THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES AND THE REVOLUTION

Douglas Porch

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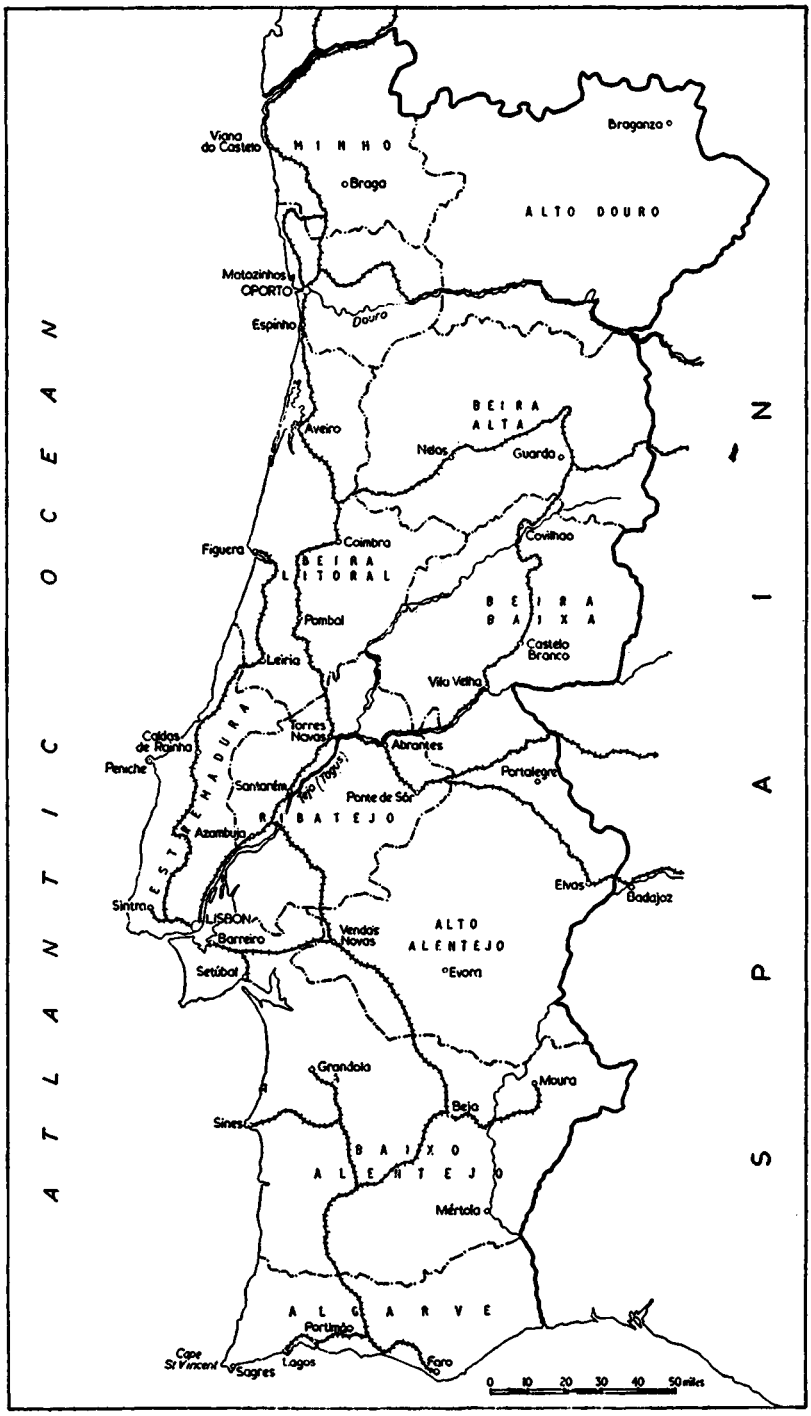
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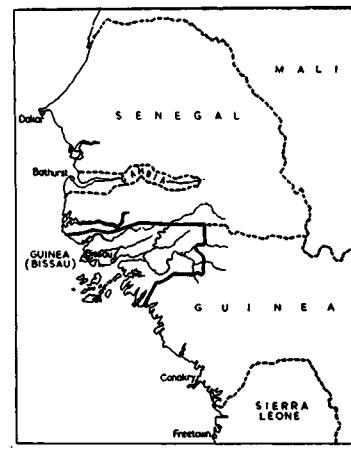

