obstructed communications in parts of the Province.

The main crops are the *mancarra* (cashew nut) in Farim, Bafatá and Gabu districts; palm oil in Cachéu, Gebu and Bijagós; rice in Mansoa, Catió, Fulacunda, Bissau and São Domingos. As is usual in West Africa, millet, cassava, sweet potato and sugar cane are also grown. Research has been done at the Pessubé agricultural station on cocoa beans, groundnuts and pineapples. There are agricultural demonstrators and veterinary staff in the interior.

There is good timber, which, with groundnuts and coconuts, is a main export. Sawmills, extraction plants and the Sacor oil refinery at Bandim are the chief industrial enterprises. The bauxite deposits are hard to get at and Guinea lacks sources of power.

## *how guinea is governed*

The people of Guinea are all Portuguese citizens with the rights and duties of Portuguese in Macao, Madeira or Minho.

Like other Portuguese Provinces, Guinea sends representatives to the National Assembly and Corporative Chamber in Lisbon, as well as to the Overseas Council, which advises the Minister of *Ultramar*. Guinea's "M.P." is James Pinto Bull, formerly Secretary-General of the Provincial Government, who retired from public service to go into business.

Like other Overseas Provinces, Guinea exercises considerable local autonomy in finance and administration. A provincial budget is drawn up annually and voted on by the Legislative Council, which consists of members elected for four years, together with the Secretary-General, a legal and a financial officer.

The basic administrative sub-division is the *posto*. The *chefe de posto* (district officer) works with the *regulos* (traditional chiefs) and *chefes de tabanca* (village headmen). The tribespeople in effect govern themselves through their own councils. Those who move to town usually maintain their ties with their villages.

The posts are grouped in nine *concelhos*, Bissau, Bolama, Bafatá, Bissorá, Cachéu, Catió, Farim, Gabu (Nova Lamego) and Mansoa, and three *circunscrições*, Bijagós, Falacunda and São Domingos, under Administrators.

Local civil and police officers include Natives, mulattos and a number of Goanese exiled from the "State of India." One admirable *chefe de posto* I have met had a Portuguese father and a Fula mother.

There are elected Municipal Councils in the larger, and Municipal Committees in the lesser, towns.

## *education*

The civil administration, the Armed Forces and the Missions are partners in education, and in town and *tabanca* (Creole for village) there are Islamic schools where Muslim boys squat to chant from the Koran.

There are 21,512 pupils in primary, and 1,858 in secondary school, and 346 at the Honório Barreto Lyceum in Bissau, named after the celebrated Negro Governor. 490 pupils are training at the Industrial, Professional and Technical School. The Dr. Silva Tavares Agricultural Apprenticeship School takes boarders from the countryside. At Bafatá the Catholic fathers run a trade school for boys.

18 scholarships are awarded annually for secondary and higher studies in European Portugal by the State, the Provincial Government, the Bissau municipality, administrative departments, the Trade and Industrial Association, private enterprise and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

A few native seminarians train for the priesthood in the *metropole*.

### *"example to africa"*

In 1963 a World Health Organisation mission to Guinea, Angola and Moçambique came to the following conclusions:—

- (a) The Portuguese authorities gave the WHO experts every facility. Nothing was hidden from them and they were not dissuaded from going anywhere.
- (b) There are exemplary health services in all three provinces.

(c) The local inhabitants have full confidence in the health services.

(d) The Rural Labour Code is strictly applied in all three provinces, which applies without discrimination to all racial and cultural groups and guarantees workers and their families medical assistance.

(e) Existing plans would lead to a better standard of living.

(f) There are first-class hospitals in the three provinces.

(g) There is no racial discrimination.

M. Raoul Follereau of WHO recorded that "within a few years leprosy will be conquered and you will then be able to be one of the first territories in the world where leprosy will have disappeared." The Portuguese conquest of both leprosy and sleeping sickness has been commended as "an example to Africa." The only threat to its complete success is the terrorist obstruction of inoculation and supervision.

But Mr. Basil Davidson\* knows better than WHO:—

"Elsewhere the last twenty years of the colonial period saw a great deal of effort directed at tropical scourges such as these. But not in Guiné; the colony could simply not afford it."

Mr. Davidson was writing in 1969 but retailing 1954 statistics given by Commander Teixeira de Mota, now Naval Chief of Staff in Guinea, in his authoritative two-volume monograph, *Guiné-Portuguesa*\*\* and quoted by the PAIGC leader, Amílcar Cabral, in his *Report* to U.N. of 1961.

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\* *The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution*. (Penguin African Library 1969).

\*\* Agência General do Ultramar, Lisbon, 1954.

## *african forces of subversion*

In PAIGC the Portuguese are at grips with a formidable, insidious foe. The military forces of Amílcar Cabral may number 6,000, of whom about half may be in Portuguese territory.

