

"I WANT TO TELL ABOUT THE CRIMES"

A Portuguese soldier gives evidence of the malicious deeds of Portugal in the colony of Mozambique

My name is Luis Fernando Carvalho Fernandes. I am 32 years old. I am a teacher (the son of José Maria Lopes Fernandes junior - who died as a victim of the Salazar regime, because of his political opinions). I served in the Portuguese Air Force as a 2nd Sergeant in the OCART-militia for six years and two months, of which 38 months in the Portuguese colony of Mozambique (from 1964 till the end of 1967). Since I shall never again submit to the hypocrisy of the Portuguese regime, I want through this document to be yet another Portuguese to testify to massacres, torture, injustices, committed by the Portuguese Army in Mozambique. The world opinion is now waking up from its long sleep that lasted for many years, terrified by the massacres and torture committed during the wars in the Portuguese colonies, also in Mozambique. After the liberation movements had revealed these massacres there have been reports supplied by Spanish and Italian priests. But the countries where these priests come from suppress or deny the reports because they are linked by economic interests to the Portuguese regime. To me it is a moment of shame but also of reflection and of action. Of course I do not wish to relate a whole people to their Fascist and criminal leaders that suppress the people. Of course I cannot and will not connect soldiers from the working and peasant class and sergeants and officers - who were thrown into a situation of violence, rage and despair, which makes them murderers - with generals and other high-placed persons who are responsible for this war. For that reason I ask all those who read my letter to unite in the struggle and to conduct it with determination. Because there is no government, there are no prison islands, there is no police that are able to defeat us. In this way we can put an end to the war, to the killing of our youth, to the injustice and the destitution in Portugal. To stress what I mean I will describe my time as a conscript in Mozambique and the crimes in which I have participated. N.B. The reason that this testimony is given so late is that I have only recently left Portugal, since there I was occupied with matters that forced me to silence for the safety of myself and others involved.

Whole villages exterminated in Mozambique

I arrived in the town of Nampula, air base No. 5, in March 1964. Shortly afterwards I was temporarily transferred to serve in the bush, in an Air Force unit (A.M. 51) in Northern Mozambique close to the border of Tanzania. After a few days in the area I could see personally that the Africans were very badly treated by the administration and were considered slaves. In this area the Maconde people live (warriors and craftsmen including outstanding artists - the art known as Maconde), who make wooden reliefs of hard wood, completely hand-made. All this handwork is very badly paid, many people are robbed under threats, if they refuse to sell at the offered price. Usually armed people buy the reliefs and bring them to Mueda, load them into aeroplanes that take them to Nampula and from there to the capital. There certain persons in the Army have contracts with shops that buy them at a very high price. In Maruppa they cheated the Africans and

forced them to exchange leopard furs and ivory for little bags of salt, and this merchandise, too, was taken to Lisbon, which got the profit.

The women were raped

When I had been in Mueda for a few days (1964) Frelimo started the fight for liberation, when a priest died at the Nangola mission (Dutch missionaries who were later expelled by the Portuguese government). This was followed by a wave of massacres and torture. Whole villages were destroyed, bombed and fired at by the Air Force. Then the Army took over all these villages, and the inhabitants, men, women and children, became prisoners. Some were shot, the women were usually raped, others were tied to trees and their sexual organs were cut off and put into their mouths. Some were killed with knives, others were burned and some of them were taken to Mueda, where they were interrogated, tortured and killed. Many of the soldiers who brought them there, carried ears and heads as war trophies in Mueda. More important prisoners were taken to Nampula, Beira and Lourenço Marques, where they were interrogated, tortured and killed by PIDE (the secret police). A few times in Mueda I saw torture that was carried out by a Lieutenant in the Army, who had no scruples, no feelings. His name was Graça Ferreira. He had an African brought in, and had his clothes removed. He beat him with a wooden stick all over his body, often in such a way that bones were broken, until the African was bleeding through his mouth, his nose, his ears. But the tortured man did not give a single answer. Then his hatred grew, and this monster fetched a soldering-iron heated by electricity. He put the red-hot metal into the back and the breast of the prisoner making holes two cm broad and five cm deep, until the prisoner died.

At an open grave

I have also witnessed many interrogations. At one of these there were twenty persons standing at the edge of an open grave, and behind them the very same Lieutenant Graça Ferreira stood with a pistol in his hand asking everyone "where have you hidden the weapons and the ammunition?" When they answered that they knew nothing, he shot them one by one, and their bodies fell into the open grave. It was a horrible scene, which the professional officers appreciated, these criminals without scruples. At that time Lieutenant Colonel Maximiano was in command of the battalion in Mueda. Then Lieutenant Graça continued his torturing and through the Air Force he had an amount of "escalopamina" ordered - it is true, because I heard the message on the radio, and I witnessed myself, how it was sent on to Nampula. It is common knowledge - which I then brought to the notice of the high-ranking officers - that "escalopamina" is a product known under the name of "truth drug", and it is clearly forbidden to use this drug according to the Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently I can testify that this product was used during the interrogations.

