



**FERNANDO ROSAS, HISTÓRIA À HISTÓRIA – ÁFRICA
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BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Since the end of Salazar’s regime Portuguese historiography has travelled a long way. Ideological indoctrination of the regime (lasted for more than 40 years, 1926–1974) left its traces and it was necessary to “revisit” a big number of themes until then left out, overlooked, misinterpreted, ideologized, politicized or interpreted in a reductionist way. Moreover, it was necessary to consider what had taken place in ancient Portuguese colonies and to initiate professional historiographic debate with African historians. The same took place also with Brazil where the military dictatorship ended in 1985, or in East Timor, country that succeeded to get rid of Indonesian domination and reached independence only in 2002. What belongs to these new themes is not only local resistance against Salazarism or influence of fascism on Salazarism or Portuguese extreme right in itself but also collaboration of Portuguese left with subversive Brazilian opposition at the time of military dictatorship, feminine mass movements supporting Salazarism and new interpretations of Portuguese colonialism.

These changes took place against backdrop of big politico-social changes that initiated from the beginning of 1980s: first admission to European Union in 1986, later, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and disintegration of the USSR, foundation of CPLP¹ in 1996, and later attempts of Portuguese speaking countries to internationalize or globalize Portuguese language (with the aspiration to get a seat of a permanent member of Security Council for Brazil). All these changes influenced both Portuguese historiography and social sciences both of which became much more internationalized or globalized and today collaborate with both Brazilian and African researchers. As Luís Eduardo Agualusa, internationally renowned Angolan writer, observed: “I think we are living a very good moment. For the first time in history there is a lusophone peace (...) Today, there is a group of Portuguese-speaking and internationally renowned writers which seems to be something there was not before in such a significant way and with so success” (NUNES 2010, pp. 14–15).² This “*pax lusófona*” has its influence not only in literature but also in other areas. As far as historiography is concerned names João Medina, António Costa Pinto, Fernando Catroga, Luís Reis Torgal, Maria Manuela Tavares Ribeiro, Manuel Loff and others are well known also outside Portugal. It is also Fernando Rosas (*1946) who belongs among these prominent Portuguese historians. Rosas acts in Lisbon as a professor at history department of the Social sciences and humanities faculty, *Universidade Nova* in Lisbon, and ex-president of *Instituto de História Contemporânea* at the same faculty. In his works — some of them published in England, Germany, France, USA or Brazil — Rosas usually writes about contemporary history of Portugal (among the most well-known belong *Salazar e o Poder* — *A arte de*

1 CPLP — *Comunidade dos países de Língua Portuguesa/Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries*

2 “*acho que estamos a viver um bom momento. Pela primeira vez na história, existe uma paz lusófona (...) Existe hoje um grupo de escritores em Língua Portuguesa com presença internacional, o que me parece que tenha havido antes, de uma maneira tão forte e com tanta projeção*”.

saber durar, 2012 or *História e Memória, or Estado Novo nos anos Trinta — Elementos para o Estudo da Natureza Económica e Social do Salazarismo, 1928–1938*).

África à África is the most recent book written by Rosas. It is a study of Portuguese colonialism in Africa (it covers all five African countries of Portuguese language which are now members of PALOP and CPLP)³ but it is more or less written reproduction of popularizing TV series, which was broadcasted in Portuguese-speaking countries on TV channels RTP2 a RTP África and which resulted from cooperation of Portuguese and African researchers. Such a project introduces a new perspective concerning sensitive issues of Luso-African history.

In his book *África à África* Rosas popularized Portuguese colonialism on the basis of three basic myths which should not be understood only in a narrow sense as Portuguese myths or myths of *Estado Novo* regime, but as myths that were always part of European perspective to Africa and African territories and tribal societies. The first myth is a myth of a long Portuguese *pax imperial* interrupted only in 1961 with the beginning of colonial wars in all Portuguese Africa. In fact, history of Portuguese Africa was, at least from the very beginning of the 19th century, full of pacification campaigns (“*campanhas de pacificação*”/pacification campaigns) lasting at least till the Great War. The second myth can be labelled as at least partly Portuguese myth: it is a myth of cosmopolitan character of colonialism, of a role of providence and predestination of European nations to “civilize” black or savage man; a myth resulting from social Darwinism and assumption of superiority of the white man and a supposition of “natural order of things”. In 1950s this myth was substituted by the theory of lusotropicalism (about innate gift of Portuguese of cross-breeding and colonization of tropics in a very peaceful and Christian way), that was supposed to — facing international pressure Lisbon felt from international public — legitimize continuity of Portuguese colonialism. And finally, there is a last myth about “*brandos costumes*” (gentle habits) of Portuguese colonialists. It is a myth about moderate violence that was during 1950s and 1960s naturally associated with luso-tropicalist narrative which was proved false during Portuguese decolonization process.

