

## Goa in Retrospect: Colonial Memories Published Recently in Goa and in Portugal

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**Abstract:** This essay explores some colonial and post-colonial reminiscences published in recent times in Goa and in Portugal for the purpose of analysing their perceptions of “contemporary processes.” Such reminiscences must be examined carefully; they can be aimed at distracting the reader from the reality and the true reading of the processes. They are written in hindsight and, like most memoirs, often hide an author’s own agenda. They also tend to win consumers unlikely to have had direct or indirect access to contemporary evidence, be it public or private. Keeping these concerns in mind, this analysis reveals much about the present and hopes to provide insights into ongoing trends. As a historian-analyst I wish to draw particular attention to the need for cross-checking such texts for the distortions they can transmit. There is much that needs to be done in this regard, particularly by way of scrutinizing the native collaborators (not just sympathizers) of the colonial regime. Also, transitions and continuities need to be respected in order to evaluate correctly the processes at work at any one time. They cannot be insulated in their contemporariness or isolated from their past and consequences.

This is an attempt to understand Goa by exploring some colonial and post-colonial reminiscences that have been published in recent times in Goa and in Portugal. Most published reminiscences are written in hindsight and often hide an author’s own agenda. They also tend to win consumers who are

unlikely to have direct or indirect access to contemporary evidence, be it public or private. Keeping these concerns in mind, this analysis reveals much about the present and hopes to provide insights into ongoing trends.

Hindsight implies the risk of failing to capture contemporary processes well, though such reminiscences can have the advantage of capturing the same processes in their long-term implications. However, there remains the responsibility of historians to cross-check such hindsight for the distortions they can transmit. There is much that needs to be done in this regard, particularly in tracing the native collaborators of the PIDE (Portuguese secret police) and other tools of the colonial regime.

Transitions and continuities need to be taken into account in order to evaluate correctly the processes at work at any one time. They cannot be insulated in their contemporariness or isolated from their past and their consequences. It is from this perspective that I wish to analyse here the “contemporary processes” present in the recently published reminiscences of some of the actors involved in order to uncover the reality and the true reading of such processes.

In this analysis I shall exclude for now the important economic component that shaped the course of events and politics in colonial Goa. Without it one needs to keep in abeyance any definite conclusions as regards the interest or lack of interest or inabilities of the colonial power to ensure the economic “development” of the Goan society. It is in this context that the society’s transition must be viewed subsequent to 1961 in order to permit us to understand the processes in their continuity.

Empire, slavery, colonialism and racism are concepts with negative charges in post-colonial times. It is not surprising if some Western researchers and historians are also affected by these sensitivities in their societies and seek to avoid the use of these concepts or tend to give them new and diluted meanings. Thus, for example, L. F. Thomaz, a very respectable figure in the Portuguese historiography of expansion, defines the “Estado português da Índia” as a “rede,” or *network*, of political, social and economic relationships, and not as an “ordinary empire” [“*um império vulgar*”], which he associates with jurisdiction over and control of significant geographic space. It is not difficult to gauge what bothers him in this exercise of defining empires. This is clear from the scholastic jargon he uses to justify the alleged “abuses” of the Portuguese empire: “*se era opressivo, o era por acidente e não por essência*” (207-43) [“If it was oppressive, it was only by accident, not by essence”].

