

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Times 12/7/73
p. 17

Reported massacre in Mozambique and Portuguese policy

From Mr M. A. Faul

Sir, The article by Father Adrian Hastings on the reported massacre in Mozambique might well fool an Englishman who had never set foot in Africa. It fails to impress me, and I have lived and travelled in southern Africa, including Mozambique, for nearly 20 years.

There are a number of contradictions in the article which make it utterly incredible. To start with, the Mucumbura area in which is situated the village of Wiriyamu, has been under more or less effective Frelimo control for almost a year. It is from this area that many of the guerrilla raids into Rhodesia have been launched. If a Portuguese column penetrating the area had perpetrated the massacre, and "some victims managed to escape death by flight", it is moderate to conclude that the escapees would not have fled to Portuguese-controlled areas. They would have gone to Frelimo. But although this massacre took place seven months ago, Frelimo have not said a word about it. Surely this would have been a propaganda gift!

Your leader article refers to the "specific nature of the details, including the names of some of the victims". This is regarded by you as being corroborative. A total of 138 cases are listed, mostly by name, plus others which are treated more generally. Many of the names are Portuguese which is not surprising, as Christian Africans usually have a "European" name. Of the non-Portuguese names many are of the Shona type (which is common in the area as the people are akin to the Shona in Rhodesia), others are Nguni names (eg, Nguniya, Misipho, Kereyia, Chuma), others yet are Chinyanja (eg, Chitैया, Nsemberembe, Nchembera). The nearest Nguni people are over 200 miles away in Rhodesia. The Nyanja people are 150 miles away in Malawi. While a good deal of tribal mixing goes on in the towns, it does not occur in rural areas. Further, there are just too many names and too much detail on how each died, for the story to be convincing. Further still on names, one child is stated to have been killed twice! Once by shooting, once by burning.

Consider for a moment the manner of killing stated to have been employed. The methods are (a) shooting, (b) burning in huts, (c) beating and kicking, (d) disembowelling, (e) striking on the ground, (f) decapitation, (g) an unspecified "ghastly game".

Now consider any articles you published on the Lari massacre of March 1951 in Kenya, the Angola uprising of 1961, the Congo massacres of 1960-1964. You will find all these methods of killing in each of these, and all committed by respectively, Mau Mau, MPLA, Lumumbists and Jeunesse. The barbarities described at Wiriyamu are practically a carbon copy, particularly of Lari.

Finally consider this point. Since 1968 the Portuguese have been methodically arming African villagers, both in Angola and Mozambique (though I cannot speak for Portuguese Guinea, never having been there, I believe the same obtains there). Would they do this if they did not trust the people with arms? Furthermore the Portuguese, if they wish to stay in their African territories, have a vested interest in keeping the trust and confidence of the people. A massacre as described would have the opposite result and would be both stupid and pointless. The massacre (if it occurred) has all the hallmarks of the African "Nationalist" movements, both those listed above and others in South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia and Mozambique itself.

I doubt not that Father Hastings is sincere. I doubt that his sources are as impeccable as you think they are, particularly if the missionaries who supplied the information are in Frelimo-controlled areas. Who knows, perhaps *coacti fecerunt* (they were compelled to do it).

Yours faithfully,
M. A. FAUL,
185, Shorncliffe Road,
Folkestone, Kent.

From Mr Richard Wainwright

Sir, Your report of a massacre in Mozambique is utterly horrifying, but should not cause surprise. The Portuguese Government has, for years past, deliberately waged

indiscriminate warfare in Africa, thus indicating to its troops that there is nothing sacred, or even important, about the lives of African women and children, in the eyes of official Portugal.

Last November, as guests of the late Amílcar Cabral, my wife and I visited liberated areas in the north, south and east of Guine-Bissau on behalf of the Liberal Party and of the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust. We saw children being nursed for extensive burns caused, according to certification by United Nations doctors, by napalm. We inspected the charred remains of recently burnt boarding schools and farming villages, with bomb craters around them. One forest boarding school of the Guineans, in which we stayed, had no military installations or significance whatever; yet whilst we were still in the country the Portuguese bombed it to destruction. The liberation movement has no aircraft.