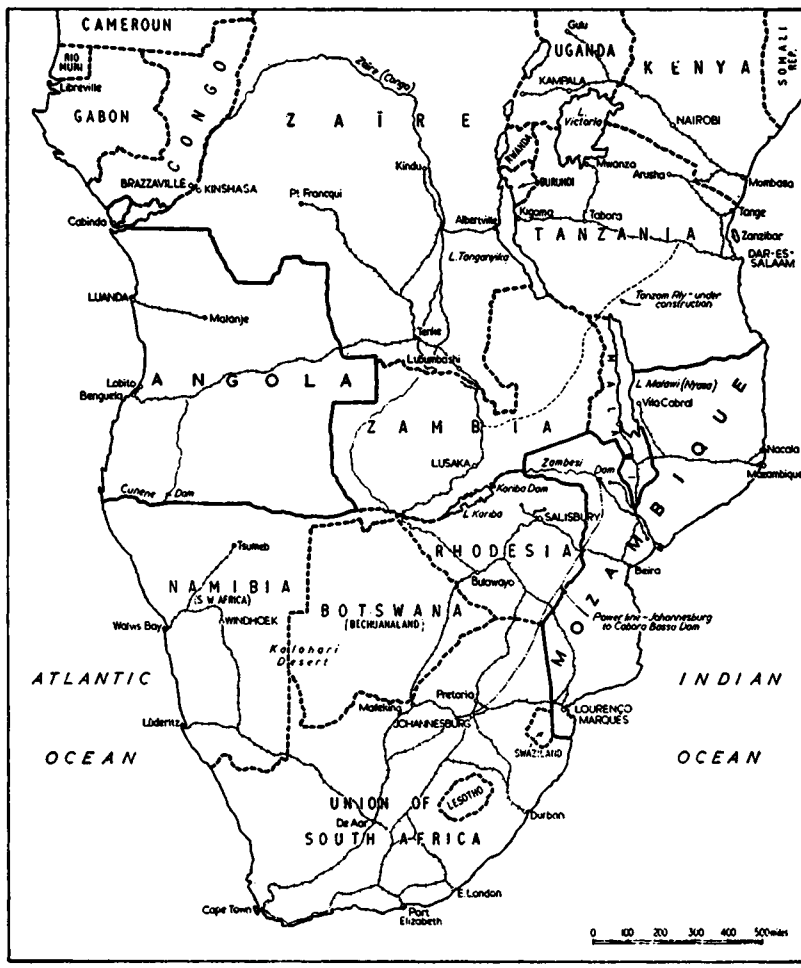

Southern Africa

PREFACE

Portugal, runs the popular stereotype, has been one of Europe's backwaters for almost three centuries. Little supposedly has happened there to attract the world's attention since Wellington's troops marched out of Torres Vedras in 1808. Its Iberian neighbour Spain has captured the lion's share of scholarly interest and political passion following each of its periodic civil wars. When the press bulletins announced on 25 April 1974, that the fifty-year-old government of Prime Ministers Salazar and Caetano had been overthrown by a military *coup*, few, admittedly, had to consult a map to find Lisbon. Most of us had been on holiday in the Algarve, read a Second World War spy adventure set in Lisbon's narrow streets, or spent an evening knocking back glasses of port on some Oxbridge high table. But we did not know how it happened, and so close to home.

This book is a study of the origins of the civil-military crisis in Portugal. Viewed in the context of Portuguese history and the experience of armies in other countries, particularly that of the French army in Algeria, the Portuguese *coup* loses much of its shock value for the West. However, the Portuguese army alone among European armies forced to fight the war of the flea' revolted against colonialism. The Portuguese revolution which followed provides a unique laboratory for the study of an army in crisis, the strains which the attempt by officers to direct the political life of the country after April 1974 placed on military organization, the traditional career patterns and attitudes of soldiers, and on discipline. It is concerned with the role of officers in government and the day-to-day problems which political upheaval created in every barracks. This is a study both of the army in politics and of politics in the army, which I have attempted to place in the broader context of the events of the revolution.

During the course of my research, I was able to interview a number of Portuguese officers in all three services, all of whom requested that their names be kept out of print. I have respected this wish. I owe them a great deal of thanks for their patience and invaluable help. The conclusions I have drawn in the book are, of course, my own.

I also owe my thanks for advice and encouragement to a number of people in the United States, Britain and Portugal, but especially to Dr. Lewis Gann, António de Figueiredo, Carl Hanson, John Vincent-Smith and Gillian Flint.

1 THE POLITICS OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY 1910–1974

Since Clemenceau suggested over fifty years ago that war was much too important to be left to generals, soldiers on several continents seem set on proving that politics should not be left to politicians. In the Arab world, black Africa and Latin America, the gun-toting politician appears well entrenched, while uniformed general-presidents are not unknown in Asia. Nor is Europe a complete stranger to military meddling in high places. Frequent recourse to the 'whiff of grape shot' to quell popular disturbances and the disproportionate influence of military chiefs, especially in wartime, has sometimes led governments to lean heavily on their military arm. Wilhelmine Germany is perhaps the best example of a modern European government fallen under the spell of its service chiefs. Bismarck's efforts to bridle the elder Moltke, his chief of staff, eventually came unstuck in a jamboree of military parades and politics. Thus, von Tirpitz was allowed to plan his navy unmindful of international consequences, von Schlieffen to draw up his grand offensive unhindered by 'political' considerations, the younger Moltke to give guarantees to Austrian Chief of Staff Conrad in 1914, and finally Ludendorff and Hindenburg to rule Germany behind the thinnest trappings of civilian power during the last two years of the war. Few governments after 1939, least of all Hitler's, allowed this phenomenon to repeat itself.

