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Race Relations in Moçambique

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INTRODUCTION

A considerable amount has been written during the last two decades about race relations in Brazil, in Portugal's African territories and her other overseas possessions. Two schools of thought have emerged: the one subscribing to the view that the Portuguese in their relations with peoples of colour, have adopted what could be called, roughly, a non-racial approach; the other school maintains that the Portuguese were, and are, even worse racialists than other Western European colonialists.

To the former belong Brazilians like Gilberto Freyre, Portuguese like Jorge Dias, Americans and Englishmen like Abshire, Samuels, Egerton and Welch. To the latter, amongst the most prominent are Basil Davidson, C. R. Boxer, Marvin Harris, Duffy, Chilcote, Easton, the late Eduardo Mondlane, Amílcar Cabral and other leaders of anti-Portuguese guerilla forces in Guinea, Angola and Moçambique.

In the following paper I shall try to maintain a balance between these two extremes; while presenting at first the official Portuguese view of race relations I shall also try to relate this to what I have actually observed at first hand in Portugal, Angola and Moçambique. Particular emphasis, however, will be placed on race relations in Moçambique since this is the

area where I have been studying race relations during periodic visits over the last eight years.

The approach adopted in this paper is, broadly speaking, the ethnomethodological approach as outlined by Alfred Schutz in his two essays 'Common-sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action' and 'Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences.' Thus, for me in my observations, it has been important to know and understand the socio-cultural environment in which these social relations take place as well as the meaning that the actors themselves attach to their actions. In other words, it is both as actor and observer that my study has been carried out. My qualifications for so doing are that I am of mixed ethno-cultural origin; Portuguese and English were my 'home languages', and I have no difficulty in playing the role of a typical English-speaking South African, or of a typical Portuguese from Portugal or from Moçambique. It has taken no great talent nor any particular insight to be well aware of the fundamental differences that separate what Schutz calls 'the common-sense constructs of the reality of daily life' as they appear to a Portuguese and to an Englishman.

PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM

Most Portuguese are genuinely shocked and puzzled when they are accused in the United

Nations by spokesmen of the O.A.U. and various political leaders of Black Africa of being racists. Colonialists, maybe, but racists, never! That is the general view. A number of British and American academics have also expressed the view that the Portuguese are just as racially prejudiced as any other Europeans, only somehow they seem to be able to disguise their prejudices or express them in a more subtle way than other peoples.

But before attempting to deal with race relations in a specific area, it would be advisable to point out that this problem can be examined in different ways, historically, psychologically, and sociologically. There is also the scientific study of races from the genetic, physical anthropological and biological point of view; but as we are only concerned with the relations between people of different races within the context of socio-economic situations, the detailed morphological characteristics of different human beings will not concern us, except incidentally.

While it is patently absurd for the Portuguese to claim that race prejudice of any kind or form can never be found among them, it is equally absurd to accuse the governments of Portugal and her overseas provinces of Angola, Guinea and Moçambique of being 'racist' regimes in the same way as the Republic of South Africa admits to being. By racist I mean that the racial differences of various communities are taken into account in granting political rights and social status and economic privileges within a particular society.

There has never been any formal legal discrimination against black people in Portuguese Africa, such as has existed in nearly all British colonies and in South Africa. That is not to say that differential treatment was not meted out to Africans when a formal distinction was made between subjects and citizens under the 'Estatuto dos Indígenas'² but, for example, all government schools in these territories have always been integrated, despite all claims to the contrary by some critics of the Portuguese. There are no separate entrances for Whites or Blacks to public buildings, no special benches for Whites, all public transport is integrated, as are all places of entertainment, benches, parks and public conveniences.

There are no official prohibitions against marriage or extra-marital sex between White and Black such as exist in South Africa. One

only has to move from Durban or Johannesburg to Lourenço Marques or Beira for a few days to realise that race relations in South Africa and Moçambique are very different. The question is, how different? And how can these differences be discussed in the light of modern theories of race relations?

It is a generally accepted proposition that a colonial situation produces a colour line, that is, a division between colonizer and colonized that invariably places the colonized in a subordinate position. It is generally assumed by Anglo-Saxon (British and American) as well as French sociologists and Africanists, that this colonial situation and its colour line must inevitably lead to conflict between colonizers and colonized. Therefore, multi-racial societies must perforce be plural societies, and in times of crisis they consist of groups with no real bonds between them which must, under strain, disintegrate into their component ethnic parts.

The Portuguese do not subscribe to this view. They still believe that a colonial situation can, given the right circumstances, develop into a multiracial integrated society under the umbrella of a commonly shared cultural and religious tradition. This, they point out, is what happened in Brazil after the abolition of slavery, and this they maintain is what their policies are designed to bring about in Angola and Moçambique. According to the late Dr Salazar:

These contacts [with coloured peoples] . . . have never involved the slightest idea of superiority or racial discrimination . . . I think I can say that the distinguishing feature of Portuguese Africa — notwithstanding the concentrated efforts made in many quarters to attack it by word as well as action — is the primacy which we have always attached and will always continue to attach to the enhancement of the value and of the dignity of man without distinction of colour or creed, in the light of the principles of the civilization we carried to the peoples who were in every way distant from ourselves.³

Similarly, in the preamble to a decree abolishing the special Statute for the Natives of Angola, Guinea and Moçambique, we find the following statement:

The heterogeneous composition of the Portuguese people, their traditional

community and patriarchal structure, and the Christian ideal of brotherhood which was always the base of our overseas expansion early defined our reaction to other societies and cultures and stamped it from the beginning, with a marked respect for the manners and customs of the people we encountered.⁴

While agreeing with Boxer that 'the truth was more complex, and that race relations in the old Portuguese colonial empire did not invariably present such a picture of harmonious integration as the foregoing quotations would imply',⁵ there still remains the problem of accounting for the fundamentally different attitudes towards people of colour manifested by the Portuguese and Spaniards in Africa, Asia and the Americas, as compared to those displayed by Englishmen and other Western Europeans in these areas.