Perhaps the “império-rede” of the Portuguese was more logical and more in keeping with the Portuguese fishing tradition, or with their fondness for football, or even with their more modern enthusiasm for the Internet. But nothing convinces us that their limited economic and human resources could permit Portugal to have any other type of empire, enabling a more extensive and intensive control of spaces and populations.<sup>1</sup> As defined by C. R. Boxer, the Portuguese empire was a thalassocracy, a “shoe-string empire,” a maritime empire cast in military and ecclesiastic mould.<sup>2</sup> Such an empire need not be necessarily less violent. On the contrary, by being less tied to territorial and populational spaces and concentrations, it enjoyed greater mobility for its hit-and-run operations. This was the essence of its naval strategy, and there is enough recorded evidence of such forms of violence. The enemies or defendants had then no fixed target for retaliation. It is not difficult to understand the Portuguese excesses as a strategy of intimidation and dissuasion. They were few in numbers and had to act from long distances from their home or colonial bases. We have the modern parallel of Israel in the midst of the Arab world. Even if we decide to agree with the mild and benevolent definitions of the Portuguese empire, we cannot ignore the public perceptions of its logic and the marks it left as revealed in the published reminiscences or as conveyed by other contemporary observers.

I have chosen to analyse the published memoirs of seven Goans and six Portuguese contemporaries or near-contemporaries of the events. Among the Goans, five are Catholics and two Hindus. Four of them participated actively in resistance to the colonial regime in Goa. The fifth, the late Pascoal Meneses, represents the Goan business class that benefitted from the Indian economic blockade in 1954. The sixth, Maria Aurora Couto, shared and shares her life with a prominent ICS officer, her husband Alban Couto, who played an important role in Goa’s political transition. The seventh, Luizinho Faleiro, coming from a humble colonial background, rose to be a short-term chief-minister of Goa, and reveals his passion for a new Goa as a Centre of Excellence, very different from the colonial Goa, in which he spent his first ten years of life.

It is possible to analyse these memoirs in a way that allows us to have a glimpse of the socio-political ambience prevailing in Goa after India’s independence in 1947. They reveal conflict as well as the convergence and continuity of processes and interests.

Without a good grasp of the detailed background in which the writers of the memoirs lived and acted, their writings and comments make little sense

to the common reader. The same is applicable to the memoirs left by some Portuguese nationals who spent relatively short stretches of time in Goa during the last two decades of the colonial regime and who were attentive to local conditions. Among these I have picked up *Adeus Goa, Adeus Lisboa*, by Joaquim Ribeiro Simões; *O fim dos séculos: Goa, Damão e Diu*, by António Correia de Lima; *Goa em 1956: Relatório ao Governo*, by Orlando Ribeiro; “*Dossier*” *Goa: A recusa de sacrifício inútil*, by General Vassalo e Silva, the last Portuguese governor of Goa; *O Fim do Estado Português da Índia*, by Francisco Cabral Couto; and Carlos Azeredo’s *Trabalhos e dias de um soldado do império*.

### Portuguese India for “outdoor relief”

Joaquim Ribeiro Simões, from Seixo da Beira, in the district of Coimbra, studied at the Military College from 1934 to 1941, and participated in five expeditions (to India, Guinea and Angola), including two to Portuguese India. With an MA in History-Philosophy from the University of Lisbon (1962), he taught at the *Colégio Militar*. Soon after his arrival in Goa, he made friends with Melina, a Goan student of law in Bombay. She was spending her holidays in Goa. She told him quite frankly: “It is time for you guys to go back to your home country. Four hundred years are enough and more. Do as the English did. Leave us alone” (Simões 28). Quite interesting are the commentaries of the author about this theme and his frequent references to Goan men and women as “*escuros*” [“dark”], distinguishing them perhaps from the African “*pretos*” [“blacks”] who, at the time of his sojourn in Goa, were still serving there. In the absence of “*louras*,” or “blondes,” he only tolerated a few Goan belles with “*bustos frementes*” [“vibrant busts”] and “*sedosos saris*” [“silken saris”]. His imperial logic could fit in Boxer’s controversial analysis of Portuguese racism, which referred to the Portuguese “*outdoor relief*” and to their empire as a good place to dump their bastards. The military doctor managed to keep up a romance with two Goan females, a Catholic and a Hindu, simultaneously, in two different provinces of Goa, without letting Lakshmi know anything about his affair with Helena.