Since 1945, decolonisation has placed the greatest strain upon civil-military relations in Europe. Great Britain mercifully wrote off her Empire without a fight. Belgium needed only the slightest arm-twisting to pack up and go home. But the continent's two other substantial colonial powers, France and Portugal, opted to learn their lessons the hard way.

Some political commentators, the historians Kenneth Maxwell and Márcio Alves among them, view the stubborn refusal of Salazar and Caetano to call it a day in the colonies as the logical corollary of Portugal's economic dependence on Africa. As America's claims in Vietnam about assuring the boundaries of the 'free world' and halting 'international bolshevism' dead in its tracks were seen by many as a smokescreen to cover economic imperialism, so Portuguese talk about a historic and civilizing mission in Africa is brushed aside as the cynical

propaganda of a doddering dictatorship. Kenneth Maxwell writes:

> Portugal was the last European power in Africa to cling tenaciously to the panoply of formal dominion and this was no accident. For a long time Portugal very successfully disguised the nature of her presence behind a skilful amalgam of historical mythmaking, claims of multiracialism, and good public relations. The reality was something different. . .Economic weakness at home made intransigence in Africa inevitable. It was precisely through the exercise of sovereignty that Portugal was able to obtain any advantages at all from its 'civilizing mission'. And these advantages were very considerable: cheap raw materials, large earnings from invisibles, the transfer of export earnings, gold and diamonds, protected markets for her wines and cotton textiles.

The Brazilian Marcio Alves commented:

> To hold on to the Empire was fundamental for Portuguese fascism. Economically, the African territories – and especially rich Angola – were so important to Portuguese capitalism that Caetano took over from Salazar on the condition that they would be defended.[1]

If Portugal's stand in Africa is put down to pure profit motive, then much of what happened in Portuguese Africa in the last century becomes inexplicable. In the early thirties, Jorge Ameal distilled three basic characteristics from Portuguese colonial ideology. First he took the 'geographic element', expressing the sentiment that although Portugal was a tiny country, her flag flew over what was then the world's third largest empire. For over a decade, it was fashionable among Lisbon writers and politicians to refer to the 'Third Empire', while a favourite colonial quip had it that 'Angola is a great country with a small colony in Europe.' The second element Ameal defined as the heroic one: 'The ancestral memory of an astonishing gallery of discoverers and builders. . .The Portuguese, like no other people, made their enterprises of exploitation and conquest a transcendent campaign, a sharing of material values.'[2]

The last element was the material one, in many ways the weakest of the three. Portuguese Africa was staked out originally in the sixteenth century as a few wood and water stations on the way to the Goan spice bazaar. With the decline of the pepper trade and the opening of Brazil, Bissau, Luanda and Beira vied with Belize as the world's most forgotten

outposts of empire. Portuguese interest in Africa only revived in 1885, when the Berlin Conference announced that Germany and Britain were casting greedy eyes on the lightly held and virtually unexplored Portuguese enclaves. A series of military campaigns was launched to conquer the interior of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea, continuing fitfully until 1915.

The colonies did not live up to their rich promises in the First Republic (1910-26). Messy colonial administration, corruption and lack of capital and initiative were all blamed. But the fact remains that the profit motive was at best latent in this hurried turn-of-the-century expansion. Just as the French conquest of Algeria and the Western Sudan had been the result not of businessmen out to get rich but of military imperialism – the desire of officers to keep on going[3] – so this push into the hinterland by the Portuguese was largely a military show mounted for reasons of prestige and maintained in part as a way to keep the bloated military establishment gainfully occupied. Dubious bush victories were shamelessly exaggerated at home and once a region was subdued the conquering officers turned administrators. Progressive colonial governors like Norton de Matos realized that the extensive military presence in the colonies was one of the greatest stumbling blocks to development there.[4]

> The specific nature of the Portuguese African colonies at the turn of the 20th century is unmistakable. The normal colonies of the 19th century were the outcome of industrial expansion of the metropolitan power. . .The Portuguese colonies were wholly different in origin. In essence, they were the stagnant survivals of 16th century slave and trading posts, suddenly extended into the hinterland under the threat of rival European annexation. . .Thus, the stimulus to conquest did not come from any industrial élan: it was not internal and natural, but external and artificial.[5]

While the British and Belgians used the colonies to feed raw materials to industry for re-export as manufactured products, Portugal, with the exception perhaps of cotton for the textile industry, exported colonial bureaucrats and in return got, as one Royal Commissioner in Mozambique saw it: '. . .endless officers, bulky reports, countless laws, many decrees, a hundred unworkable regulations. Words, words, words.'[6]

For the first three decades of the twentieth century, the African colonies were a losing economic proposition. Luanda was described as