His armed forces of "popular revolution" (FARP) include an *Exército Popular* (People's Army) and a *Guerilha Popular*. On paper at least PAIGC reproduces an administrative and command structure after the Portuguese pattern. Amílcar and his comrades are, after all, Portuguese in upbringing and education. The PAIGC troops wear camouflage uniform similar to the loyal Portuguese and are difficult to distinguish from their own black soldiers and irregulars. The majority of rebels are Balantas.

Cabral has divided Guinea into northern, eastern and southern "inter-regions," sub-divided into zones.

The People's Army (E.P.) comprises mobile groups intended to operate anywhere under the direct orders of the Inter-Regional Committee. Their role is to engage the enemy, sustain the guerrilla forces (G.P.) and mobilize and organize the people against their rulers.

The basic E.P. unit is a group of 21 made up of:

- Leader
- Political Commissar
- Bazooka aimer
- .. loader
- L.M.G. aimer
- .. loader
- 6 riflemen
- 7 snipers

Each such group contains 3 sub-groups with its leader and 5, usually supported by a mortar operated by 4-6 men and a heavy machine-gun manned by a team of 4.

That is the basic unit. A tougher proposition are the *bi-grupos*, hard-hitting combat units endowed with additional fire power. A *bi-grupo* consists of the following:—

- Leader
- Political Commissar
- 3 bazooka aimers
- 3 " loaders
- 3 L.M.G. aimers
- 3 " loaders
- 9 riflemen
- 3 snipers

There are three sub-groups to each *bi-grupo*. The sub-group is made up of a leader, bazooka aimer, bazooka loader, together with three riflemen and snipers. The normal supporting arms for a *bi-grupo* are two mortars and two heavy machine guns.

### *terrorist bases*

The G.P. have installed bases and some field hospitals in densely forested parts of the Province. In Oio, where PAIGC is strong, there are about 12 bases and more in the South. The main ones are at Canjambari on the Northern, and Unal on the Southern Front. Each base is manned by a garrison whose strength may range from 32 to 64, besides its leader and political commissar, and comprises four groups, each consisting of a leader and eight rank and file. Their weapons are rifles and both light and heavy machine guns. The base itself is also provided with a bazooka, a heavy machine-gun and a



*Statue of Honório Barreto in Bissau.*



*The author with the Governor and Commander-in-Chief,  
General Spínola.*



*Open-air Mass for Portuguese troops, black and white.*



*Part of a haul of captured communist weapons.*



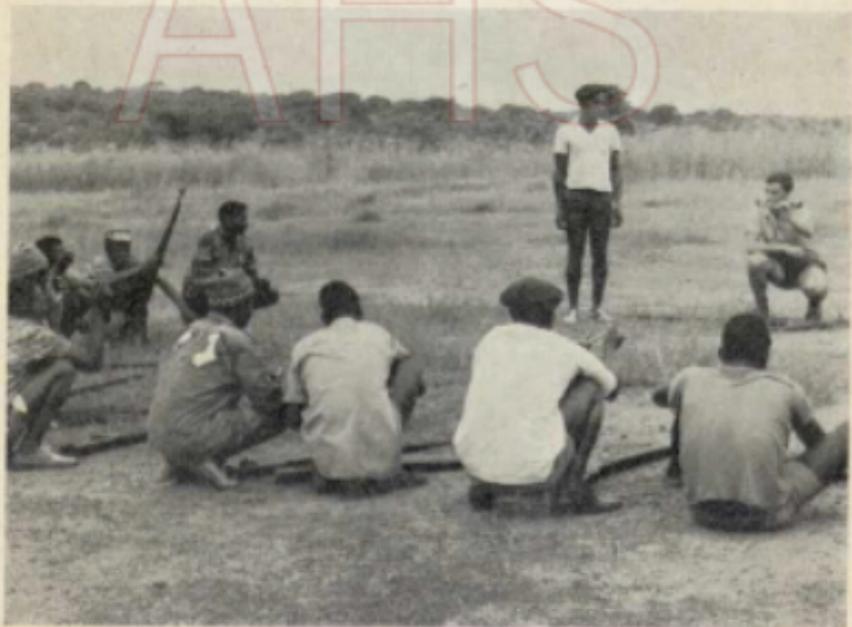
*Portuguese officers teach in many of Guinea's schools.*



*Patrol with British Ferret\* (18th August, 1969) returning to Buba.  
\*Portuguese for "FOX".*



*The river war. Portuguese marines protect Guinea's river-borne trade and lines of communication.*



*Portugal arms and trains her African citizens for their own defence.*

mortar. As fast as the Portuguese destroy a base, the PAIGC make it good. Field hospitals, served by Cuban doctors, have been set up at Morés and Xitole.

In addition to the FARP, a teenage *Milicia Popular* (M.P.) has been recruited to spy and forage. The M.P. is organized in regions, zones, sections and groups. Each group includes a leader, political commissar and 15 militia of both sexes. Every section, zone and region is controlled by its Committee and, at the top, the Revolutionary Committee consists of a Chairman, Political Commissar, two Vice-Chairmen (one of them a woman) and a Secretary.