It must be remembered that race attitudes and race relations are not static phenomena; attitudes and behaviour patterns change both in time and space, and it is quite ridiculous to expect to find, as Boxer obviously does, a rigid adherence of precept to practice in such a complex field of human relations. For example, significant differences have occurred in the evolution of race relations in Angola and Moçambique. The background from which the majority of Angolan settlers have been drawn has contributed to these differences; the fact that the majority of Whites in Moçambique until the 1950s were either officials or could be classed as a type of remittance man from the upper classes, is also important. Then there has been the proximity of South Africa and Rhodesia to Moçambique which has strongly influenced the local people and made them far more race conscious than their Angolan counterparts. Despite this, however, consciousness of skin colour as an important differentiating factor in human relations is only to be found among certain groups of Portuguese in Moçambique. It has never become part of official government policy.

Raymond Kennedy in the 'Colonial Crisis and the Future' says:

While social, economic and political conditions vary in the colonies of the different powers, and even between the colonies of the same empire in most cases, and although there are variations in policies, all the dependent areas mani-

fest certain common characteristics which may be termed the universal traits of colonialism. The only marked instance of deviation from the general pattern is the Philippines, for here, during the forty odd years of American control, a rapid evolution away from colonial status has occurred . . .

The first of the universal traits of colonialism is the colour line. In every dependent territory a true caste division exists, with the resident white population separated from the native masses by a social barrier that is virtually impassable. The colour line, indeed, is the foundation of the entire colonial system, for on it is built the whole social, economic and political structure. All the relationships between the racial groups are those of super-ordination and subordination, of superiority and inferiority. There is no mistaking this pattern for one of mere segregation, or separation with equality. The colour line is horizontal, so to speak, and cuts across every colonial society in such a way as to leave the natives in the lower stratum and the whites in the upper.

Even in the case of the one non-white imperialistic power, Japan, the representatives of the ruling nation occupy an upper-caste position, which is supported by a concept of racial superiority, although for practical purposes the Japanese have played up solidarity of the darker races against white domination. Throughout the colonies, we find a system of group discrimination and subordination, and natives are judged and treated, not on the basis of individual worth or ability, but as members of an undifferentiated group. Although other elements are involved, the heart of the colonial problem is the native problem, and the native problem is a racial or caste problem.⁶

Kennedy lists four other traits that are worth mentioning:

Political control by the possessing power, leaving the natives little or no share in the government of their homelands.

Economic dependence upon and control by the mother country.

The lack of social contacts between

natives and the ruling caste.

A very low stage of development of social services, especially education.

There is no doubt that Kennedy's neat little model of colonialism fits all colonial situations, but his first characteristic, the colour line does not apply fully to the situation in Portuguese Africa. In fact, it was on reading this article in 1946, that my interest in the subject was aroused and I have tried ever since to come to grips with the reasons for the marked difference in race attitudes of the Portuguese when contrasted with those of Englishmen, Belgians or even Italians and Frenchmen.

RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The Portuguese are of very mixed ethnic origin. This is something that all critics of the Portuguese agree upon. It is my considered opinion, based on first hand observation over a number of years, that this fact has helped to a considerable extent to lower amongst most Portuguese, the consciousness of colour as an important differentiating factor in human relations. Although class distinctions are much clearer in Portuguese society than they are in South Africa or Rhodesia, for example, a caste situation has never developed in any Portuguese dominated territory. There is ample historical evidence that numbers of the indigenous peoples, be they Africans, Mulattos, Moors, Chinese, South American Indians, or what Americans call East Indians, have, from the earliest days of contact, right up to the present time, been accepted as equals and assimilated into all levels of Portuguese society. Admittedly they may only represent a fraction of the total of so-called coloured people under Portuguese rule, but one of the characteristics of Portuguese and Spanish, and thus Iberian culture, is its emphasis on individual relations and its neglect of the group as a social phenomenon. This comes out very clearly in the novels of Eça de Queiroz, Vicente Blasco Ibañez, the Brazilians Machado de Assis and George Amado, and the essays of Jose Ortega y Gasset and Miguel de Unamuno.

The anthropologist, Jorge Dias, in an article on the Portuguese character makes the following points:

The Portuguese man is, above all, profoundly humane and kind-hearted without being weak. He does not like to

make others suffer and he avoids conflicts, but when ill-treated and hurt in his pride he may become violent and even cruel . . . The Portuguese have an enormous capacity to adapt themselves to all situations, beings and ideas, without this meaning, however, any lessening of their character. It was this feature that permitted them to maintain always that attitude of tolerance which gave the Portuguese colonization a special and unmistakable aspect: assimilation by adaptation . . . The Portuguese, led by healthy instinct mixed with the various populations of the world and contributed highly to racial fusion. It was from the free exercise of this impulse that leads him to consider men as his equals and makes him love women of all colours that was born the great Brazilian nation which surprises the world by its unique harmony of human living. A similar miracle occurs in some overseas provinces and is on the verge of taking place in others. That which we did, led by our natural tendencies and impelled by our hearts, that many criticised, and still do, is nowadays being justified by science.⁷

It is rather ironical that the Portuguese, who, for the last 150 years have been pilloried in the writings of many English and German travellers and historians for their lack of 'racial pride', in mingling their blood so freely with that of so-called 'lower coloured races' such as Africans, Indians and heathen 'chinese', are now being accused of not having mingled enough, and of being not only culturally arrogant but racists as well! Some of their critics still believe that the Portuguese have no real claim to call themselves 'Europeans' but are in fact a 'coloured race'. The decline and fall of their Eastern Empire and their economic backwardness have often been attributed by Portuguese, as well as foreign historians, to a kind of national degeneration which they regard as being a natural consequence of unbridled miscegenation!