'beautiful and bankrupt', and despite temporary upsurges in the colonial economy, Angola and Mozambique ran a trade deficit of 10 to 12 per cent most years. Guinea simply stagnated. In 1933, the economist Elémer Böhn lamented the economic state of Portuguese Africa and concluded that the Portuguese remained there 'only for reasons of tradition and prestige'.[7] In 1930 the Republican statesman Cunha Leal reported that the Finance Minister, Dr Salazar, thought 'The colonies were a cancer and a nightmare. . .I let drop the following phrase: "I must conclude, therefore, that if Angola were to be taken away from us, that would be a great service rendered to us." To which Salazar replied with an indefinable gesture, "I wouldn't go as far as that".'[8] One senior government official in the mid-1930s estimated that the African colonies had cost Portugal more than 150 million pounds since 1850 in budgetary deficits, administrative expenses and the cost of Portuguese intervention in the First World War, brought about by fears that her possessions would be carved up at the peace table if she held aloof.[9]

Portugal's tenacious defence of her colonies after 1961 cannot be understood on purely economic grounds any more than her willingness to fight Germany for them in 1916. Adriano Moreira, Salazar's Minister for the Overseas Provinces, refused to put Portuguese colonialism in the same bag with the economically motivated British and Belgians when he spoke of 'Our universalist mission which [Portuguese man] has been carrying on and which can never be mistaken for colonisation in terms of mere material interests and racial segregation.'[10] This is not to say that the profit motive was totally absent from Portuguese colonial calculations. Under Salazar's careful management, Africa began to turn a small profit and by 1961, with the aid of foreign investment, accounted for approximately one third of Portugal's total national income (although Portuguese statistics often fall short of reliability).[11] But the importance of these figures had become blunted after 1961 due to two important developments: the disruptive effects of the African war on the economy in terms of lost production, especially in agriculture, manpower shortages and enormous defence expenditure which accounted for over 7 per cent of the GNP and 40 per cent of the annual budget, placing Portugal in a warfare state category with Israel. Secondly, in economic terms, Portugal was becoming increasingly Eurocentric. Between 1960 and 1969, the percentage of Portugal's exports to her overseas territories fell from 43 to 25 per cent. By 1973, exports there counted for only 10 per cent of her trade compared with 45 per cent to the EEC. Only 10 per cent

of her imports came from the territories while 45 per cent were from Europe.[12] While the home country continued to reap benefits from certain parasitic practices like shipping monopolies, currency exchange and the export of cheap black labour to South Africa's gold mines, it is certain that the major contributors of hard cash in the last decade have been tourists and the massive diaspora which has turned Paris into Portugal's second city: an estimated million and a half Portuguese have left home to work in French and German factories and send part of their pay packet home each month.

While the overseas territories had declined in economic importance to Portugal, those with substantial investment there, both foreign and native, began to question the wisdom of the war. They resented the enormous sums squandered on the defence and administration of the territories and the free goods and services the government required them to supply to the forces.[13] Indeed, if looking for patterns of decolonization, there appears to be an inverse relationship between large-scale economic penetration of a colony and the willingness of the colonial power to fight it out with the local maquisards. The two 'classical' imperial countries, Britain and Belgium, came to terms with the post-war world with a minimum of hesitation. It was in those countries where large economic interests did not provide a firm base for colonial exploitation – France and Portugal – that the decolonization experience was most bitter. The dreadful war the French fought in Indochina made no sense in economic terms. Algeria was hardly the lynchpin of the French economy. A colonial hardliner like Caetano was the first to admit that it would be more lucrative and more convenient 'to abandon the colonies'.[14] The death grip of both countries on their colonial wards cannot be explained in decimal points.

The failure of 'economists' to fully realise their psychological importance to Portugal has obscured the real colonial dilemma of Portuguese governments since the nineteenth century. As modern industrial nations manufacture Concordes and moonshots for reasons not of economic gain but of national prestige, so Portugal delved into the exploits of her past to paper over the poverty of her present. The 'Third Empire' provided a backdrop against which Portuguese political leaders could posture on the world stage. Without it, their perpetual political crises would, like those of some South American banana republic, have earned no more than a few lines in a back page of the *Times*. 'Africa is more than a land to exploit', Marcelo Caetano declared in the 1930s, '. . .Africa is for us a moral justification and a *raison d'être* as a power. Without it, we would be a small nation; with

it, we are a great country.'[15]

Cultural chauvinism, which runs high in every Latin country, probably tops the league table in the Iberian peninsula. The Portuguese are acutely aware that their once great prestige has bottomed out in world opinion and the obsession of the Portuguese élite with their cultural heritage has been one of the main stumbling blocks to economic and political development there. The dynamic men of generations past have too often been more concerned with Portugal's 'cultural problem' than with constructing a modern political economy. The main Republican cavil against the monarchy at the turn of the century was that monarchists were more concerned with railways, trade and banking than with the 'spiritual development of the country'.[16]