## *24 tons of captured arms*

Except for air support, possession of which would "escalate" operations to the discomfort of the republics harbouring the terrorists, the PAIGC lacks for little in the way of warlike material. In some respects it is better armed than the Portuguese. Its troops are equipped with Soviet, Czech, East German, Chinese, Cuban and a sprinkling of American and British weapons. These include Russian 82 mm. recoilless cannon, 82.5 mm. bazookas, heavy and light mortars, 12.7 mm. anti-aircraft machine guns, multi-barrelled Kalashnikov automatic rifles, land mines, anti-personnel mines and grenades.

In August I inspected the 24 tons of Communist material just captured at Colina do Norte, on the northern border with Senegal. Some of it was displayed under the flagstaff of the local garrison; the rest I saw at the Air Force base at Bissalanca, where it had been taken by the green-bereted parachutists who had shared in this most successful operation. (In Portugal the paras are part of the Air Force.)

The 1968 version of the Degtyarev, as used in Vietnam, was in evidence. A bazooka was marked

#### CUBA

#### EXERCITO REBELDE

Ammunition boxes bore at one end the name of a Soviet manufacturer, at the other

#### PAIGC CONACRY

In my possession are Soviet-made "dum-dum" bullets, which are against the conventions of war.

Also amongst the captured material were exercise books for instruction and propaganda literature in Portuguese, all printed in the USSR. A booklet commemorating the centenary of Lenin's birth contained photographs of PAIGC leaders.

These are the weapons, physical and psychological, of the PAIGC of Amílcar Cabral. There are other revolutionary parties, too. We may pass briefly over BNGC (*Bloc des Naturels de Guinée-Bissau*). Its leader, a Fula called Oumaro Gano, once worked in Senegal, until Amílcar Cabral had him chased into the Gambia. BNGC believes in a peaceful negotiation of autonomy, and is against Cape Verdian dominance in Guinea.

The PAIGC rival FLING (*Front pour la lutte pour l'indépendance de la Guinée Portugaise*), which now does little but talk and bring out its paper *Bombolon*. Its weapons and soldiers are strictly controlled by the Senegalese *gendarmérie*. François Mendy has been replaced as leader by Benjamin Pinto Bull and the party is divided within itself. Paulo Dias heads a pro-Cuban, pro-Chinese fraction.

But the OAU has cut off funds for FLING in accordance with its policy of one movement per territory to be "liberated"—FRELIMO for Moçambique, MPLA for Angola, PAICG for "Guinea-Bissau". Senegal, too, has

withdrawn support from FLING. When President Senghor's Francophil "African Socialism" was under fire from the Marxist PAI (*Parti Africain de l'Indépendance*) in 1966, he entered into an agreement with Amílcar Cabral granting PAIGC bases and free movement in his territory. This is one reason why PAIGC have been able to step up their operations. Another is the presence of Cuban mercenaries acting as instructors, radio operators and medicos. On the 19th November last year a Cuban army captain, Pedro Rodriguez Peralta, was captured after being wounded in a Portuguese ambush. He had been attached to the PAIGC by the Cuban Government five months previously.

### *paigc a cape verde movement*

Note the "C" in PAIGC—the African Party for the Independence of (Portuguese) Guinea and Cape Verde. Cape Verdians are something of an élite in Guinea. They are to the fore in official and commercial posts. Thus, in Bissau, if you embark on the somewhat lengthy task of sending a cable or cashing a cheque, you are likely to be served by a pretty Cape Verdian girl. There are Cape Verdian ground staff in the Air Force (Guinea and Cape Verde constitute a single Air Zone) and Cape Verdian engineers in the Bissau dockyard.

From Amílcar Cabral down, Cape Verdians predominate in the hierarchy of PAIGC, which is resented by Negro members. In July, 1967, some of the leading Negroes plotted to assassinate Cabral; but he got wind of the conspiracy and some of them were liquidated. They say that there is talk in the PAIGC of having to fight another war, when they have ousted the Portuguese, a war against the Cape Verdians.

## *amilcar cabral*

The Secretary-General of the Party was himself the son of a Cape Verdian father and a Mandingo mother. He was born at Bafatá. He won a scholarship to Lisbon University after doing well at the Lyceum in São Vicente in Cape Verde. His teacher of English told me what a good pupil Amílcar was. He became an agronomist in the administration of his home Province and showed exceptional promise. Unfortunately, he fell foul of a white superior who was his professional inferior. He drifted to other jobs in Lisbon and Angola, then defected to Conakry, by 1958 the capital of the Republic of Guinea which under Sékou Touré's leadership had defied General de Gaulle and opted out of the French Community. Amílcar may have been influenced by his Marxist wife, a white Portuguese whose brother is serving as an officer in the Army. They have since parted.