Portuguese relations with other races present us with a complex and a confusing picture. Historically, they can best be studied as they developed in Brazil. Philip Mason, in his ambitious work, *Patterns of Dominance*, describes the two different approaches to race relations

in Brazil, represented by Gilberto Freyre on the one hand, and Marvin Harris, Charles Wagley and Pierre van der Berghe on the other. It would appear that more recent researches indicate the presence of an increasing degree of racial tension and racial awareness, particularly in the State of São Paulo and the more industrialized areas of Brazil. These later findings have been taken as positive proof of the inaccuracy of Freyre's interpretation of Brazilian society. I am convinced, however, that much of the criticism of Freyre's work is based on a misunderstanding of his aims and his methodology. Now that Parts II and III of his major work, *Sobrados e Mucambos* and *Ordem e Progresso*, are available in English, a reading of the Introduction to *Sobrados e Mucambos* (which could be translated as 'Town House and Slum') would clear up many misunderstandings.

Gilberto Freyre never expected his interpretation of the formation of Brazilian society to be accepted as the last word on the subject. Neither did he claim that it would be valid for all parts of Brazil. Regional differences are so marked in climate, ethnic composition and economic development that this would be impossible. My own first impression on reading 'The Masters and the Slaves', which should, of course, have been translated as 'Plantation Home and Slave Quarters', was that this kind of study should be made of other areas where plantation slavery had existed, such as the American Deep South, the Caribbean and even South Africa where race has become such an important factor in human relations. Unfortunately, it would be impossible to make such a study in those areas, except possibly the West Indies. I can just imagine the furore that such a study would arouse in South Africa or the U.S.A. The author would inevitably be tarred and feathered, possibly even lynched, and he could look forward to a few petrol bombs being thrown through his windows, and his wife and children being threatened or even assaulted, in true individualistic democratic style.

Yet Freyre mentions names of prominent Brazilians and their families who had slave ancestry; he gives genealogical details that would be suppressed in any English-speaking country, for obvious reasons. Most Englishmen like to think of their ancestors having led pure celibate lives while shouldering the

burdens of Empire; men like these could not possibly be a prey to the same ungovernable lusts as dagoes and foreigners. But the Portuguese, although they also turn a blind eye to many aspects of social reality, that is, the way people actually behave in contrast to how they are supposed to, or imagine themselves to behave, have a different approach. For example, only recently a magazine published in Lourenço Marques suggested that the house where Mouzinho de Albuquerque, a national hero, lived with his coloured girl friend when he was High Commissioner for Moçambique, should be preserved as a national monument. Not ironically, with the intention of embarrassing his descendants or tarnishing his reputation, as would be the case if Mouzinho had been a South African, an Englishman, an American, or a Rhodesian, but in all seriousness since this episode in Mouzinho's life is an integral part of the history of Lourenço Marques and citizens of this city like to know, and are entitled to know, what happened in the early days.

In other words, I suggest that this difference in attitude reflects the fundamental difference between Anglo-Saxons and Portuguese in their view of the individual and his role in society. The Anglo-Saxon has always felt that a leader's private life was intimately bound up with, and reflected on, his public performance and reputation. The fall from grace of Parnell because of his 'immoral' life, the obscurity of Veblen, for his 'irregular' sex life, are two examples that spring to mind, not to mention others such as Oscar Wilde and Profumo.

Portuguese society does not have this view. A very clear distinction has always been made between a man's role as a public figure and as a private individual. His private frailties are not held to detract from his public reputation. Thus, it was possible for a President of Portugal to live for most of his life 'in sin', as it were, with his female servant, and for her to join his legitimate widow in mourning at his graveside. Everyone knew this, but I never heard anyone suggest that for this reason he should resign as unfit to hold such high public office. I could not imagine such a situation being openly tolerated in Britain or South Africa, even in these days of the 'permissive society'.

It would not surprise me to discover that many Brazilian and foreign critics of Gilberto Freyre never bothered to read his work properly. In his first volume, he spares neither the

'masters nor the slaves', nor the Indians. He describes them all in the round, with all their virtues and their vices. The Portuguese settlers and pioneers, in particular, are described with no atom of sentimentality.

In his chapter on the Portuguese, Gilberto Freyre makes the point, that is repeated in a somewhat sentimental and idealized way in the passage quoted from Jorge Dias, that is, that the Portuguese are very flexible and adaptable in their person to person relations with other peoples. They are seldom prone to xenophobia; on the contrary, they are far too easily impressed by the supposed virtues of other peoples, and it is one of their greatest weaknesses that they all too often try to copy others, and uncritically adopt ideas and attitudes that are either inferior to their own cultural traditions, or are totally incompatible with them. Examples of this can be found in the introduction in 1929 of the 'Estatuto dos Indígenas da Guiné, Angola, Moçambique e Timor', modelled on the French colonial system of the *indigénat*.