For the 'New State', as for France's Fourth Republic, the colonies were a political necessity. Their loss would have revealed just how far each country had sunk in world estimation, increasing their political marginalization internationally and consequently their weakness at home. Statements associating the colonies with the historic glories of these two culturally sensitive Latin countries, eager to spread their respective civilizations and languages, cannot be dismissed simply as a thin cover for colonial economic exploitation on a grand scale or as trite *Alliance française* propaganda. The pragmatic Anglo-Saxons and the culturally divided Belgians decided that they had had a good innings, but had reached the time to cut and run. De Gaulle and the rump of the Free French eventually spared their country an agonizing cultural readjustment by administering the necessary 10ccs of grandeur in the nick of time. But unlike de Gaulle, Salazar was in no position to offer his people the spectacle of a leader backed by a *force de frappe* carving out an area of political influence between the two superpowers. Instead, the past became the ticket to political survival in the present. To Portugal fell the self-appointed historic mission of civilizing that portion of the African population which had fallen into her hands. Portugal was not Portugal without greatness, and Salazar and Caetano would not let go until the gun was actually pointed at their heads. The British historian of the Portuguese Empire, C.R. Boxer, wrote:

> It is a fairly accurate generalization that the mass of the people in most countries consider themselves to be inherently superior to those of any other. The Portuguese, who pioneered the expansion of Europe and their successors during three centuries certainly possessed this conviction in full measure – and perhaps to a greater degree than did any other nation, in the opinion of some foreign

> observers. . .The result was a nationalism of exceptional durability and toughness. This exalted nationalism helps to explain why the Portuguese held on to so much of their precious sea-borne empire for so long and why they are so reluctant to relinquish any part of it nowadays, whether economically viable (Angola, Mozambique) or otherwise (Goa, Guinea).[17]

Article 2 of Salazar's 1930 Colonial Act gave, 'To the organic essence of the Portuguese nation the historical mission of possessing and colonizing overseas dominions, as well as civilising the native populations encompassed by them.'[18] 'Non-civilised' Africans were to be brought within the pale of Portuguese culture. Local traditions, social organization and law were to be maintained until all blacks could be 'assimilated' – that is taught to read and write Portuguese and converted to Christianity. They would then be granted the full rights of Portuguese citizenship, already given the inhabitants of the Cape Verde Islands, India and Macau. In practice, this policy was less than successful. Lack of schools and the often arbitrary granting of *assimilado* status meant that by 1950 only 30,000 blacks in Angola and 4,000 in Mozambique had stepped up to civilisation. Conversely, thousands of literate blacks, realizing that *assimilado* status carried few tangible economic and social benefits but on the contrary a tax hike, turned down this rather dubious honour.[19]

For the vast majority of blacks who lived by the sweat of their brow, Portuguese civilization meant virtual forced labour. Although the labour code strictly forbade unpaid labour for the state, compulsory labour and the procurement by state officials of workers for private entrepreneurs, for many years, these provisions were winked at to the point that the enforcers' eyes remained almost permanently shut.[20] Female and child labour were commonly used for heavy road work. Unemployment was equated with indolence and unemployed blacks often found themselves sweating for low wages on a state project or hived off to a local planter or contractor to keep them out of mischief. Mozambique's principal export was men to the Transvaal gold mines, up to 100,000 annually, for a procurer's fee and a slice of the sea-borne traffic to Johannesburg. These mining jobs were much sought after by Africans who faced only limited prospects of employment at home and the FRELIMO government continued these arrangements after independence. However, left-wing journalist Perry Anderson criticized this economic organization, virtually unchanged since the seventeenth century, not only as 'an astonishing anachronism', but also as

uneconomical because it militated against the creation of a consumer market which would have benefited the homeland.[21]

Increased international condemnation of post-1945 colonialism pushed the government into a few cosmetic reforms. The words 'colonial' and 'colony' were eliminated from the constitution in the early 1950s to sidestep United Nations censure. Africa now became 'Portugal Overseas', and Angola, Mozambique and Guinea were given equal status as provinces with the Alentejo and Trás-os-Montes. In 1961, *assimilado* status was abolished and all blacks in the three 'provinces' became citizens. The outbreak of the war in that year also resulted in stricter enforcement of the labour codes to woo the African population.[22]

The 'civilizing' mission and the economic development of the colonies were given a leg-up by encouraging white settlement. Portuguese emigration traditionally benefited Brazil, but Salazar redirected it toward Angola and Mozambique after the war. The dictator's critics claim that this was a cynical ploy to cream off his excess working population, thus cutting short cries for industrial and land reform, as well as an attempt to transform the underdeveloped colonies into viable markets for home manufacture.[23] Angola's white population shot up from 44,000 in 1940 to roughly 200,000 by 1960, while Mozambique doubled its 1940 white population of 48,000 in 20 years. Angola's estimated 350,000 whites in 1974 comprised 5 per cent of the population, while whites counted for slightly more than 1 per cent in Mozambique.[24] This post-war white wave was not a great success either culturally or economically. The newcomers, a mainly 'fugitive' emigration of poor farmers, were a trifle short on 'civilisation'. Economically, their arrival served only to increase the gulf between blacks and whites and to exacerbate racial tensions. In the 1950s, the government transported entire villages to central Angola, giving each family thirty acres and forbidding employment of African farm workers. But the transport costs were prohibitive, the farming standards of some new arrivals primitive, and in many cases they simply drifted to Luanda or Nova Lisboa to displace Africans holding manual and semi-skilled jobs, or to swell the growing ranks of white unemployed.[25]

The presence in Angola of a large settler population cannot be underestimated as a factor which militated against a withdrawal, as had the one million white *pieds noirs* in Algeria. Many emigrants settled down in Angola's central farming region or in the northern coffee-growing lands near the Congo frontier and their reluctance to give up their homesteads was a major factor in prolonging the war.

