

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Times 11/7/73

Gifford/Wall/Reeves

Reported massacre in Mozambique

From Lord Gifford

Sir, Your report and leader on the massacre of Wiriyamu in Mozambique makes one feel sick and angry at the disgusting brutality which it describes, but grateful that at least there are men with the courage and newspapers with the integrity to research and uncover the truth. As Father Hastings writes, this is no isolated occurrence. The massacres of Mucumbura in 1971 were documented in similar detail by another priest, Father Luis da Costa. Frelimo has on repeated occasions brought forward witnesses to Portuguese atrocities to testify to the Group of Experts of the UN Commission for Human Rights. The presence of officers of the Directorate-General of Security at Wiriyamu confirms that such butchery is no aberration but a calculated act of policy.

It is not too late for the Government to cancel next week's visit of the Portuguese Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano. The visit is designed to be a public demonstration of British Government support for Portugal's colonial policies. Certainly it will be seen in that light by outside observers. The time is long overdue for the Government to cease their uncritical support for Portugal, and to recognize—as many West European governments and all British opposition parties have recognized—the justice of the cause of the African liberation movements.

Yours faithfully,
GIFFORD, Chairman,
Committee for Freedom in
Mozambique, Angola and Guiné,
Top Floor,
12 Little Newport Street, WC2.
July 10.

From Mr Patrick Wall, Conservative MP for Haltemprice

Sir, When a paper of the standing of *The Times* makes an allegation about a massacre in Mozambique it would be wise for the authorities in Lisbon to take notice.

Of course, units of all armies occasionally run amuck but having visited the combat areas in Mozambique on a number of occasions it surprises me that this should happen in a country where the success of the Portuguese has been largely due to the good treatment given to the African population and to their complete lack of racialism. Indeed, many of the crack Portuguese army units

are now made up of ex-Frelimo guerrilla fighters.

It is also surprising that such prominence should be given to a report that is admittedly second-hand, namely a story obtained by the Reverend Adrian Hastings from some unnamed Spanish missionaries working in Mozambique. Mr Hastings' views about the Portuguese have been well publicized over the years and the timing of this report just before Dr Caetano's visit to this country is clearly designed to afford the maximum pleasure to Frelimo supporters and the maximum embarrassment to the Portuguese and their British hosts. The alleged incident took place in December 1972; is it not strange that the first reports appear five days before the Portuguese Prime Minister is due to arrive in London?

It is to be hoped that the Portuguese government take immediate action to investigate these allegations that *The Times* has ranked with Sharpeville and My Lai. Yours faithfully,
PATRICK WALL,
House of Commons.
July 10.

From Bishop Ambrose Reeves

Sir, Readers will greet with horror the report of the massacre perpetrated by Portuguese troops at Wiriyamu. It is scarcely sufficient, however, to say that Dr Caetano "will surely be asked to comment" on this matter during his visit to Britain. The comments which the Portuguese authorities make on their colonial wars are familiar.

The question now is, how much more will it take to make the British Government sever its links with the Portuguese regime? By issuing its invitation to Dr Caetano, the British Government gave further weight and importance to the Anglo-Portuguese alliance and, therefore, support to Dr Caetano's long wars against the African people in Mozambique, Angola and Guine Bissau.

By going through with the visit now, the British Government and people will appear to be condoning Wiriyamu. Surely cancellation of the visit is the only adequate response.

Yours sincerely,
AMBROSE REEVES,
Hon President,
The Anti-Apartheid Movement,
89 Charlotte Street, W1.
July 10.