In some of his other essays, Freyre has also suggested that when the Portuguese have remained true to their easy-going traditions, they have created relatively stable and harmonious multiracial communities, but they have failed miserably when they have tried to emulate the 'efficiency' of the British, the French or the Germans.

MOCAMBIQUE

The evolution of race relations in Moçambique illustrates this point very well. Many of the Whites born and brought up in Moçambique or who have spent most of their working lives in the territory, have been strongly influenced by the racism of their South African and Rhodesian neighbours. In earlier days, from the last decade of the nineteenth century right up to the decade before the last war, English influence predominated. Most commercial enterprises and financial institutions were British, run and staffed by Britons. It was only as late as the 1960s that a well-known petrol company appointed a Portuguese manager; Barclay's Bank still had a British manager in 1964. Considerable areas of Moçambique were at one time ceded to chartered companies, which though nominally Portuguese, were financed and staffed by Britons, South Africans and Rhodesians. In

the 1920s, employees in Southern Moçambique were paid in sterling, as the escudo, after a disastrous devaluation shortly after the first World War, was held to have no value and would only be accepted as legal tender under duress. It is not surprising, therefore, that many Portuguese developed an outsized inferiority complex vis-a-vis their neighbours. Dr Salazar's government put pressure on local firms to employ more Portuguese and foreign investment was deliberately discouraged. Beira had become almost an extension of British Central Africa, and only in Lourenço Marques and in the outlying districts were the Portuguese to be found in their own home, so to speak. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that many Portuguese did their best to emulate the attitudes of their economic masters. Also, it is not surprising that Lisbon viewed with disfavour this process of 'de-nationalization' as they called it, that was taking place in their East African possession.

Right up to the middle of the 1950s most 'white' Portuguese were either in government service or lived in Lourenço Marques. The hinterland was inhabited by few Portuguese and practically all trade was in the hands of Chinese and Indians. Settlers from Portugal were debarred from entering the territory unless they had guaranteed employment, or considerable cash in the bank. Moçambique was regarded, until fairly recently, as unfit for European settlers, and was essentially a plantation colony like Malaya and British West Africa. This, despite the fact that Antonio Ennes, writing in 1891, had this to say about the Portuguese as immigrants to the tropics:

Physically our peasants will be able to resist Africa's climate better than northerners, particularly if they acquire habits of cleanliness and hygiene. This will probably be the only asset they will have to withstand the hard struggle for life that will await them. In such a terrible struggle, only those will not fall by the wayside, who have, in their character, unbreakable and tenacious energy, backed up by practical abilities that can make up for the total lack of means of action and protection, such as civilized societies grant to individuals living within their own institutions. The pioneer of new countries, no matter to what kind of work he applies himself,

must be self-sufficient: he must get from his isolated activity sufficient reward to satisfy all his needs, and, he must be able to look after himself. Now, our national character, such as it is, has been formed during the last centuries by the social and moral forces that have been charged with shaping it, and has shown itself to be singularly wanting in individual enterprise, either through shyness, or because it is not there. What we least know, is how to live only with ourselves, for ourselves. I must point out the fact that the Portuguese immigrant in other countries rarely seeks out a field of action that is free and independent, or work on his own account that carries with it great opportunities for success or failure. He does not look for an occupation that will grant him the chance to expand his own individuality. He prefers a subordinate position to the risks and dangers of independence, and tends to follow well-trodden paths: thus he subjects himself to a wage for fear of uncertainty and goes to meet his boss already conscious of the fact that he cannot look after himself. These are all the symptoms of his limited capacity for great colonial enterprises. If by chance, he finds himself left to his own devices, he begins to clamour for the State to protect him, to defend him, keep him, and even teach him how to live, and if the State does not put him on her knee, more often than not, he succumbs because he really is not fit or trained to face up to the adventures he has embarked on . . .

Antonio Ennes goes on to speak of the English settler:

The pioneers that civilization calls on, to take possession of the new worlds and tame them, are not recruited from the ranks of the prudent middle-classes nor from among the peaceful and timid rural populations; they usually come from the masses of the rootless and the classless sections of the population, individuals who have been subjected by the need to keep alive, to take up any profession, to do all kinds of work; these are the people who can face up to any danger and adapt themselves to any

situation. It is particularly with adventurers that the virgin countries are settled, especially as today, the migration of peoples from Europe for political and religious reasons has ceased, and if the English have potential colonists as no other people have, it is most because Britain sheds throughout the world, multitudes hardened in a tough school of life who are prepared to risk everything because they have nothing to lose, and who gamble with life itself for a bare living. It is that Bohemian crew that supplies the Chartered Company with police, sends settlers to quarter the land under the protection of the forts at Salisbury and Victoria, and that covers the Mutare Valley with miners. If, in order to colonize or occupy the Countries of the Mashonas and the Matabeles, it were necessary to recruit people from the villages of Yorkshire and Northumberland, as it is suggested that we should get colonists from the meadows of Beira and the Alemtejo to settle Moçambique, the attempts to do so would inevitably fail, or if they did not do so completely, they would only be able to get immigrants who would not be able to display the qualities required of them by the promoters of the expansion of the British race in Central Africa . . .⁸

Antonio Ennes was quite right in his assessment of the Portuguese peasant as a pioneer settler. Such people would only be settled in large numbers on the land, in properly organized and heavily subsidised schemes, which were quite unheard of in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the type of settler he so much admired, the 'lumpenproletariat' of Britain's industrial revolution, the remittance men and other outcasts from middle-class respectability, have created an insoluble problem of race relations in Central and South Africa, as we all know to our cost. These two passages are interesting because they illustrate the point I was making earlier about the propensity of the Portuguese to be influenced by other peoples. It also explains to some extent why it took the Portuguese so long to realise that these much despised peasants were not, in fact, quite as helpless or as useless as Ennes and his contemporaries supposed them to be.