His vocabulary and style of writing fail to hide his colonial bias, despite his loud proclamations of being a democrat and an opponent of the Salazar regime in his own native country. Here are a few samples of his perceptions and complexes:

The social and religious factionalism of the Goans, both horizontally and vertically, never allow them to present a common and homogeneous political front to confront the two most feared enemies of their autonomy: Portugal and Indian Union. If the Salazar regime bears the prime historic responsibility for the events in Goa, the Goans should blame themselves in the first place for their inability to organize themselves politically and to transcend the inferiority complexes that have resulted from a narrow and backward cultural *process*, marked by mutually destructive social tendencies. (30)

He describes what he saw early one morning while passing by the ferry landing in Panjim:

Along the extended sandy bank of the river, in a military-like formation, there were dozens and dozens of backsides of Hindus shitting unhurriedly, as if they were using their WCs at home. Without hurry, it seemed a quiet ritual. With their left hands they washed their black bumps without any complex, nervousness or parsimony. (39)

[Estendidos pelo areal fora, alinhados como em formatura viam-se dezenas e dezenas de traseiros de hindus defecando despreocupadamente como se estivessem utilizando as suas próprias retretes. Sem pressas, em tranquilo ritual. Com as mãos esquerdas iam limpando os escuros cus e lavavam-nos sem qualquer complexo, atrapalhação ou parcimónia.]

He describes also some *curumbins* whom he saw on their way to Margão:

I passed by some dark individuals who were almost naked, covering only their private parts with *langoti*, a piece of cloth. The women were also dark and marched behind their menfolk. They bore on their arms a whole lot of bangles and carried nose-rings. (46)

[Cruzamo-nos com indivíduos escuros todos nus com exceção do langotim, pedaço de trapo embrulhado a púbis e as vergonhas; mulheres também escuras, com incontáveis manilhas nos pulso e brincos no nariz marcham atrás dos varões.]

He further recounts an impressive scene he witnessed at the municipal square in Margão:

There was a huge crowd made up chiefly of Hindu men and women, and with a small mixture of Christians and Muslims. The cortege was proceeding towards the Colva beach where some of Gandhi's ashes were going to be scattered [...]. The police were helpless and did not know how to act. (48)

[Era uma imensa multidão formada maioritariamente por homens e mulheres hindus, mas com cristãos e maometanos de mistura. O cortejo dirigia-se a praia de Colvá onde seriam lançadas ao mar algumas cinzas do Gandhi (...). A polícia não podia nem sabia o que fazer.]

When the lieutenant-doctor was in Goa on a repeat visit, the Satyagraha campaign was on and so also the Indian economic blockade.

He travelled in the same ship as Professor Pissurlencar, the founder-director of the Goa Historical Archives in the Portuguese post-republican dispensation. He mentions Pissurlencar once again and very respectfully after reaching Goa. They visited the pyramids of Egypt together. The author refers more than once to the option that ought to have been given to the Goans, namely, to vote in a referendum conducted under UN auspices to determine the political future they wished. But he also seems convinced that Salazar would never permit it (Simões 136-40). Very relevant is a paragraph in which he describes his visit to a border outpost at Siquerval, accompanied by Captain Santos Borges, a few days after a satyagrahi incursion. It was the same official who had captured the satyagrahi Jaime Fernandes around that time. The lieutenant-doctor writes:

The defenders, almost all of them Goans, behaved bravely, standing their ground. Fully isolated, surrounded by some dozens of armed Goans, who were firing from their rifles and machine-guns, these elements of the Fiscal Guards behaved cold-bloodedly and high-handedly. The author admits that in Lisbon hardly anyone knew about this ongoing and dirty war, and feels certain that any knowledge of it was likely to be erased from the history textbooks. (172)

[Os defensores, quase todos goeses, portaram-se com valentia, mantendo-se nos seus lugares. Absolutamente isolados, cercados por dezenas de homens também goeses, que disparavam as suas espingardas e metralhadoras, estes elementos da Guarda Fiscal comportaram-se a sangue-frio e galhardia. Em Lisboa, quase se desconhece a guerra surda mas persistente que aqui se vai

travando. Guerra envergonhada, suja, que possivelmente será apagada dos compêndios de história.]

