

Policy of the authorities in Mozambique

From Brigadier Michael Calvert

Sir, Mr Bernard Levin casts doubt on my judgment, and discernment, I will confine myself to these points. I first heard of General Arriaga's benign policy to captured guerrillas from a captain in the Portuguese Commandos at the depot at Dondo when he asked if I supported it. He himself objected to having to sweat his way through the bush to capture guerrillas and then being ordered to let them go. His question made me enquire about this order and I found that it did exist. General Arriaga, whom I had previously met and photographed, did not mention this policy to me.

I visited Changara garrison, 100 miles south-west of Tete, motored myself to Mucumbara west of Tete, and visited by helicopter areas south-east of Tete and parts of the garrison protecting the Cabora Bassa Dam complex in November 1972. I spoke to numerous captured or surrendered guerrillas who were on cookhouse or other fatigues. They had freedom of movement and there was no barbed wire or fences around the camps which adjoined the bush.

Some of these ex-guerrillas were mission-trained and could speak English including one whom I met at Guro named Wilson John, who had been a houseboy in Salisbury, Rhodesia. I spoke to him alone and he confirmed that, when captured, he had had this offer made to him of going back into the jungle or staying with the Portuguese. I also spoke to members of the GEP (Grupos Especiais Para-Quedistas) many of whom had been Frelimo guerrillas and had then volunteered to fight for Portugal. They told me that it was General Arriaga's policy which had made them change sides.

At Nampula in northern Mozambique I interviewed a number of surrendered guerrillas including Januario Fernando Napulula, aged 35, an ex-mission school teacher, who had undergone a ten-month course in 1965-66 at the Simferopol Guerrilla Warfare Training School in the Ukraine and who had then commanded with great distinction and success a Frelimo guerrilla company in the Muende area of Cabo Delgado province; and Basil Francis Banda, aged 31, who spoke good English and had been a member of the Frelimo Central Committee. Banda was educated in Lorenzo Marques and Tanzania and was a close associate of the late Edouardo Mondlane, founder of Frelimo, and of his vice-president, Ouria Simango. Banda had studied political warfare at the Central Komosol School in Moscow for ten months in 1966-67. As an outstanding pupil he was selected for a further period of study in political subversion including "how to carry out a coup d'état and how to subvert an army" (his own words). They both praised General Arriaga's political and psychological warfare methods which they affirmed were most effective. Banda volunteered to come to England if he could broadcast his views on the BBC.

All this and more I have related in an article in the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies to which I referred in my previous letter to you, and which I think Mr Bernard Levin might have studied before he allowed his bent for sarcasm and the witty word to displace his normal good nature. As a qualified civil engineer and having worked in a Civil Engineering Research and Testing laboratory and with a consultant engineering firm I have been trained to deal in hard facts, write pragmatically and judge the truth of statements made to me as any false facts would cost the firm money.

Having decided beforehand in Britain, the subjects I wished to

don University and other of their literature, I travelled freely for five weeks around Mozambique and was allowed to speak to whom I liked. When, as with Wilson John and Francis Banda, I met English speakers I walked with them alone in the open out of earshot or possible microphone recording and made copious notes of what they told me in notebooks which I possess. I had no restrictions on taking about 300 photographs of any body or scene I wished.

Colonel Para Videira, Governor and Military Commander of Tete District, and a practising parachutist who speaks fair English, had no particular reason to recount the anecdote, among many others, which he told me about the man he sent to Beira with a return ticket. I would trust him to speak the truth before I would trust certain other sources of information which have received much publicity at this time.

I leave others to judge my military competence but I suggest that I have had more experience in this respect than my witty friend, Mr Bernard Levin, whose articles I have frequently praised and whose standard of writing (and length of sentences) I cannot match.

Yours faithfully,
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Flat 9, Station Parade,
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From Father Adrian Hastings

Sir, In the BBC programme *The Editors* on Sunday, August 5, the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* declared, not only that there was still no evidence at all for the massacre at Wiriyamu, but also that the original report came from what he called a "highly tainted" source. He made it quite clear that he meant by that the Burgos missionary priests. He explained that they were so linked with Frelimo that their evidence was worthless.

This is such an extraordinary and irresponsible accusation to make that it cannot be left like that. He implies that the Burgos fathers have as a group abandoned the elementary principles of christian behaviour, and that they are not merely sympathetic to the cause of Frelimo—as many well may strongly be in the light of earlier Portuguese atrocities in their own mission area now well authenticated—but that they actively support it to the extreme extent of producing false evidence on a vast scale, either concocting a document listing over a hundred murdered people or taking over a Frelimo document and pretending that it was in fact written by them.

He did not make this charge against one or another priest but against a whole Catholic missionary society in the matter of a document whose authenticity has been upheld by the Superior General of that society. On what evidence does he make this monstrous charge against the integrity of a large number of Catholic priests? Is it simply an echo of the vilification of the Burgos Fathers and of me which has been pouring out of Lisbon these last weeks?

If the Portuguese administration had had serious evidence that the Burgos fathers as a group supported Frelimo would it really have left some of them to work in Tete even until now? Would it have left in prison untried for 18 months even the two priests it has accused of such charges—other priests have been brought to trial on much lesser counts? What right has the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph* to smear a whole group of Catholic priests in this way?

Yours sincerely,
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