Opposition to opening the doors to peasant settlers from Portugal was strong amongst the small 'white community' in Moçambique for a number of reasons. In contrast to Angola, where numbers of such settlers had been allowed into the territory even before the turn of the century, albeit in very small numbers, and although Moçambique during the nineteenth century had been the dumping ground for convicts and many political malcontents, the local white inhabitants prided themselves on being a cut above the average. The thought of having a large 'poor white community' was too much, since it would cause their wealthy neighbours to despise them even more. Even today, many Portuguese in Moçambique deplore the fact that most of their countrymen who immigrate to South Africa are illiterate peasants or unskilled labourers from the Island of Madeira. Most of them run cafés or become market gardeners. It has always amused me to find that it comes as a great surprise to many South Africans to discover that not all Portuguese are illiterate or manual workers. For many reasons, not least their Catholicism, the Portuguese are not really welcome in South Africa as immigrants.

MISCEGENATION

An aspect of race relations that illustrates the wide gulf that separates the Portuguese 'commonsense view of social reality' from that of Englishmen or South Africans is the phenomenon that in English is called 'miscegenation' and in Portuguese '*mestiçagem*'. James Duffy refers disparagingly to the Portuguese tolerance of, or propensity to, miscegenation, as follows:

In a strict sense *mestiçagem* never became a colonial policy, but it was a reality to which Portuguese statesmen found it convenient to give a moral dignity and egalitarian significance.²

While it is true that miscegenation as a conscious policy was probably never carried out systematically by any Portuguese government throughout the colonial empire, since it is an inevitable consequence flowing from the meeting of peoples, it was surely sensible to accept the fact that they will mix, and to try and grant to this process some moral dignity, rather than to pretend that it never occurred, as is so often done in South Africa, or if it did, then to say that it only took place among 'moral degenerates', a rationalisation very commonly

expressed by Englishmen and Americans.

The fact is, Portuguese attitudes to miscegenation vary greatly among different classes of people, though in general they tend to display greater tolerance of its consequences than other peoples. In the past, it was accepted as inevitable by the Portuguese, that white men in the Tropics would have African, Indian or Chinese mistresses, and in some cases that it would also be natural for a number of these men to marry their mistresses. But even where matrimony did not set the seal of legality on the conjugal relationship, when children were born, particularly sons, it was very common for the proud fathers to recognise these children. Thus it happened, that even as late as the early 1930s, quite a number of Portuguese returned to Lisbon or Oporto accompanied by their mulatto children. They frequently married a white girl and would expect her, as a matter of course, to be willing to accept these children as her own. I can well remember families in which half-brothers and sisters of different colours all lived together under the same roof. There has always been a chronic shortage of white women in the Tropics, and before the end of the last war, few Portuguese women were willing to face the hardships of living in tropical Africa. This was particularly so in Moçambique, but was not so in Angola, where, in Mossamedes, Lobito, Benguela and Sá da Bandeira, fairly large white communities were settled from the turn of the century. Today, modern methods of controlling tropical diseases, air-conditioning, refrigerators and other aids to modern living, have greatly abated the horror of life in the Tropics.

There has been a decline in the number of mixed marriages and other permanent, or semi-permanent, conjugal relationships between white and black have decreased considerably during the last two decades. There are still many more Portuguese men than women in Moçambique and the official policy today is to encourage mixed marriages. Does the absence of any legal impediments to inter-racial marriage mean that a great number of such marriages is taking place? The latest statistics available to me showed that in 1963 only 117 mixed marriages took place in Moçambique. But statistics of this kind are of little use because the Concordat between the Portuguese government and the Vatican has made it virtually impossible for Catholics married in

church to obtain a divorce. Thus many interracial conjugal relationships may be prevented from becoming marriages because one of the parties may already be canonically married to another.

I do not doubt for a moment, that interracial sexual relations are as common in Moçambique as they were elsewhere in colonial Africa, but the assumption by some English and American writers that Anglo-Saxons were less prone to fornicating across the colour line, is a perfect example of ethnocentric delusion. For example, some time ago an investigation was carried out in one of South Africa's major cities showing that African prostitutes were able to get six times more white male customers than their white sisters, and this, in spite of the savage penalties incurred by anyone caught by the police in terms of the infamous Immorality Act. Swaziland has recently passed an immorality act of sorts to prevent South African and other whites from corrupting innocent Swazi girls. In all other ex-colonial areas of the world, the Whites have left behind them a numerous coloured progeny who have become 'a problem'. But nowhere, except possibly in some of France's West African Colonies, was it possible for such coloureds, to use the common term applied in South Africa, to be as easily accepted socially as has always been the case, and still is, in Portugal and her overseas territories.