Congo-educated Holden Roberto, whose *União das Populacões de Angola* (UPA), later to become the FNLA, initiated the Angolan revolt in 1961 by attacking over the Congo border, realized too late that he was not dealing with capitalistic Belgians ready to scurry home almost with the first rifle shot, but with tough Latin farmers, too poor to go home and ready to defend themselves.[26]

In both France and Portugal the army decided to topple the government after a long and bitter struggle against colonial insurgents. Here, however, the parallels begin to diverge. The French army's grand entrance into politics was surprising because it represented a break with its traditional role as *la grande muette* – 'the silent giant'. Until 1958, even the most imaginative anti-militarist republican was hard-pressed to cite an instance when the army had overstepped the bounds of strict legality. To insulate itself against the periodic upheaval of revolutionary change in France, the army tacitly acknowledged the sovereignty of the legal government while claiming loyalty to the nation. When Marshal Saint-Arnaud flushed out the National Assembly in 1851, thereby slamming the doors on the Second Republic, he made clear that he was simply executing the orders of his commander-in-chief President Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte. This policy began to show cracks with the fall of France in 1940. When forced to choose between the doddering old marshal who represented legality in Vichy and an upstart brigadier who called for honour in London, most officers chose the former. After 1945, many of these men found themselves jobless. The tradition of loyalty to the government so long held in the army had been knocked sideways – de Gaulle had succeeded because he refused to follow orders.

But while the French army at home had been kept under the iron thumb of the government, in the colonies it had enjoyed a large degree of independence. Paris found it difficult if not impossible to prevent headstrong and ambitious generals like Bugeaud or Lyautey from pushing out the frontiers of empire or imposing pet administrative projects. While the British army was organized around a system of linked battalions which rotated between home and colonial service, many French officers spent their entire careers in the colonies, especially after the creation of a separate colonial force in 1898. To the feeling among many of these officers that Paris was remote, ill-informed on colonial matters and too left-wing, was added the dangerous expansion of colonial mercenary corps like the Foreign Legion after 1945 from the remnants of the Wehrmacht and other bits and pieces of out-of-work soldiery. That these men owed their loyalty

not to France but to an élite group of officers proved fatal to the Fourth Republic and under a less skilful and determined politician than de Gaulle might have been so too in the young Fifth Republic.

After slogging through two bloody colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria discontent in the victory-starved French army boiled over. But while the Algerian settlers' revolt enjoyed the friendliest relations with the French army, which was enough to sink the badly listing Fourth Republic, there was never any serious question of the army stepping up to power in France. De Gaulle, like Napoleon, was respected not as the leader of the army but as the only man who could put France's house in order. He was popular not because he hailed the arrival of the tanks at the Elysée Palace, but because he was the only man able to drive the generals and colonels back to barracks. Subsequent attempts by some sections of the army to influence domestic politics against the will of the nation in the 1961 day of the barricades, followed by terrorist bombings of the clandestine OAS, staffed by renegade officers and NCOs, were derisory, if bloodstained, failures.

In lively contrast to the French army, Portuguese officers were as loquacious in political matters as their French counterparts were mute. Throughout the republican period especially, officers popped in and out of cabinets and garrisons revolted on the side of one political faction or another with dizzy regularity. The army mirrored the unstable republic which the large majority of army officers and virtually all of the navy supported. The Portuguese republic topped the list for parliamentary instability. With 45 different governments in 16 years, Portuguese cabinets lasted only four months on average. The republic was unable to bring its armed forces to heel, yet the army lacked the internal cohesion to force a programme on the government. In 1912, conservative General Pimenta de Castro staged a *coup d'état* and handed seven of the nine ministerial portfolios to military men. In May 1915, a rebellion in some army and navy units reinstated the more left-leaning Democrats. In December 1917, with most of the army either on the Western Front or fighting Germans in Africa, some Lisbon regiments revolted under the leadership of a former envoy to Germany, Major Sidónio Pais, who promptly set up a *de facto* military dictatorship and christened it *República Nova.* Pais was assassinated a year later, and immediately pro-monarchist military juntas sprang up in both the North and the South. Loyalist Lisbon regiments teamed up with the navy to crush each revolt, assuring the republic a lingering death.

From 1918 until the military *coup de grace* of 1926, military influence in the government steadily increased. In this period, 12 of 26 cabinets, fully 46 per cent, were presided over by military men. Before Pais, only 15 per cent had been so governed. War veterans also became very prominent in Parliament. But the presence in high places of so many soldiers only seemed to increase the republic's petty squabbles and inability to put its economic house in order. The army was dragged into the ideological disputes of the day, and whatever solidarity still existed among those in uniform splintered into political factionalism.