Cabral attended the "Three Continents" Conference at Havana in 1966, met the late Ché Guevara and is highly thought of by Fidel Castro. In October, 1969, he was prominent together with Judas Honwana of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and five other leaders of African 'liberation' movements, at an international symposium held by the Russians at Alma-Ata, capital of the Soviet Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. The gathering, jointly sponsored by the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, was to commemorate the centenary in 1970 of Lenin's birth and its theme was Leninist teaching on national liberation revolutions. Cabral is certainly a cut above some of the posturers further South, who, like Dukes of Plaza Toro, lead their regiment from behind in places like Dar-es-Salaam.

## *political warfare*

Besides up-to-date Communist arms, PAIGC has the use of *Radio Libertação* in Conakry. Some extravagant claims are broadcast, for instance, the "capture" of Bedanda, where in 1968 I visited a locally recruited Negro company, embarked in the LDM (medium landing craft) of a river convoy—and missed my croc. Six months before that Algiers Radio reported a raid on Bissau. Moscow Radio went one better and reported the bombing of Bissau by 20 aircraft. In fact there was a long range mortar attack on the airport. Little damage was done.

PAIGC commit fewer atrocities than the organizations operating against Portugal in Angola and Moçambique—though, cruelly, faked letters purporting to come from company commanders in Guinea are sometimes sent to the homes of serving Portuguese soldiers falsely announcing their death in action. Examples have been shown to me at the Lisbon offices of the *Movimento Nacional Feminino*, which roughly corresponds to the W.R.V.S., by its leader Madame Cecilia Supico Pinto, who might be described as Portugal's "Lady Mountbatten". She has the same burning concern for the wounded and distressed. We first met in Guinea in 1966. "Lady Mountbatten" had become the Portuguese soldiers' "Vera Lynn." She visited units in all sectors and sang *fado* to her own guitar accompaniment. Nothing like this had happened before, and it was not the normal behaviour of a Portuguese society lady. "Celinha," as she is known, also told me of Communist women who have impersonated her own welfare workers and ghoulishly appeared in peasant homes to give lying news of a son or husband dead in a Guinea swamp.

## war of words

Monotonously, under datelines not even as near as Conakry, there appear reports of most of Guinea passing under PAIGC control. On each visit I have found such reports exaggerated to the point of fantasy. The story goes that when Amílcar Cabral met the international Press in President Sékou Touré's capital a naïve, or naughty, journalist asked him: "Why then is this Press conference being held here?"

In subversive war "control" is a different term which can be misleading. Deep penetration is child's play for the well-armed guerrilla fighters who lay mines or ambushes on roads, tracks and rivers, and make their nocturnal flits from inviolable bases in foreign territory. Compare Angola, Moçambique, Rhodesia. Who controls what in Vietnam? Not that the PAIGC are as successful as the Vietminh and the Vietcong. Bissau is not Saigon.

The Bijagós Islands and the islands of Bissau and Bolama are unscathed by terrorism. I have motored unarmed and without military escort from Bissau to Nhacra and beyond, whereas elsewhere one travels in convoy. A murderous outrage near the capital some while ago turned out to be a *crime passionel*... In Bolama a few months ago a mine exploded on the road from the local airfield to the sea, damaging a car and wounding two soldiers and a civilian. A second mine was discovered the same day on the same road. But the probable source of these outrages was the Zunqueira area on the mainland opposite Bolama.

This is a tract where the Portuguese concede "dual control." In such areas communications are so difficult

that the people must needs placate the latest visitors, be they Portuguese on patrol or a guerrilla group.

General Spínola, who is practical as well as aggressive, ordered withdrawal from Béli in the east and, if it pleases them, the terrorists may claim to have occupied the surrounding territory that borders the Republic of Guinea. But there is no population for them to "control." It has long since fled the terror and the war.

### *subversive grand strategy*

At the time of my first visit, in 1963, the Balantas, and others, fell under revolutionary persuasion. By 1965 the south country along the Rio Cacine was a cockpit of guerrilla activity seeping north-westwards towards the heart of the Province.

PAIGC strategy was to try to link up with another of their strongholds in the traditionally turbulent Oio region around Farim, Mansaba, Mansoa, Bissorá, and drive a wedge through the narrow waist of the country. They thus hoped to sever the peaceful, loyal, groundnut-producing north-east from the trading ports of Bafatá, Bambadinca and Bissau.

The Portuguese, however, reinforced their river patrols, using naval landing craft and marines as well as soldiers, and garrisoned the southern border posts of Gadambel, Sangonha and Cacuca to intercept infiltrators.

In Oio villages were fortified and their inhabitants armed. Posts were established round Bissum to check incursions from Senegal. A line of defended villages runs from the neighbourhood of Cambaju on the Senegal frontier to Bambadinca.