CULTURAL QUALIFICATIONS

No discussion of race relations in Moçambique must omit to examine the effects that the 'Estatuto Civil e Criminal dos Indigenas de Angola e Moçambique' of 1929,² as amended, has had on these relations. This law was repealed in 1961, but from 1929 to 1961 Africans under Portuguese rule suffered from considerable disabilities under this law. It was inspired by the French system of the *indigénat* and is another example of an unfortunate borrowing in the name of efficiency and progress. The preamble to this decree explains its aims:

The new law is inspired by two basic ideas. The first is to ensure not only that 'natives' whose guidance has been entrusted to us enjoy the natural and unconditional rights that are equal to those of Europeans, and which have been established in Portuguese colonial

legislation, but also that they should fulfil progressively their moral and legal duties to work, to become educated and to improve themselves with every guarantee of liberty and justice. The second idea, which is, of necessity, inspired by the same basic doctrine, is to bring about all desirable improvements within the framework of their rudimentary civilization, so that the transformation of their customs and habits, and their own improvement will take place gradually and gently, as will their gradual integration into the body politic of the colony, which is the extension of the motherland. Such a system, which is just, practical and efficient, implies respect for these laws and customs, as long as they do not go against individual rights of freedom and life, the principles of humanity and the sovereignty of Portugal.

This Decree (originally No. 12:533 of 23 October, 1926) was drafted before the advent of the Salazar regime to power. Rightly, it belongs to the Republican era but was not implemented before 1929. Criticising this measure, Lord Hailey quite correctly remarked, that 'Insistence on a cultural qualification can in practice create a more restrictive barrier than that of colour'.¹⁰

The abolition of the Estatuto in 1961¹¹ has removed the only legal restrictive barrier on Africans, since all, black or white, tribalised, or detribalised, are now citizens by birth. But full rights of citizenship are only enjoyed by those who are enfranchised, and Portugal's qualified voting system excludes not only the majority of the non-westernised Africans but also a large number of Whites. Duffy has some pertinent criticisms to make of this Decree:

In stressing the traditional Portuguese sentiments of racial equality and at the same time devising a policy founded on theories of cultural inequality, the Portuguese Government was walking on a conceptual tightrope . . . A system as selective as assimilation, which in a period of twenty-five years has affected the legal status of one half per cent of the African population, has little to recommend it as an instrument of native policy . . . unless the purpose of that policy is to maintain the degraded status

of the greatest part of the population.¹² As a Portuguese I can quite categorically state that this was not the intention of the framers of this Decree; there was no intention of maintaining the majority of Africans in a permanent state of degradation, but it is true that a number of employers, in particular, and some Portuguese, found this law to be a convenient way of exploiting Africans.

The educational and other requirements demanded of Africans by the Estatuto if they wished to become 'assimilados', that is full Portuguese citizens, were not so high as to account for the very small proportion of them that availed themselves of this privilege. The question to be asked at this stage is, why was the status of 'assimilado' so unattractive to the many thousands of Africans, who, even in 1950 must have been able to become citizens, had they been willing to do so? Since 'indigenas' according to all accounts, lived in a state of 'degradation', obviously there must have been very good reasons for these unfortunates to turn their backs on what were possibly minor, but nonetheless still significant improvements in their status. The number of 4 349 'assimilados' shown in the Census of 1950 does not reflect the total number of 'assimilados' in Moçambique, because this figure only refers to first generation 'indigenas' who have become 'assimilados'. The others are automatically classified as 'non-natives' by birth, as can be clearly seen in Adriano Moreira's article.¹³ But even if their number then was really 30 000 (a figure that Duffy considers to be too optimistic)¹⁴ this still represents only a minute fraction of the total African population which was at that time six millions in round figures.

LABOUR

It was only when I started my fieldwork on race relations in Moçambique in 1964 that I was able to discover some of the more important factors that contributed to the failure of this law to achieve its stated ideal aims. Some of these were the heavier taxes paid by citizens, the requirement of monogamy and Christianity (the latter only implied), as well as the onerous bureaucratic procedures attached to the process of becoming a citizen, which helped to deter a considerable number. But by far the most important I found to be the insistence on equal pay for equal work that applies to all Portuguese citizens, regardless

of race. Few Africans in Moçambique could compete on equal terms with Whites, Indians and Chinese in the labour market, mainly because they lacked the manual and technical skills that were sadly lacking in their own traditional background.

The employer who had to choose between a keen but less experienced, or even able, African artisan, and an experienced, and possibly more efficient, white, Indian, Chinese or Mulatto tradesman or clerk, obviously opted for the latter. Africans who had the status of 'indigenas' could earn fairly good wages in various skilled and semi-skilled occupations such as drivers, carpenters or bricklayers, but because they did not belong to labour syndicates, they were paid according to their individual worth. Once they became citizens, standard rates of pay were rigidly applied. In the case of lorry drivers, for example, a well paid and responsible job in Angola and Moçambique, as an 'indigena' an African could earn R40,00 or more per month, but if he became an 'assimilado' the basic wage was double that amount. Very often he was only qualified as a driver, and so his employer might fire him and employ an Indian, a Chinese, a White or a Mulatto who could not only drive but also undertake all running repairs. It came as a surprise to me that labour syndicates, which correspond to our trade unions, because they are recognised by the courts, can exercise so strong a pressure on employers.

The admirable egalitarian principle of 'equal pay for equal work', whether applied to women or to people of different races or colours, is one to which most of us would give our unqualified support. Unfortunately however, as we have seen in South Africa, in practice it has acted in a discriminatory way against Africans. The major breakthrough of Africans into the ranks of skilled building artisans only took place in 1951 with the passing of the Native Building Workers Act No. 27 of the same year. This measure provided for the training and employment of Africans at differential rates of pay, considerably below those paid to white workers, as bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters and eventually building contractors, theoretically to be employed exclusively in the construction of African urban townships around South Africa's larger cities. In practice, the African has almost ousted the White from the building industry, and much of the skilled

and semi-skilled work carried out in building operations in many parts of the country is, in fact, performed by Africans, though a number of white artisans are employed wherever possible to give the appearance that the law is not being contravened. There is no doubt that if the law were to be changed, these African artisans could easily offset the critical shortage of skilled white artisans in the building industry that has sent their wages rocketing and has made building costs almost prohibitive. But it has taken just under twenty years for this level to be reached, despite every opportunity to progress.