Portuguese politics had been caught up in the ideological undertow of the age. Not surprisingly, the main currents came from abroad and from the right. While the left toyed with Proudhonian socialism and sought to impose a Portuguese-flavoured Third Republic, conservatives looked to recreate the France of Louis XV at home by adapting French philosopher Charles Maurras' theories of integral nationalism to the Portuguese situation. *Integralismo Lusitano* first appeared in print in 1914 and caught fire among army officers and students at the conservative Coimbra University essentially by offering monarchism with a modern face. Traditionalist in outlook, it denounced most post-1789 political doctrines including popular sovereignty and liberalism and all non-Roman religious faiths, especially Judaism and Protestantism. Its adherents preached the virtues of a society based on religion, authority and nationalism as a bulwark against left-wing internationalism.[27] But like its French counterpart, the *Action Française, Integralismo Lusitano* was not geared to parliamentary opposition or to the seizure of power, but rather served as an intellectual pressure group.[28] Unlike fascism, integralism was traditionalist and not remotely socialist. But the romanticism of violence among its more youthful following and the spectacle of social stability offered by Mussolini's Italy and Primo de Rivera's Spain meant that by 1926, fascism had fired the imagination of many intellectuals, not least army officers.[29] Disenchantment was increased by the 1923 entry of the left-wing *Seara Nova* group into the government. Two army revolts were crushed in 1925. Finally, on 28 May 1926, General Gomes da Costa revolted in the northern town of Braga and marched on Lisbon to end the republic.

The conspiracy was not a fascist *coup*, but an uncomfortable marriage of republican and integralist officers who sank their differences long enough to end the 'corruption and degradation' of the parliamentary republic. They gained support among the mass of officers by promising to rectify the lengthening list of economic and professional

grievances. Most soldiers wanted a return to 'constitutional normalcy', not a new order.[30] Officers, like civil servants, had seen their purchasing power slashed to one-half of what it had been in 1910. They complained that bad training, poor armament and obsolete equipment had sapped morale and consequently discipline. The army, they grieved, needed a root and branch reform which would, among other things, eliminate the national militia brought in by victorious republicans in 1911. The government had swelled the forces far beyond the country's defence needs. Peacetime military strength had tripled since the declaration of the republic, absorbing 40 per cent of the national budget, and transforming the army into an elaborate system of outdoor relief for the middle-class unemployed.[31]

The emphasis on professional grievances was not the only feature which the 28 May *coup* shared with its successor 48 years later. The impetus for the plots against both régimes came from junior- and middle-ranking officers who sought leadership from select superiors known to desire a change. Even the similarity in the names of the generals who eventually assumed the leadership mantle was uncanny: in 1974 Costa Gomes inherited the job of Gomes da Costa. The young officers of 1926, like their modern counterparts, were convinced that the army must set the example for Portuguese society. Their 'revolution', therefore, became an élitist enterprise reserved for professional officers, unlike the 1925 Lisbon revolt which drew in sergeants and soldiers. Basing their operation on the Braga and Coimbra garrisons, they set up a *junta revolucionária* in almost every regiment from January 1926.[32] The heterogeneous political philosophies of the conspirators, their lack of unity, almost total absence of political experience and technical skills needed to implement reform, as well as attempts to cash in on the *coup* by political groups too small to gain power at the polls, meant that the death of the republic did not end republican influence in the government, nor military unrest. The new government under navy Commander Joaquim Mendes Cabeçadas was dominated by republican officers, but fascist-orientated groups in the army made life difficult – too difficult. On 9 July, another army *coup* directed by pro-monarchist General Sinel de Cordes ousted President Gomes da Costa and replaced him with General Oscar Carmona. Under the dual direction of the two generals, military indiscipline was compounded by financial irresponsibility. The country slid noisily towards the New State. Violent army and navy revolts rocked the government in 1927 and 1928. In 1928, Salazar was named finance minister in the cabinet of Colonel Vicente de Freitas. By the time a final military revolt was

crushed in 1931, Salazar had become firmly established as the only man who could save Portugal from economic ruin. He soon convinced enough politicians that he was also the only man who could save her from political anarchy. Amid widespread purges of teachers, civil servants and army officers hostile to the régime, Salazar was named prime minister in July 1932.

The foundations of the fascist state were established over the next few years. All political parties, secret societies and trade unions were disbanded. Salazar installed himself as chief of the National Union, now the only legal party. The Statute of National Labour which decreed that government-controlled syndicates were to replace the old trade unions and working men's associations had whole paragraphs lifted from Mussolini's Italian Charter of Labour. Other features of the corporatiste society also owed much to *Il Duce*. As the Spanish Civil War heated up, the régime, desperate for a Franco victory, took on other trappings of a fascist state. A *Mocedade Portuguesa* (Portuguese Youth) modelled on the Hitler youth was organised in schools and, in his own bloodless version of the 'night of the long knives', Salazar converted the troublesome 'blue shirts' into the Portuguese Legion at a stroke. However, both the Portuguese Youth and the Portuguese Legion were quietly played down after 1945. As for the corporatiste organization of the new state, it betrayed a misunderstanding of modern industry and a contempt for labour which would have shamed German national socialists.[33] In economic organization, as in colonial policy, the traditionalist dictator attempted to turn the clock back to the sixteenth century by more or less reviving a guild system. And of course Salazar's racial propaganda clashed violently with Third Reich racism by extolling the virtues of Portugal's multiracial melting pot and pointing with pride to the large number of *mestiços* in the colonies as proof of Portuguese willingness to pursue their 'civilising mission' even after dark.