PAIGC still infests Oio, notably round Canjambari, Mores and Sara. But Quitáfine, in the south, is hardly as described by their propaganda. Last year it was largely cleaned up with the assistance of parachutists landed from helicopters. In August of this year I spent a day and a night in what Mr. Basil Davidson calls the "liberated zone, the coastal zone of Quitáfine".\* A political commissar, formerly a schoolmaster, had been captured in the Catió sector and the battalion commander gave examples of co-operation between Balantas and Fulas against the enemy of their peace.

### *opening up the interior*

Terrorism has profited from poor communications within the Province, and road building is a major civil-military activity. In 1968 I drove without escort along the straight tarmac road connecting Bambandinca with Bafatá. Bambandinca is the port—it has two jetties, one for high, the other for low, tide—for Bafatá, which is the second commercial centre in Guinea and a pretty Portuguese town, all white and terracotta.

Last August I flew along the line of the road Pelundo-Catora. Between Bula and Catora it is already metalled and the tarmac will eventually go through to Teixeira Pinto.

Airfields are being enlarged, to take jets, at Bafatá, Nova Lamego and Cufar, near Catió in Quitáfine.

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\* *The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution*. (Penguin African Library 1969).

## *"fight for the people"*

Improved communications by road and air will lighten the heavy, unremitting labours of the Armed Forces. But, as their commanders are the first to acknowledge, there is no purely military solution to their problem. Given the situation and terrain of Guinea, the attitude of her neighbours and the calibre and armament of the PAIGC, the Portuguese military achievement is remarkable and without widespread popular support their position would by now have become untenable.

In their field manual the Portuguese proclaim that "the fight against subversion is a fight for the people and never against the people." The reference is to Mao Tsetung's treatise, *Guerrilla Warfare*, in which the Chinese veteran says that

"it is only undisciplined troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its natural element, cannot live."

The Portuguese claim that they are taking the "water" away from the "fish."

This is the main purpose of the policy of "regroupment." It is a difficult operation and the authorities were slow to start. It was objected that tribal life and agriculture would be disrupted. But terrorism was already doing this and one of the PAIGC's successes has been to compel the importation of rice into a Province which formerly grew at least enough for its needs. In Bissau I watched the unloading of rice from a Greek merchantman.

## *regroupment*

Regroupment is now a main instrument of counter-subversion. In its early stages it was a largely civil undertaking. Thus, in Oio the administration regrouped Balantas at Bissum and a predominantly Balanta population at Antoinha. Since then it has become a joint enterprise with the military; in the first instance on the responsibility of individual units, latterly as part of a co-ordinated plan.

New, and better, villages are built by the people, with expert help, along roads and rivers and near Army posts where they can be shielded from terrorist influence and intimidation and protected against armed attack. There the fugitives of war can be brought back from their places of refuge on both sides of the frontiers and afforded security from molestation or conscription into the service of PAIGC. Thousands who were impressed into the terrorist ranks have come back to the flag. Often they bring their weapons with them. Safe conducts and propagandist strip cartoons in bright colours are disseminated and dropped from the air.

## *social assistance*

On the more positive side of this battle for the people, regroupment is used to bring them education and social services. The civil power, the military and the *regidos* meet in refreshingly unbureaucratic local committees. The invention of the last Governor, General Arnaldo Schulz, they are known as *cadmils*. They undertake the sinking of wells, the running of peasant co-operatives, the distribution of improved ploughs and seeds, and organize collective cultivation. In the first year of its life the *Club*

*de Mancarra*, a producers' co-operative at Bajacunda banked 14,000 *escudos*.

The Army build primary schools and "sanitary posts" in each area of regroupment. They are later handed over to the civil administration. Guinea has never before enjoyed medical care on this admittedly still imperfect scale. The "sanitary posts" and the Army doctors attract many patients from across the frontiers. The Air Force operates a "flying doctor service," moving serious cases to the hospitals in Bissau, Bafatá, Farim, Teixeira Pinto or Catió.

Young officers of Lisbon's *jeunesse dorée* and from the University find a new sense of purpose in helping the people of Guinea to improve their conditions of life.

## *self-defence*

Each regroupment is garrisoned by regular troops until the people are ready to undertake their own defence. Members of nearly every tribe, Mandingos, Manjocos and Balantas, as well as Fulas, are issued with Mausers, sometimes with Lee-Enfields, and with light machine-guns. Some 79 mm. grenade throwers and mortars have been distributed and a certain number of heavy machine-guns. Captured Communist weapons are also given out. It has been found that this helps the people to overcome the fear inspired by the scale and quality of the PAIGC's armament.

Cambaju, on the southern border, has withstood frequent attacks, in one of which the civilian defenders killed 20 terrorists. That is but one example of the courage and loyalty Portugal can command among the people of Guinea.

The people's war against the PAIGC has revealed that

the Fulas, although unshakeably loyal, have no undisputed pre-eminence in valour. As was found by the British in India, the idea of a martial race *par excellence* is often a myth.