This shows, not that the African is inherently inferior to the White, but that the retarding effect of early cultural conditioning is greater than most of us think. I should not really have been surprised that despite the lack of any kind of job reservation legislation, only relatively few Africans were able to compete on the open market with Whites and others whose cultural background was closer to Western technology than traditional African society. After all, in British East Africa, in colonial times, Africans made relatively slower progress as artisans, clerks and traders than that achieved by West Africans. This could be directly attributed to the presence of large Indian communities who were able to supply the labour markets in those territories with a steady stream of such qualified people. It is interesting to note that in Natal where most Whites are more antagonistic towards the Indian than towards the Zulu, when they wish to have some skilled or semi-skilled work, most of them would automatically seek the services of an Indian rather than that of an African.

Labour conditions in the Portuguese African territories have been subjected to the major barrage of international criticism against Portuguese policy in general, and are often quoted as proof of Portuguese racism. Apart from the regular statements from the United Nations Committee on Colonialism, the main sources are to be found in the works of Duffy, Marvin Harris, Basil Davidson and Ferreira. It has been interesting for me to discover that most of the criticisms are based on an original report made by the late Captain Galvao and published in the *Observer* of 29 January, 1961. Since Captain Galvao was, at the time he compiled his report, an Inspector in the Portu-

guese Colonial Service, it is natural that his report should be regarded as the most authoritative source of information on this subject. My own observations in the field in Angola, but much more extensively and in much more detail in Moçambique over the last eight years, have convinced me that though some of his criticisms are true enough, taken as a whole they convey a totally false picture of the situation as it was then.

Captain Galvao claimed, for example, that 'Clandestine emigration was exhausting at an increasing pace the population of Guinea, Moçambique and Angola.' Population statistics for Angola and Moçambique, which I can assure you are as accurate as any available for any territory in Africa, show quite clearly that there has been a steady overall increase of the total population. The coastal regions of Southern Moçambique, for example, are running the grave risk of becoming overpopulated due to the high birthrate, which is higher than the average for the whole African continent. Thus, Captain Galvao's 'conservative' estimate that 'the three colonies had lost one million natives by emigration in the preceding ten years' is clearly a gross exaggeration. According to the most recent figures given in the statistical year book for 1968, some 150 000 officially recruited as well as 'clandestine' migrant African workers are being employed outside the territory in the Republic of South Africa. Since the majority of them return to Moçambique after one or two years' absence, this would account for the steady improvement in the average birthrate for the Southern Save Districts, whence most of these migrant workers come.¹⁵

Compulsory labour, as experience in Africa and elsewhere has shown quite conclusively, is, in the long run, both expensive and inefficient labour, and Galvao is on much surer ground when he castigates the Portuguese for clinging so long to the mistaken idea that shortages of unskilled labour could ever be cured by any form of compulsion or a legally entrenched 'obligation to work'. There is only one sure way of attracting labour, and that is by paying well, and when the bulk of such labour is tribalised, by creating the need for consumer goods that have to be purchased for cash. There is another way, too, that has been practised in other parts of Africa: to impose a poll tax

payable in cash, and/or to push a large proportion of Africans off the land so that the only alternative to starvation will be to seek wage employment. There is no shortage of land in Angola or Moçambique except in the district of Inhambane, where a complicated situation exists at the moment. In the Southern Limpopo Valley at Joao Bele the demand for land by Africans wishing to become full-time farmers exceeds the supply, but the reclamation of higher reaches of the fertile valley has begun and the problem there will be solved.

Why then, critics ask, do so many Africans migrate from Angola and Moçambique? More nonsense has been written about the motives or reasons for African migration than almost any other aspect of African life. Though I have no doubt that the abuses mentioned by Galvao in regard to the recruitment of labour, the fiddling of pay sheets, the use of illegal compulsion by administrative officers whose duty was to protect the workers, not exploit them, occasionally took place, that these were the rule rather than the exception, I am not prepared to accept; not for sentimental reasons, but because I have seen at first hand, workers being recruited and paid off after their period of contract both in Angola and South Africa, and I had the opportunity of discussing the 'shibalo' system with workers in the Tete and Cabora Bassa regions. The information I was able to gather, incidentally, without an administrative official or a policeman breathing down my neck to ensure that I asked the 'right' questions and received the 'right' answer, convinced me that if the abuses described by Galvao and Davidson had occurred as frequently as they alleged, these would have precipitated such a flood of migrants across the borders of Angola and Moçambique, that not even the most authoritarian of governments would have been able to conceal this phenomenon. Furthermore, there would have been violent protests from their neighbours.

Many years ago, in 1927, Brito Camacho, the last High Commissioner of the Liberal Republic in Moçambique, said:

How do we explain then . . . that every year, tens of thousands of workers emigrate from Moçambique. This fact has this clear and prosaic enough explanation . . . the workers of Moçambique from South of the Save cannot find sufficiently well-paid work in the

Province to satisfy their need for cash. Agriculture cannot be considered to be, in the southern districts, an economic factor worthy of consideration, and all the industry in Lourenço Marques joined together can hardly provide enough work for more than a few dozen workers. Let people say what they like, what appears to us to be an incontrovertible fact is that the native of Moçambique emigrates in order to get a living, to get money with which to pay for cattle and women, with which to pay his taxes and to provide for the modest but inevitable expenses of his household . . . We do not have the right to prevent him from emigrating unless we can provide him with sufficiently well-paid employment, as close as possible to his villages . . .¹⁶

I think I have said enough to indicate how unreliable much of the information about labour conditions in Portuguese Africa is, when one takes the trouble to look more closely into the subject.