When we enquired (through an interpreter) why peasant people whom we met were prepared to tolerate years of hardship which the liberation struggle involves, the replies all reflected the theme that the inhumanity of the Portuguese offered them no bearable alternative. We received similar replies from those who shared our transport in the Republic of Guinea, after slipping out of Portuguese-held Bissau in order to join the liberation movement.

Our Guinean hosts (who were certainly not communist) could not understand why a country with Britain's traditions should, under Labour and Conservative governments alike, bolster Portugal and even fail to prevent British armaments furthering Portugal's indiscriminate warfare.

Yours, etc,
RICHARD WAINWRIGHT,
The Heath, Adel,
Leeds 10.
July 10.

From Brigadier Michael Calvert

Sir, I visited the Mucumbura area in November, 1972, where according to the most flimsy hearsay evidence by a Father Adrian Hastings of Birmingham a supposed massacre of villagers took place.

I do not know the Administrator of the area (whose name I have not at hand as I am in hospital with a leg injury), as he had been of inestimable help to Colonel Bernard Callinan, CBE, DSO (recently President of the Australian Institute of Civil Engineering) and his 2/2nd Independent Company (whom I had once helped to train) during their classic 13 month guerrilla operations in Japanese occupied Timor in 1942/43. The Administrator is a fine man and the whole principle of his administration is to win over and obtain the loyal support of the Africans in the area. I wrote to the Australian Commando Association telling them of him and his fine and humane administration and asked them to correspond with him.

This is also C-in-C Mozambique General Kaulza da Arriaga's policy and he has gone so far in this direction that he has issued orders that when Frelimo guerrillas are captured they should immediately be given the choice of going back into the jungle or staying with the Portuguese. 90 per cent stay (see my article on this fact in the February issue of the RUSI journal).

Colonel Para Videira, who is a commander of the Tete area which includes Mucumbura told me that "What I like about this war is the absence of hate". When a personable young captured guerrilla was brought before him he asked when he last saw his parents and where did they live? The lad answered "Beira three years ago". "Well", said Colonel Para Videira, "Here is a railway warrant. Go and see them and report back here in a fortnight's time". Which he did. There were no recriminations.

I recount these two tales to show that the whole principle of the army and the civil administration is to win over the Africans and not to alienate them. It is an Anglo-Saxon theory that you defeat insurgents only by shooting guerrillas. The Portuguese theory is to win them over to your side and put right the grievances on which any insurgency is based. For this policy some Rhodesians and South Africans think that the Portuguese are soft. Their multiracial

society and absence of any semblance of white elitism has always been an example to all western powers and has even earned them derision in the past.

Our Ambassador in Lisbon, who had also visited the area in November last year, can corroborate my views as he told me that he had confronted General Arriaga with some atrocity stories. General Arriaga had shown him a file on the subject wherein all such complaints had been minutely investigated and that in only three cases had they found some evidence of the truth of these allegations and the culprits had been most severely punished.

I feel that it is no coincidence that a meeting of a large number of world terrorist organizations in 1972 (as I mentioned during an interview on the BBC) that included Frelimo and the IRA, took place in a Jesuit College near Rome. There is a secret section of the Jesuit fraternity who have thrown in their lot with the proponents of world terrorism.

I consider that Father Adrian Hastings's allegation (so aptly timed and politically and obviously not religiously motivated) can be placed on a par with some of the wilder allegations of certain bemused Irish priests in Ulster who are so emotionally disorientated that they think that the end justifies the means. I myself have the highest opinion of Ignatius Loyola, some of whose teaching I made compulsory reading when Commander of Guerrilla Schools in three continents, so I have no dislike whatsoever of Jesuits as such. In fact I admire them.

I feel ashamed that a newspaper of your standing should lend itself to such unproven propaganda against a country whose methods of dealing with a communist backed revolt on its borders supported from bases in Zambia and Tanzania, far surpasses in sympathy, humanity and compassion for their enemies any other counter-insurgency policies carried out by America, Britain, France, Holland or even Belgium during the post-war years. As you may know I have been visiting the guerrilla areas of the world during the past few years for my study *The Pattern of Guerrilla Warfare* whilst Hallsworth Research Fellow in Guerrilla Warfare at the University of Manchester and feel in a position to judge.