Rosas’ book is divided into thirteen chapters that cover period from the end of 19th century till the end of 1970s in almost all the Portuguese-speaking world (author does not cover Brazil and Asian Portuguese speaking territories). In the first chapter reader is introduced to Portuguese colonialism at the end of 19th century and to the international standing of Portugal within European competing powers in Africa (including failure of Portuguese project called Pink Map/“*Mapa Cor-de-Rosa*” in 1890). In the second chapter Rosas pays attention to redefinition of colonial politics by Salazar and his dictatorial regime (*Ato Colonial*, new definition of “empire” and role of forced work in building of colonies). The third charter concentrates on the role of Student’s House of Empire (“*Casa de Estudantes do Império*” — CEI), i.e. institution established for students coming to Portuguese metropolis studying there in times of *Estado Novo* within the resistance movement against Salazarism. It was founded in 1944 under the auspices of Portuguese student organization led by Marcello Caetano, Mocidade Portuguesa (MP) and under the supervision of the ministry of colonies. Main aim of

3 PALOP — *Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*/African Countries of Portuguese Language.



CEI was to control and educate/indoctrinate university students coming from colonies. Unfortunately for Portuguese regime, this institution got increasingly a centre of proto-nationalist and anti-colonial movements not only at universities but also in metropolis itself. It means that already at the very beginning regime was unable to reproduce idea of “imperial unity” even among colonial elites. The fourth chapter maps a system of colonial prisons in Portuguese Africa (Tarrafal in Cape Verds, S. Nicolau in Angola, Machava in Mozambique) and organizations of secret police PIDE.⁴ Historiographic production about activities of PIDE in overseas territories before and after the end of decolonization almost did not exist. Rosas reminds us the only exception, courageous historian Dalila Mateus. Her name is associated today with exhibitions of documents within *Fundação Mário Soares* and *Museu Aljube — Resistência e Liberdade*. But even today it seems that PIDE and further investigation into it continues being taboo. Rosas suggests possible explication of such a phenomenon — 43 years after the end of colonial wars crimes of PIDE/DGS are still taboo. According to him this kind of crimes is still considered a part of the conflict because political police was in close contact with Portuguese armed forces fighting against local guerrillas. Fifth chapter is dedicated to the role of Norton de Matos (*Norton de Matos em Angola*, pp. 73–86) as a governor and later high commissioner in Angola, but also to other aspects of Angola-colony during 20th century. Norton de Matos was named a general governor of Angola in 1912. After that he became high commissioner between 1921 and 1924. He himself and Portuguese republican regime were aware of backwardness of Portuguese colonialism. That is why Norton de Matos attempted to modernize Angola. In 1912–1915 Norton de Matos constructed 15.000 kilometres of roads and later, as a high commissioner, more than 8.000 km. He significantly contributed to broadening of railway network as well. Later, in 1940s, his progressive work was remembered by minister of colonies, Armindo Monteiro.

Sixth chapter, *Diamang* (pp. 87–96), takes a deeper look at the biggest Portuguese company in Africa. At that time, it was one of the five biggest producers of diamonds in the world. In the mid-1950s this company occupied region called Luandas (Angolan northeast), i.e. 30.000 square kilometres (one third of continental Portugal), employed 332 European employees, 417 women and children and, moreover, 17.000 African workers. In fact, *Diamang* was a state within a state. *Diamang* controlled a territory of 52.000 square kilometres from Luanda Norte to Luanda Sul. It did not only extract diamonds but had its own police, customs, transport, founded small towns, dams, schools or health care centres.

Seventh chapter introduces us to the beginning of Portuguese decolonization of Angola (*Angola 1961: O princípio do fim*, pp. 97–109). Here, Rosas describes the very beginning of a great anti-colonial storm in Angola. Situation got difficult especially when neighbouring Belgian Kongo got independence. Rosas emphasizes unreadiness and weak reaction of Lisbon government facing numerous signals and warnings coming from political police and even from international intelligence services and allied governments. For Portugal Angola was a jewel of its colonial system: land of

4 PIDE: *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*. Portuguese political police between 1945 and 1969 responsible for all forms of repressive actions against opposition. It was present in both continental Portugal and overseas.



enormous extension (300.000 square kilometres Angola is fourteen times larger than Portugal), relatively near metropolis and with numerous agricultural (coffee, cotton, cattle breeding) and mineral (petrol, diamonds, iron ore) or water resources and with relatively numerous community of whites (in 1960 there were 172.000 Europeans). This land carried mythic image of future prosperity. Rosas emphasizes three aspects/phases of the conflict: 1) rebellion in *Baixa do Cassange* (Angolan lowlands bordering with Congo controlled by *Cotonang* company, Euro-Belgian Angolan cotton company), 2) February 4, 1961, 3) March 15, 1961 (rebellions in the North).