### *militant private enterprise*

Not all the self-defence villages are the product of regroupment. Near Xitole 25 traditional Fula villages and in the area Camamudo-Fajonquito-Contuboel 10 Fula and Mandingo villages have made themselves responsible for their own protection against the terrorists.

As for the Felupe, they need little help and advice. Barbed wire they disdain. In the north-west of Guinea round Susana and São Domingos, these former, and perhaps sometimes recidivist, headhunters prefer their own bows and arrows to the firearms proffered by the Portuguese authorities. The Felupe terrorise the terrorists and in bloodthirsty, hot pursuit, have been known to cross the Senegal frontier and have thus caused Portugal to be arraigned at U.N., an organization which, as a body, cares nothing for frontier violation in the interests of subversion.

Having accompanied a Felupe patrol, I would not care to be their enemy. Their more peaceable sport is wrestling. Bouts sometimes end fatally—for rival spectators.

### *disenchantment*

Not all those who revert to their Portuguese allegiance are peasants. In Bissau in 1968 I met intellectuals, including an idealistic former *chefe de posto*, who had become disenchanted with revolution. They were engaged

in broadcasting counter-subversive propaganda. Among them was a former interpreter of Amílcar Cabral who had acted in the *Creole* propaganda film, *Labanta Negro*, made by Italian Marxists.

The Portuguese also cultivate friendly personal relations with officials of the neighbouring republics. Across the border from Bata there was stationed a Senegalese police chief who had fought under the tricolor at Monte Cassino, in Indo-China and Algeria, and was on excellent terms with his Portuguese opposite numbers, whom he told of his weariness of war. When President Sékou Touré's men of Guinea-Conakry show a disposition to fraternise on the frontier with Portugal's Guinea, they are speedily transferred.

## *rafael barbosa*

I was in Bissau soon after that extraordinary scene at the Governor's Palace in early August, when the Chairman of the PAIGC Central Committee (with him were Raul Nunes Correia and Pascoal Anrigema) declared that he had been "deceived by promises in the name of the winds of history and renounced the revolution before a large crowd. General Spínola replied that there must be no recriminations. For a better Guinea "we must build and not destroy."

I talked to Barbosa and Correia. Rafael is grey and aged after years of prison. He declared himself a Protestant and sickened by violence. He mentioned in particular the recent wounding at Bula of two women and two babies. Raul is younger, dark and a bit of a "card." He owes his qualifications as a mechanic to the University

of Kiev and has placed them at the service of the Portuguese Air Force.

91 other prisoners were declared to be rehabilitated at the same time as these three.

## *words and deeds*

For Guinea, asleep through centuries, the war has induced social expenditure and a new approach. At the same time, it is fair to remember that a development plan had been introduced before the war broke out and that there were some devoted officials—*homens de Guiné*—who served her ably and well. John Gunther,\* who was never “inside Portuguese Guinea,” was unjust when he said that the place was “shabby, almost moribund”.

As often, Mr. Basil Davidson is out of date in writing of the struggle as the “company’s war.” The C.U.F.\*\* monopoly handles most commodities; but it is losing money, and the authorities protect the peasant by fixing prices for his crops. His groundnuts fetch more in Guinea-Bissau than in Guinea-Conakry, in Senegal or the world at large.

In the Republic of Guinea scarcities and high prices fail to commend the ideology of Sékou Touré. The Sous-sou President is suspect to the Fulas and Futa-Fulas, who on both sides of the border remained faithful respectively to Portugal and to France.

Mr. Davidson is more accurate when he says of Portuguese Africa that:

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\* *Inside Africa* (Hamish Hamilton 1955).

\*\* *Companhia União Fabril*.

"there were none of the basic conditions, upon which revolution on Europe and Asia had been founded: no large proletariat, no crystalized working class, no masses of peasantry deprived of land . . . and of Portuguese Guinea that

"there has been no great problem of land expropriation or rural indebtedness."

Almost one hears a murmured "Too bad!"

The PAIGC claims as proto-martyrs of the revolution the Bissau dockers, who in 1959 struck against exploiting shipmasters. About 30 were shot by the police. Their grievances have since been redressed. Dockers can now earn 30 *escudos* a day, which is a high wage in Africa. They have excellent canteens and rest rooms.

In 1956 I was invited to the dockers' annual outing. Drums beat, *vinho* and palm wine flowed and there was much dancing. A leading docker exchanged orations with the Governor. Both ended "*Viva Portugal!*" They embraced. An official account recorded that

"Twelve hundred stevedores and dockers held their annual get-together lunch, at which they consumed (1) six hundred and fifty kilos of rice, (2) eleven hogs, (3) ten goats, (4) one cow, (5) one thousand two hundred rolls. All this was washed down with one thousand litres of red wine, eighty litres of brandy and . . . one hundred and fifty litres of the local palm wine!"