Thrown from aeroplanes

Every day more and more Africans were taken

prisoner. The town prison and the Army prison in Mueda were overcrowded, and the prisoners had to be disposed of to let new ones take their places. A simple solution for the command : put thirty Africans into a C 47 aeroplane and throw them, their hands and feet bound, into the sea at the island of do Ibo, where the crocodiles ate them. The C 47 aeroplanes belonging to the Portuguese Air Force that carried out these operations were usually commanded by Major Candelas, Lieutenant Gonçaves, Lieutenant Carvalho, etc. Their enlistment numbers were 6.158, 6.159, 6.160, 6.162, and they made two to three flights a day. It was a terrifying sight : half an hour after the operation you saw the sea at this spot turn red, a sea of blood. After that commandos and parachutists came to reinforce Mueda and they were aided by marines. They were real murderers, vandals, without feelings. With their bayonets they opened the bellies of pregnant women and used the foetus as a football. Other prisoners they beheaded after shooting them and they brought the heads home as trophies. I have seen this myself in Muidunbe and Miteda one day when I was out with a detachment under command of the officer Dias Gonçaves, the most reactionary murderer. Then I came to Vila Cabral, where I saw the same torture and massacres. There were army detachments under command of Colonel Martiniano together with Lieutenant Colonel Massanita, who then passed for a national hero first in Angola and later in Mozambique, because he killed, shot and tortured.

Fragmentation bombs and napalm

The air base was run by Lieutenants Marques, Baptista, etc., and with aeroplanes of the types T 6, Dornier, Auster, PV 2 and P2V5 (I think the P2V5 belongs to NATO) and C 47 they carried out bombing-raids on defenseless civilians. They used fragmentation bombs and napalm. The navy participated with marines stationed at the Nyassa Lake (Metangula). All these fragmentation and napalm bombs were prepared by Sergeants Montes, Ernesto and Cabo Casaleiro, who boasted of taking part in such an efficient way in the extermination of defenseless men, women and children. Then fights started in the Tete region, in Furancongo and Mutavara, and then Dr. Hastings Banda (president) of Malawi asked for Portuguese aircraft and revealed a so-called plot against himself staged by "terrorists". Consequently Kalawi was bombed, and the Portuguese planes stayed for five days at Fort Johnson. This operation was carried out by planes with neither nationality nor registration marks. This wave of violence led by the Fascist Portuguese regime spread all over Mozambique, and the village inhabitants were bombed, plundered, tortured and killed. Are these coward, barbarian and criminal actions those of which the Portuguese regime is so proud ? You fools, some day justice will triumph. To confirm my testimony I also want to reveal that executions and bombing-raids were carried out by the following pilots : Lieutenants Carrilho, David Baptista, Apelhao (killed by Frelimo), Major San-Cabreiro (killed by Frelimo), Malaquias (killed by Frelimo), Cunha Lopes, Sergeants Gomes, Renato, Queiros, Quental, Guardao, Oliveira, Freitas, etc... these are what the

Portuguese government calls "our heroic Portuguese pilots".

Can they have a clear conscience ?

How shameful... People who emptied their machine-guns and their bombs on a defenseless people, who killed women, men and children higgledy-piggledy in this way, can they have a clear conscience ? It is not possible ! Why don't the "relatives" of these ministers and other high-placed persons go to the colonies to fight ? Why do they pay large amounts of money to the army officers in order to have to go there, while others buy somebody to go in their place ? Perhaps because the lives of those others are less worth, and because they are cannon-fodder. How shameful !

One day when I was in Nampula in a doctor's waiting-room, two ladies were sitting next to me, general's wives, who said : "Oh, my dear, if only the situation (that is the war) continues in the Northern part of this province ! Then we can complete the building of our residence in the capital." Certainly, these ladies had their husbands in Nampula waging a bureau war and receiving a lot of money for expeditions they could make with no real reason in one or two days with no risks. But if their husbands had been in the bush to fight, the "ladies" would probably have wished the war to end as quickly as possible ! Why do they hide the truth ? That the war is extended to more and more towns in Mozambique : Beira, Quelimane, Lourenço Marques, etc., and that soldiers every day become victims of the war and not of car accidents or of maneuvers, as the government invents. Lies and hypocrisy reign in the Fascist government of Portugal, but the hour has come, when the truth will be told. With this document I want to give evidence and add it to the other disclosures made about massacres and torture committed in Mozambique by government troops. To make it possible for all the world to test the truth of this document I am available to the African countries or to the Committee of Human Rights, if any of them would like to make an investigation on the spot.

Direct witness to these inhuman actions,

Luis Fernando Carvalho Fernandes
former 2nd Sergeant in the Portuguese
Air Force