Referring to French scholar René Pélissier⁵, Rosas reminds us that before the war Portuguese armed forces (including police, militia, and administration) counted 15.000–20.000 whites, mestizo, and black men. This small contingent clearly mirrored weakness of Portuguese colonial power facing new situation in Africa, but also a way how Salazar dealt with Portuguese armed forces. Eighth chapter entitled *Colonato do Limpopo* (pp. 111–125) is dedicated to Mozambique and to life of its people after the Second World War. This chapter — as well as the others — presents several photos of industrial constructions and white colonists in Mozambique of that time and surveys strategies of white colonization of Salazar's regime and its coexistence with much larger African population. In the introduction Rosas informs about consequences of the change of status of colonial territories after the Second World War (in constitutional revision from 1951 expressions “colony” and “Empire” were substituted by “*províncias ultramarinas*” [overseas provinces] and “*Ultramar*” [Overseas]). Like that Portugal became one and indivisible whole from Minho till Timor, indivisible nation, colonies ceased to exist. Portugal did not have any necessity to justify anything to United Nations. Whereas in 1930s and 1940s Portuguese colonialism was shielded by social Darwinism and a theory of racial supremacy of a white man, now shielded by lusotropicalism about extraordinary talent of Portuguese to form mestizo societies in the tropics.

Ninth chapter deals with *Cahora Bassa* (the name of the chapter is the same, pp. 124–140), which is a passage of the river Zambezi where the river is clenched between rocks and mountains. This passage is called *Garganta de Cahora Bassa*. River of Zambezi is one of the longest rivers in Africa: its length is 2.700 kilometres and has an extraordinary importance for hydraulic structures. Portuguese were aware of its importance for the irrigation of Mozambique. After 1960 Portuguese initiated preparation works and in 1969 company ZAMCO started construction of a dam which, when finished, had 171 metres of height with the width between 5 and 21,5 metres. The building itself used up half millions of square metres of concrete from cement plant in Dondo, place 700 kilometres distant from the construction site. During its construction ZAMCO employed approximately 1.200 employees. It is there where today energy for Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe is produced. But all this belongs to so-called “*viragem para África*” (turning to Africa) after the WW II, Portugal that initiated modernization of Portuguese Africa. That is the reason of the construction of giant dam *Cahora Bassa* in Mozambique and white colonization of that part of Mozambique already in 1956. Referring to contemporary Mozambican historians Rosas

5 R. PÉLISSIER, *Revolta armada de 1961*, in: D. WHEELER– R. PÉLISSIER, *História de Angola*, Lisbon 2009, pp. 149–150.



pays attention the role of Cahora Bassa during the FRELIMO's fight for independence. Tenth chapter (*O 7 de Setembro de 1974/September 7, 1974*, pp.141–155) deals with decolonization process in Mozambique. The title refers to the date of a rebellion of white Mosambicans against the way the process of dismantling the colonial regime took place. Already in the end of April 1974 first political groups were taking shape: conservative groups of white colonists who did not support independence (“*Mocambique Português*”, FICO: *Frente Independente de Convergência Ocidental*), supporters of white independence (GUMO: *Grupo Unido de Moçambique*) or supporters of federalist solution (in terms of initial strategy of Portuguese general Spínola) and all those who did not want to transfer the power to FRELIMO⁶ without elections or referendum. After April 1974 all these groups was slowly coming out on the streets and organized demonstrations. This chapter describes and explains course of events after the fall of regime *Estado Novo* in Lisbon and resistance of some groups against independence. Culmination of such a resistance took place on September 7, 1974: all these groups refused agreements negotiated between representants of FRELIMO and Lisbon government in Dar-es-Salaam and later in Lusaka. Already in August there was a first exodus wave of white Mozambicans. All the negotiations of Lisbon government with FRELIMO led to agreement about independence without electoral consultations or referendum. In September 1974 resistance groups started occupying airport in Lourenço Marques. *Rádio Clube* became the centre of the resistance. It was from here the opposition declared its demands 1) free elections, 2) provisional government, 3) condemnations of Lusaka agreements, 4) they expect help from Lisbon and Johannesburg. Resistance spread to smaller towns and periphery as well: Beira, Vila Perry, and others. Spínola — at that time provisional president of Portugal — did know about the preparations of such a rebellion in advance, he even negotiated with its leaders in Portuguese spa Buçaco, but in the end did not support it. As Douglas Wheeler has already noted, “Spínola is a special phenomenon, and his record and ideas are worthy of special study. Now 64 years old, Spínola is a robust, energetic General who gained an early reputation in Portugal and the Azores as an efficient bright young officer with original ideas; an internationally known horseman and cavalry officer, he was commandant of the Azores at the end of World War II and, briefly, Minister of War in a 1945 Salazar cabinet. He had all the credentials of a New State loyalist and veteran alumnus.”⁷ But in this case Spínola seemed to have free hands. He signed the agreements according to which rebels could enjoy freedom if they demobilize within 47 hours. Neither South Africa helped them and that is why all the movement demobilized. September 21, 1974 provisional government was established but it could not silence violence in Lourenço Marques and other places. On July 25, 1975 independence of Mosambique was declared. Eleventh chapter is entitled “*A Guerra da Trindade ou o Massacre de Batepá*” (Trinity War and Batepá Massacre, pp. 157–170) and maps decolonization process on islands São Tomé e Príncipe which had its slow beginning already in 1950s closely associated with *Estatuto dos Indígenas* (Natives Stat-

