

# Lord Mayor offers an apology to Portuguese leader and criticizes newspaper report

18/7/73

By A. M. Rendel  
Diplomatic Correspondent

The centrepiece yesterday of Dr Caetano's visit to London was the luncheon given at the Mansion House by Lord Mais, the Lord Mayor. This was an occasion for both the Portuguese Prime Minister and the Lord Mayor to emphasize the importance of trade in Anglo-Portuguese relations. But Lord Mais evidently wished to make some public apology for the demonstration against Dr Caetano at Greenwich the night before, and to couple with this sharp criticism of the publication by *The Times*—though he did not mention the newspaper by name—of the report of the alleged massacre at Wiryamu on the 26 of Dr Caetano's visit.

The Lord Mayor's speech was also remarkable for the outspokenly cautionary note which he struck over the European Community.

Lord Mais spoke of Portugal as possibly the oldest friend and ally that Britain had had or ever would have, a friend of 600 years standing.

He then recalled that Britain had become a member of the European Community at the beginning of this year. "I do not doubt for a moment," Lord Mais

said, "that it caused you concern as it caused concern to some of us in this country, and I was one of them, not because we did not see the advantages of entry into Europe, but because we saw in that entry a possible threat to our traditional trade with our old friends in the Commonwealth and in other parts of the world, and of course with Portugal."

Lord Mais went on amid considerable applause from a number of guests, many of whom had close links with Portugal: "We in London much regret the accusations which are being made against your country, and one may well ask, 'Why are they made just at this particular moment of time? Could there be a motive behind the timings?'"

"I think there probably could. Obviously investigations and explanations will be forthcoming. In the meanwhile we in the City do not judge old friends unless we have conclusive proof. Some of us, fortunately, heard an entirely different story from a most reliable and also quite unbiased source. I for one prefer to believe that version than what I read in some of the press.

In his reply Dr Caetano, beginning with a graceful reference to the City, said that a visit to Britain which did not include the justly famous "Square

Mile" would always be incomplete.

He then traced briefly the history of the alliance and said that before the first political treaty was signed (in 1373), Portuguese and English merchants had been for many years travelling to one another's country. The flexibility of the alliance had enabled it to withstand occasional differences in various fields between the two nations, and would continue to do so.

Dr Caetano then emphasized that Britain's membership of the European Community must not be allowed to damage trade relations between Portugal and Britain. "We must work to ensure that our trade grows beyond the record figure, reached last year, of £145m each way."

He added: "Portugal has already made a trade agreement with the Common Market. Until we succeed in making the world itself our market, let Europe at least be a market for Europeans."

Finally he associated himself wholeheartedly with the Lord Mayor's toast to the future of Anglo-Portuguese relations.

Earlier Mr Peter Walker, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, had called upon Dr Caetano at the Portuguese Embassy for a talk on trade matters.

Parliamentary report, page 14