

# Attitude to race in Mozambique

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19/7/73

From Mr B D Ross

Sir, According to news reports your newspaper has carried a prominent item on an alleged massacre, and the item is being used by party politicians to damage celebrations of an old alliance of your country and Portugal.

Having just returned from a few days in Mozambique I must admit to being baffled by the vigour of criticism of Portugal's role in Africa.

Here in the Republic of South Africa white children go to separate schools and children of other races attend schools where due to the numbers using the facilities the "platoon" system is used, with several sessions each day in the same building.

In Lourenço Marques there are three shifts per day, and classes are multi-racial. I saw children of different races walking together to catch buses. In South Africa they would be walking to separate bus stops to catch separate buses.

Municipal representatives on the new councils set up in Mozambique are all black.

From what I have read neither Frelimo nor the Portuguese forces teach colour prejudice. Frelimo are trying to delay Cahora Bassa, not destroy it.

Could Portugal be released from the financial drain of the war the existing basis of racial cooperation and promotion on merit, not colour, would form a firm foundation of an example in stark contrast to the South African system.

Waiting for a lift in a Lourenço Marques hotel, a black man emerged, obviously a guest, and tipped the hall porter. I took him for a local citizen until he muttered "thank you" in English, and I realized he was probably a visitor from my country, not allowed to stay in a similar hotel in South Africa.

I cannot comment on the report of an alleged massacre as I know nothing apart from official Portuguese statements that they have not yet located the alleged village.

However, my point is that your journalists may lump Southern Africa into one category, whereas the Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique are working examples (despite a colonial war) of a successful multi-racial society.

South Africa is belaboured because of the injustices of apartheid; there is no apartheid in Portuguese territories, and I suspect it is some other motive that colours some of the attacks on the Portuguese administration?

Could it be that Europeans feel guilty of their historic association with the attempt to colonize Africa, and without weighing one system against another, automatically condemn any administration containing white men?

Yours faithfully,

B D ROSS,

12 Vivendell,

10 PO Box 1,

110000,

12 Natal, South Africa.

13 July 11.

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press is censored, and terrible reprisals await those within her borders (whatever their colour) who dare to tell the unpalatable truth.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN PAUL,

St Ninian's Rectory,

Castle Douglas,

Kirkcubright,

July 13.

From Mr M Azevedo

Sir, As a former member of the Portuguese Army, born in Africa, but unwilling to do a further term of national service, I would like to point out that although Portugal is a dictatorship, the fighting in Africa is not inter-racial but multi-racial and is essentially economic. In Mozambique and Angola, where the fighting has gone on for more than 10 years, the black Portuguese are more protected by the Lisbon Government than the white African Portuguese.

The only brutality in Portuguese Africa in the beginning was on the part of the terrorist groups in Africa—Frelimo and MPLA. Fortunately for the Lisbon Government they are against one another and consequently they attack any village which is considered to be under the influence of the other, blaming any subsequent loss of life on the Portuguese Army. Such inter-terrorist activity can easily account for any stories of complete destruction of African villages.

There are great natural resources in Angola and Mozambique and only under a more enlightened approach by liberal Portuguese Government can these be fully realized. Until these resources are exploited to the benefit of the provinces there is bound to be unrest and a desire for independence. This has nothing to do with race or colour as the provinces are truly multi-racial.

I am, yours faithfully,

MANUEL AZEVEDO,

Beckenham,

Kent.

From Mr Peter Elstob

Sir, I hope your reporter put his taxi driver right about Portugal being on our side in the First World War (today's Times Diary). Although it was the collapse of the Portuguese-held part of the Allied line at the beginning of the Battle of Lys in April 1918 which led to the German breakthrough and Haig's famous "backs to the wall" order, it should be remembered that the Portuguese 2nd Division had been extended to cover a two division front, were long overdue for relief and were hit by the main weight of a German nine division attack.

In his official report of the following July after the failure of Ludendorff's great "Kaiser-battle" Haig said, "I desire also to express my appreciation of the services rendered by the Portuguese troops who had held a sector of my front continuously throughout the winter months ...".

Portugal's neutrality in the Second World War was markedly pro-British, much to Hitler's annoyance, and the use by us of a base in the Azores was invaluable in the war against the U-boat. We may not like what Portugal is doing today but let's be fair about the past.

Yours faithfully,

PETER ELSTOB,

22 Belsize Park Gardens, NW3.

July 17.

From Mr Kenneth Clarke, Conservative MP for Rushcliffe

Sir, As the Labour Party are repeatedly wasting the time of the House of Commons by debating the foreign policy and activities of other countries, will we now see a motion tabled calling upon the Prime Minister to urge President Pompidou to cancel the forthcoming visit of President Stroessner of Paraguay to Paris—or do even the official Opposition realize that there must be some limits to this sort of absurdity?

Yours sincerely,

KENNETH CLARKE,

House of Commons.

July 17.

Of course, there is intertribal rivalry and suspicion (often encouraged by Portugal—have not we all heard the old colonial maxim "divide and rule"?) but violence and massacre are as horrific to the Africans of Mozambique as they are to the readers of *The Times*. When perpetrated by Portugal, who is continually proclaiming her Western, civilizing and Christian role in Africa, they take on an extra dimension of horror.

News takes a long time to filter out of Portuguese Africa because the