I personally consider, and I am writing this in an article asked for by Mr Adebayo of the African Forum, that I consider that Portuguese Africa may be the only real bridge between White and Black Africans because of its ingrained multiracial viewpoint unprecedented in any other state in Africa.

I hope that you will in all fairness give equal space to this letter as you have done to Father Adrian's allegation.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL CALVERT,
War 4,
Cambridge Military Hospital,
Aldershot,
July 11.

From Mr Frank Field

Sir, Your report of the alleged massacre in Wiriyamu raises as a matter of urgency the whole question of the Portuguese presence in Africa and Britain's role.

In view of Father Hastings's report, the immediate priority, as you rightly state in your leader of July 11, is to set up an independent inquiry to establish the accuracy of the allegations. The tripartite arrangements you suggest have an obvious appeal, and your proposal for participation by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church seems eminently sensible. It would be difficult for the Portuguese Government to reject the good offices of the Vatican, which besides having an interest in the veracity or otherwise of its missionaries' report, is in a position to bring pressure to bear on that government.

However, while recognizing that representatives of UN Committees would be unacceptable to Portugal we would suggest the participation of a representative of the Secretary General. As you point out, South Africa allowed Dr Waldheim to visit South West Africa, and Portugal as a member of the UN would have no reason to doubt his impartiality.

Britain's support for the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1972, calling for negotiations with independence movements must be followed by a firm stand with regard

to Portugal's colonial policy. In the first place, HM Government should translate words into action by indicating to Portugal her rejection of her African policies. Secondly, in relation to the present allegations, she should insist on the establishment of an independent investigation. If guarantees of such an inquiry are not forthcoming from Dr Caetano, next week's visit to Britain should be cancelled.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK FIELD, Director,
United Nations Association,
93 Albert Embankment, SE1,
July 11.

From Mr W. D. Martineau

Sir, I have recently returned to this country after living 23 years abroad, twelve in East Africa and the last eleven in Portugal. I doubt if I am alone in feeling the gravest doubts about the truth of the report of the massacre in Mozambique. Probably these tragic people were massacred, but not by Portuguese troops.

I have seen Portuguese teenagers grow up and then go into the "tropas" to serve overseas, some for as little as two years. They often come from simple families whose affection and respect for children always struck me as overdone in the sense that punishment for bad behaviour was and still is regarded as unacceptable. I think the Portuguese soldier would be incapable of mistreating let alone torturing or butchering a child. We are however asked to believe that fellow soldiers acclaimed the brutal despatch of a nine month old baby with the words "well done, you are a brave man".

The propaganda value of the report is presumably improved by the impending arrival in this country of Dr Caetano.

Yours truly,
W. D. MARTINEAU,
9 Blatchington Road,
Seaford, Sussex.
July 10.

From Mr Jose da Fonseca

Sir, As an ordinary Portuguese citizen and army deserter, I would like to thank you for publishing Fr A. Hastings's report on the Wiriyamu massacre in Mozambique, perpetrated by the Portuguese army (July 10). By giving prominence to this report you have offered a good contribution to the understanding of the true nature of the Portuguese regime and its colonial policies.

Now the British public has been told that the Portuguese regime in spite of its soft appearances and the pious speeches of Dr Caetano, is a very ruthless one. Before we all knew that under Portuguese juridical practices the political rebel had very little legal protection and it is known that many individuals have been summarily eliminated at the hands of the DGS secret police. Now we are told that the same may happen to entire villages.

If the imminent visit of Dr Caetano to Britain is not going to be a complete farce (or, even worse, a gesture of condescension from the British side), the political leaders of this country ought to call off his visit and tell the Portuguese Prime Minister of their disgust in face of such atrocities. And to be morally valid the disgust cannot be expressed only in words.

Exactly this courage the Anglo-Portuguese alliance demands from us in these crucial years of Portuguese history.

Yours faithfully,
JOSE DA FONSECA,
London, W1.
July 11.

From Mr D. J. Maberley

Sir, The report of the alleged massacre at the village of Wiriyamu in Mozambique is both shocking and opportune.

But, Sir, is it not a little curious, if not dangerous, of Father Adrian Hastings, in wishing not to jeopardize the safety of the local people by locating "the exact spot on the ground", to reveal the name of the aforesaid village?

Yours faithfully,
D. J. MABERLEY,
Sidney Sussex College,
Cambridge.
July 11.