This potentially revolutionary force has been won over. In Guinea there is no genuine basis for popular uprising. How significant were President Sékou Touré's words:

"If these people do not want to be liberated, we, who are free and conscious, have a duty to liberate them."

## *morale*

How are the Portuguese standing up to this messy, treacherous war of hide-and-peek and blast-and-run?

One sees the weariness in many eyes, but despite hardship and the appalling climate of a land where in the rains everything reeks of fecund decay, morale is high.

The soldiers have few amenities—occasionally a cinema, *fado*, ration wine laced with vitamins or Sagres beer. The empties they will hang on the barbed wire to tinkle a warning of an approaching enemy.

But in some respects the Portuguese peasant-soldier's standard of life is higher in Guinea than in Europe. He has the pay and the opportunity to buy American cigarettes and the Yardley toiletries which, with Lifebuoy soap, Land Rovers and Raleigh cycles, are a principal British export.

## *on the road*

I accompanied a road convoy in 1968 from Buba (which was bombarded before the Granada TV cameras) to Aldeia Formosa. Nothing was laid on for me; I asked the battalion commander at the last moment to allow me to go. The escorting infantry included Negroes and Arab-faced peasants from Algarve. Their officer was a subaltern from Macao. Their debonair-desperado air would have enraptured a British R.S.M. Some of the men were stripped to the waist or capless under a pitiless sun. Some had cut Redskin fringes as seen in the King's Road, Chelsea, in the trousers of their camouflage suits. Revolvers dangled from lanyards, cigarettes from

mouths. Some seemed clothed in nothing but their equipment and a crucifix.

The bush came right up to the appalling laterite road and choked us with thick red dust. At danger points, particularly one road junction, we dismounted until scouts were sent out and reported all clear. Otherwise, the troops chattered, laughed and sang, and bought bananas by the roadside for a few *centavos*. ...Their cheerfulness was unfeigned.

Saluting in Guinea is capricious. An officer may take a parade with nothing on his head. More serious is the absence of malaria discipline. Authoritarian Portugal does not believe in compelling a free man to swallow anti-malaria tablets. Some soldiers fear that it affects their virility.

## RONCO

Units differ vastly. Who was it said that cavalry prevented warfare from being a vulgar brawl? In 1968 I stayed at Mansabá with a *Batalhão de Cavalaria* of style and tradition. There was no mess silver, but the cook was from the Lisbon Ritz. Loyal toasts were drunk. The Colonel made a speech in Portuguese, which referred to the oldest alliance (more than we deserve, I thought) and ended in English: "God save the Queen!" Then his officers raised the war cries of a cavalry charge. All of which is *ronco*, an approximate Portuguese equivalent of the English "bull."

Mandingo chiefs and native girls training to be nurses were entertained in the mess. There was Mandingo dancing before dinner and singing afterwards in the sergeants' mess. That battalion was a family.

A gay captain from the Azores excelled at singing *fado*.

By the small hours he was on patrol. At breakfast time he signalled that he had made contact with a terrorist base, captured some arms and taken care of some women and children who had accompanied the terrorists from Senegal.

Mansabá was growing as Mandingos were re-grouped under the protection of the cavalry. The school worked two shifts. A civilian teacher, a native lady, officiated in the morning, a cavalry sergeant in the afternoon. The local militia embraced Mandingo and Fula (old enemies) and also Balantas. The Army reconciles the differences of centuries.

The battalion ran a large irrigated farm. Fruit, vegetables and cotton were grown and sold in Bissau. Nearby a working party, which included white soldiers and was commanded by a Fula sergeant, was clearing bush to lengthen the air strip.

## *equipment*

Operating mainly as infantry, the battalion had some ageing Ferret armoured cars. "Foxes" the Portuguese have renamed them. Owing to the perfidious arms ban, civil officials ride in brand new Land Rovers, but the Army officers, who protect them, in antique jeeps. The damp and dust of Guinea are an insidious foe. Much of the transport is old and has clocked up a prodigious mileage.

At the busy and growing naval base at Bissau they enquired wistfully about Merlin engines. The landing craft used as transports and for the operations of marine commandos (*fuzileiros especiais*) are also old. Bearded, bare-chested sailors, piratically picturesque, may live in their cramped quarters for years on end.

## *salute*

In his platitudinous treatise on guerrilla warfare, the late Ché Guevara correctly remarked: "The peasant is evidently the best soldier."

I salute the Portuguese peasant soldier and his officers. Their constancy rebukes those who by abandoning their African responsibilities thought that they had made a virtue of necessity, whereas what they did was not necessary and certainly not virtuous.

Portugal holds. But to what purpose? Unless Esso strikes oil, some good timber, groundnuts, cashew nuts and palm kernels do not suffice to justify the sacrifice of so much blood and treasure. Portugal, however, glories in her sense of history and vocation and she knows that collapse in Guinea would undermine her in Angola and Moçambique, whose glittering potential exceeds that of the *metropole* and attracts world-wide investment.