6 FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Mocambique/Mozambique Liberation Front*) is a political party of Mosambique found in 1962.

7 S. L. JONES — A. COSTA PINTO, *The Last Empire. The Thirty Years of Portuguese Decolonization*, Bristol 2003.

ute) republished in 1954. Twelfth chapter entitled *Do Mar Verde a Medida de Boé* (pp. 171–183) deals with the struggle for independence in Guinea Bissau. For independence movements (PAIGC: *Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*/the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) Guinea Bissau enjoyed many favourable factors: — small territory surrounded by independent states (Guinea Conakry and Senegal), — it was the weakest link of all the colonial system at that time, — there was not agreeable climate for “anti-subversive” actions, — metropolis did not have any significant interests there, — there was a very weak road network. All these factors stimulated local guerrilla and armed resistance emerged there already in August 1959 (port of Pidikiguiti). Thirteenth chapter (*Os retornados*/The returned ones, pp. 185–199) focuses on an increasingly discussed theme in Portuguese society: return of the white African population to continental Portugal after April 1974. In the period between 1974–1976 white colonists (between 500 and 700 thousand, some of them mestizos or blacks) were returning or escaping to Portugal from ex-colonies. In 1975 the country received half millions of people: 61% from Angola and 34% from Mozambique. It was the most massive migration registered in the history of Portugal and one of the biggest in European history after the WW II (the most massive event of this kind in European post-war history was a migration of Algerian French, *pieds-noirs*, from Algeria to France in 1962). Rosas enumerated four reasons why that transfer of power was so fast: 1) fast defeat of the metropolis, 2) international pressure was forcing Lisbon government to transfer the power to armed independence movements without any participation of the colonists, 3) third factor constitutes outbreak of civil war in Angola (March 1975: war between MPLA and FNLA) and racial incidents in Mozambique where the white population rebelled against Lusaka agreements (September 1974) which initiated a white exodus already in 1974, 4) economic paralysis, atmosphere of danger and fear. It was increasingly clear that the return to “normalcy” would not be possible. White Angolans were leaving Angola for Portugal or South Africa and some to Brazil. In spite of that there were still groups of white population attempting to change a situation: FRA (*Frente de Resistência Angolana*) with collaboration with ex-members of PIDE. Between June and November 1975, institute IARN (*Instituto de Apoio ao Retorno de Nacionais*) registered 275.599 repatriated from Angola and more than 300.000 of them from all the colonies. Facing insecurity and panic of major part white colonists in Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese state started organizing (June 1975) main evacuation operation taking place in Portugal — it was accompanied by significant international aid. It was an air bridge that was going to exist from June to November 1975. In this period Portuguese government organized 905.000 flights from Luanda and Lourenço Marques to Lisbon (451 of them were realized by Portuguese airlines, TAP; 17 of them by TAM, *Transportes Aéreos de Mocambique*; the rest was realized with the help of Swiss, American, Soviet, British, East and West German, French and Belgian airplanes). During those five months 173.982 repatriated white Angolans arrived to Lisbon through air bridge. In April 1976 there was still “*mini-ponte aérea*” (mini air bridge) which was supposed to evacuate people from Windhoek (Namibia capital) to Lisbon (11.000 colonists coming from Angola). During 1976 there was still TAP air bridge bringing colonists to Portugal and, moreover, “*ponte marítima*” (a sea bridge) that was



supposed to transport cars and luggage from the ports of Moçâmedes, Lobito and Luanda to Lisbon and other destinations.

Rosa's work is a significant contribution to contemporary studies of Portuguese decolonization process and complements not only English-written works about Portuguese late colonialism but also others work about English and French or Belgian colonization and decolonization.

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