Salazar's take-over did not end military dissent. An alleged pro-monarchist plot was unearthed among army officers in 1934, and in 1936 a Potemkin-like revolt blew up on two battleships anchored in Lisbon harbour. But reforms designed to raise military prestige together with the smack of firm government dissuaded soldiers from trying their luck at political roulette. The restoration of discipline and the advent of world war encouraged a return to more professional considerations in the forces. The régime seemed to have captured the allegiance of the majority of the nation, including some intellectuals who saw the New State as a combination of fascism and Lusitanian

integralism. The political vacuum of the republic had been the largest temptation to men on horseback. With Salazar's hands firmly on the reins of government, the soldiers returned to the barracks. This is not to say that the Dictator's nights were not troubled by anxiety over military mischief; the deep-rooted liberal traditions of the forces could not be pulled up by directives forbidding officers to join the communist party nor by a government propaganda barrage stressing the necessity for an 'apolitical' army. Salazar interfered little in the ideology of the forces, preferring to leave to the paramilitary Portuguese Legion and the misnamed Republican National Guard the task of defending the régime. The result, once the trauma of political and economic instability had passed, was a lingering residue of indignation among many officers over the authoritarian nature of the New State and increasing embarrassment about the ridiculous figure Portugal cut abroad as she wobbled into the post-war world. This situation was explosive, and precisely because Salazar had done his job of political stabilization too well. In a country with a strong political consciousness engrained among the middle classes, Salazar had shut off virtually all outlets of discontent. The ban on political parties and trade unions had closed popular steam valves and made the government incapable of expanding and contracting with political pressures. Many even mildly outspoken teachers or civil servants found their careers tragically shattered and, severed from the all-important public payroll, spent their lives running small shops in provincial backwaters. Courageous liberal professionals were harassed into silence by the PIDE or, like socialist leader Mário Soares, forced into periods of jail or exile. But Salazar wielded his repressive weapons with subtle skill. The Salazar régime practised what American political scientist H. Martins calls an 'economy of terror' – a controlled but persistent repression which fragmented and neutralized the opposition.[34] The notorious Tarrafal camp in the Cape Verde islands, reserved primarily for PCP militants, was shut down in the mid-1950s. Caxias prison, outside of Lisbon, became the régime's new bastille and revolutionaries who stormed it in 1974 must have been as disappointed as *sans culottes* when it disgorged barely 100 prisoners, many of whose political connections were suspect.

The result of Salazar's policies was that the armed forces remained the only place where a man could keep his own counsel albeit discreetly. The liberal traditions of the opposition were kept alive by Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo and others who taught at the military and naval academies. Political conversions in the officers' mess were

relatively free and although one officer noted that after such discussions 'sometimes you thought to yourself, "perhaps I shouldn't have said that"',[35] their increasing frequency and openness as war-weariness increased was an important factor in spreading the disease. Political writers have claimed that PIDE agents were excluded from the army.[36] Although it is probable that the number of officers in the pay of the secret police was limited, some NCOs and a number of military employees were almost certainly paid by the line for reports on their superiors. 'We knew that in every ship or school, there were two or three petty officers or porters in the pay of the PIDE', one captain said, 'but this was never proved.' The relative immunity of the forces to government meddling can be attributed to the much maligned 'fascist' high command, which ensured that officers and NCOs involved with clandestine political groups received no more than a scolding from their commanding officer. Caetano found to his amazement that a high command supposedly in the government's pocket refused to break military conspiracy, even one which promised to cost them their jobs.[37] The Caetano dictatorship could not maintain itself in power partly because the means of coercion at its command were so weak.

Antonio de Figueiredo notes that by 1945, the army had become a 'disciplined political institution',[38] a statement whose force is somewhat diminished by the long list of military revolts which eventually culminated in April 1974. General Humberto Delgado, opposition candidate for president in 1958, claimed that the government was underpinned by an army which paradoxically detested it.[39] Salazar's policies virtually guaranteed that effective opposition could come only from the forces. The army tolerated rather than supported the government, whose muscle came from the PIDE and the Portuguese Legion. The success record of regimental revolts organized by young officers, on the decline since 28 May 1926, hit its nadir after an April 1947 attempt by a major and ten subalterns to raise the sixth cavalry regiment fizzled in Porto. The leader, Major Fernando Queiroga, complained that officer corps solidarity had been broken by Salazarist attempts to create an 'official army', and decried an incident in which an army commander allowed the PIDE to arrest and torture a group of NCOs.[40] The political opposition, hamstrung by the petty disputes and personality conflicts of the old republican élite, was even less effective. After a united opposition front cracked in 1949, the régime settled back into its Indian summer. The high command remained the only group which had yet to stick in its protest oar.