The Portuguese approach is unfashionable. Yet it is an attitude that must come back into vogue, if Europe is to live.

## *on guard for the west*

Guinea grows in strategic significance.

In 1918 the German Colonial Association called for the occupation of "the productive lands of the Senegal and Niger basins, and thence southward to the sea". Already, in September, 1914, Solf, the Secretary of State in the *Reich* Colonial Office, had submitted proposals for the "partition of the African possessions of France, Belgium and Portugal". Bolama and Bissau he rated second only to Britain's Bathurst as naval and commercial ports of the first rank.

These were the war aims of the Kaiser's Germany. What is the grand design of the "heartland" empire of Soviet Russia, whose Red Fleet shows the Red Flag in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean?

Nkrumah's Ghana was the intended Soviet link in a chain which was to stretch from the Mediterranean to West Africa and connect her sphere of influence across to Castro's Cuba, whose "Gulf of Guinea subversion plan," disclosed by the defecting Dr. Lionel Alonso, is manifest in Portuguese Guinea. The Yugoslav-designed naval port at Sekunde near Takoradi and the Soviet-built air base at Tamale far exceeded the needs of the Ghanaian forces.

Ghana has since been redeemed from her self-styled Redeemer. But MIG's bombed Biafra and Conakry, where a Chinese envoy has been received, continues as a main centre of subversion. Guinea is the last territory in West Africa north of the Equator still possessed by a NATO power. 276 miles out to sea lies Cape Verde.

Mr. Basil Davidson describes them\* as Guinea's "off-shore islands," destined, with the Bissagós, for attack and "liberation"—though to speak of the "liberation" of islands uninhabited when Portuguese were settled there in communion, never since broken, with Portugal-in-Europe, is a meaningless hypocrisy.

In 1967 Amílcar Cabral declared the "liberation of the Islands" to be indispensable to "the struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and South Africa (the aerodrome on Sal island being a South African Base *sic*").\* That magnificent all-weather air base, Portugal's unsinkable aircraft carrier, is indeed the objective of those who would sever, or menace, Europe's line of communi-

\**The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution* (Penguin African Library 1969).

cation with Southern Africa, the Commonwealth and allied countries of the Indian Ocean basin, the Far East and Australasia.

## “SATO”?

The only African ports in dependable allied hands are Portuguese or South African. If NATO is necessary, there is greater need today for a “South Atlantic Pact,” extended into the Indian Ocean. It is more than time to put an end to the bans and boycotts and blockade directed against Portugal and her friends in Africa. For Britain, they are bad business, bad strategy, bad faith.

## *an african “brazil”?*

These vital considerations apart, the Luso-tropical experiment deserves the objective examination it seldom receives. U Thant's repeated refusal to visit Portuguese Africa and see for himself is regrettable, though not unexpected. Less understandable, unless it arises from a desire that Portugal should not succeed where they failed in the discharge of African responsibilities, is the hostility of allies who profit from her constancy.

At least, it is generally conceded nowadays that Portugal is “colour-blind”. In Guinea churches, clubs and cinemas, schools and swimming pools are open to all. Black soldiers command white. All races in the Armed Forces share quarters and messes.

Commander Teixeira de Mota writes\* of the “informal, personal and direct relationships” which both European

\* *Guiné-Portuguesa, I Volume. Monographias dos Territórios do Ultramar.* (Agencia Geral do Ultramar 1954).

and African in Guinea prefers "to those of class and caste."

"The whole history of Portugal overseas (he goes on) involves a constant intercourse of different races and civilizations and neither colour nor culture imposes economic or social barriers. Individuals really mean more to the Portuguese than racial or cultural purity. . . . Portugal's own history is a continuous process of fusion of races and cultures."

But what is a "European" Portuguese?

### *"ulysses"*

The celebrated Brazilian Luso-tropicalist, Gilberto Freyre, writing of a Portugal that is Semitic as well as Celtic and Latin, Portugal that was African when the centuries of chivalry were not yet spent, compared the Portuguese with Ulysses. For he is restless with the restlessness of Moor and Jew, restless within his Iberian confine. For him

"the tropics were mother lands, native lands, and strange lands to which he returned with very special rights—almost the rights of a tropical expatriate who has wandered in Europe, absorbing her qualities in his blood, being and culture, until Europe has also become intimately his."

In Guinea one sees on the walls of public buildings and of peasant homes thatched with grass, a poster depicting a black soldier and his white comrade clasping hands in friendship beneath the flag of Portugal. Below are the words

JUNTOS VENCEREMOS

"Together we shall conquer"

Portugal fights on, and in the end the West will be grateful.



*The wounded Captain Pedro Rodriguez Peralta of the Cuban Army in a Portuguese hospital after his capture by Portuguese forces on 19th November, 1969.*

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