The abolition of compulsory labour and of the compulsory cultivation of certain crops like cotton since 1961, and the introduction of the new Rural Workers Code in October 1962¹⁷ have done away with most of the undesirable features of labour conditions in Moçambique. The measures, which as far as Moçambique is concerned, I have been able to see for myself, are being rigorously implemented in practice, did not produce any marked decline in the production of cotton or in the available supply of labour, as many employers in Moçambique were sure would be the inevitable result of such rash measures. There has been a marked increase in the numbers of Africans seeking employment in the major urban centres and it is there that the problems of accommodation and social control are most complex.

The productivity of African labour all over the continent continues to be low. A survey carried out under the auspices of the C.C.T.A. (Commission for Technical Cooperation South of the Sahara) from which Portugal and South Africa were expelled, showed that there was still a high level of labour turnover in Angola and Moçambique, which is a sure indication of a low level of productivity. But even in the Republic of South Africa, which claims to be

the most economically advanced country on this continent, labour turnover, except in a few select industries that provide proper training for their workers, is relatively high and overall productivity of South African industry is still much lower than that of more developed countries.

My impression of labour conditions today in Moçambique is that, except for skilled artisans, both wages as well as working conditions compare favourably with those existing in South Africa. What Moçambique needs, with most other countries in Africa is more avenues for employment in industry for the increasing number of Africans who cannot and will not be able to become independent full time farmers. Like other African economies, that of Moçambique will have to be diversified if it is not to be continually at the mercy of the low level of world prices for its agricultural and tropical products.

CONCLUSION

The first, and most important conclusion that can be derived from this brief discussion of some of the stated aims, as well as actual practice of Portuguese policy in Africa, is that, as far as race relations are concerned, the Portuguese had no clear cut policy. This is clear from the most recent and detailed study of Portuguese policy in Africa by Wilensky, but is even clearer from the following statements extracted from a speech made by a former Minister for Colonies, Dr. Armindo Monteiro, on 12 February, 1932, to the students of the School for Higher Colonial Studies in Lisbon:

The Empire lacks a colonial doctrine based on the secular experience of the (Portuguese) people, worked out against the lessons of our victories and our defeats; the successes that have crowned some of our enterprises and the reverses that have prevented the development of some of our collective ambitions; (we lack) a doctrine that should point to the future after carefully balancing the virtues of our race against its weaknesses . . . Our colonial administration has no stability. Ministers succeed ministers and governors follow governors with disconcerting rapidity . . . In recent times during one year, several ministers were in charge of the colonies. The administration of each colony changes

with every new governor — according to his thoughts, his ideas, his friendships and his interests. Instability is the most searing indictment that for a long time now, has been levelled against us . . .¹⁹

As far as actual race policy is concerned then, until 1961, it was tacitly assumed that somehow or another, all the peoples of different ethnic origins living in Portuguese controlled territories would gradually become integrated into a common Portuguese orientated society. The Portuguese language would be the most important common cultural link between them. This is what has happened with Brazil, with many of the inhabitants of the Indian enclaves of Goa, Damao and Diu, with the Chinese inhabitants of Macau and many of the Indonesians of Timor.

After 1961, with the abolition of the Estatuto that discriminated between Portuguese citizens and indigenous inhabitants and introduced the *indigénat* system copied from the French, the Portuguese government has been firmly committed to a clear cut policy of culture amalgamation and biological fusion between peoples of all races in their overseas provinces. In January 1972 further regulations were enacted increasing the penalties to be applied against persons or organizations found guilty of racial discrimination of any kind.

The war in the northern and western districts of Moçambique has brought about a certain cooling in the very amicable and easy-going relations between White and Black, which made such an impression on me during my first long visit to the territory. They contrasted so strongly with the tension and antagonism I had become so used to experiencing in South Africa. Even though writers, artists and other intellectuals of any colour are viewed with considerable suspicion by the authorities, there is not as much tension as might normally be expected in a country that is going through what is, after all, a crisis situation.

My own experience in various parts of the country, has convinced me that what Schutz calls the 'lebenswelt' of the Portuguese is so different from that of their neighbours, that it allows for contacts between White and Black to take place on a level of tolerance and equality that has never been possible in South Africa, or what was British Central and East Africa.

I suggest that some of the fundamental values and assumptions that are an integral

part of the Portuguese life-style, are partly responsible for this. The old-fashioned humanistic traditions of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment are still a very strong part of the Portuguese cultural tradition. There is an outward looking nationalism that welcomes strangers and foreigners into their midst. They are pleased when peoples of other colours speak their language, share their values and act as they do; they are flattered by imitation, not insulted; they are not upset by obvious differences, only interested in them. They do not attach the same value to money or commercial success

as their neighbours do. They consider all politicians to be fools or knaves, or a little of both. They are highly and vociferously critical of all authority and hero-worship is reserved strictly for good soccer and basket-ball players, but even that is tinged with irony.

To conclude, the Portuguese still believe in the essential dignity of every man, woman or child, regardless of race, and that this is worth protecting as against the demands of the machine, or of technology or the profit motive. And it is this that gives life amongst them a certain individual savour that is lacking in other countries.

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