He observes that something else would also remain unknown in Portugal:

Frequent cases of desertion, which are worrying the military authorities. There have been at least ten cases, including a quartermaster (*furriel*) who fled from the front, seeking asylum in neighbouring India. This phenomenon could be explained only by a global sociological analysis that would take into account the deeper motives. Almost all the young deserters were well-behaved military personnel and professionally very competent. Only two had committed faults that could be punishable in accordance with army code. One of them was ensnared by the charms of a Goan belle of a Bombay-based family. As to the said quartermaster, an expert in mines and explosives, he was tired of the military discipline and of serving the orders of Salazar regime. (193)

#### Witnessing the End of Portuguese Rule in Goa

António Correia de Lima was another doctor who lived in Goa during the end-phase of the colonial regime in Goa. During his second assignment he served in a prisoner-of-war camp following the occupation by the Indian military. But, during his first service assignment in India, he witnessed from the Mandovi Hotel the armed assault on the Betim police-outpost across the river by the freedom-fighters belonging to *Azad Gomantak Dal*. He was called to provide surgical assistance to two of the five police-personnel that had survived the assault (Lima 176-79). We know from oral sources that this assault left a bullet in the thigh of Roque Santana Fernandes, a freedom-fighter, who escaped and survived the freedom-struggle. António Correia de Lima refers to two dissenting political parties in Goa:

Those who wished to win for Goa a greater autonomy, but still under Portuguese rule. Some others wanted a pure and simple integration in the Indian Union. But the great majority of Goan people were indifferent or wanted nothing. (236, 267)

[Os que queriam Goa portuguesa, mas com maior autonomia, com a criação daquilo que se poderia chamar o Estado Português Independente da Índia. E os que queriam pura e simplesmente, a sua integração na União Indiana. Isto a um certo nível, porque a maioria do povo goês era indiferente, não queriam nada.]

Further on he cites a conversation among some Portuguese officials who had established contact with the anti-situationists, who demanded greater autonomy to see if that would permit the Goans to handle the administration and finances of the territory, though still under a Portuguese-nominated governor-general. But the author himself notes that these conversations were washed with whisky, and forgets that he too had a glass in his hand (268-69)! Gilberto Freyre, during his visit to Goa in November 1951, in a talk at the Instituto Vasco da Gama, lamented the lack of political will in Portugal to recognize the capacity of the Goans to govern their own state. Freyre saw no need for sending governors from Portugal and even affirmed that it was “just that a Portuguese province with so many cultured and intelligent persons should deem itself a quasi-nation, and no longer a sub-nation” (289) [“É justo que uma Província portuguesa de grande número de pessoas cultas e inteligentes como é a Índia, se julgue com o direito de ser uma quase-nação e não mais uma sub-nação”].<sup>3</sup> Orlando Ribeiro, a well-known Portuguese geographer and an enthusiastic defender of Freyre’s “luso-tropicalism,” led a research mission to Goa from October 1955 until February 1956. He penned a report to Salazar in 1956; yet it was published only at the end of the millennium! He visited and studied most of the Portuguese overseas provinces and has the following comment about Goa: “Goa appeared to me as the least Portuguese of all that I saw till then, less Portuguese than Guinea, pacified in 1912!” (64). He regrets the lack of interest in Portugal for the languages and culture of India, and the absence of this in the study programmes of the universities, resulting in the incapacity to deepen the historical and cultural links with India, which constitute the foundation of Portugal’s greatness overseas.

Getting back to António Correia de Lima, the author of *O fim dos séculos*, he tells us that he had a close relationship with and had easy access to the last Portuguese Governor of Goa, Manuel A. Vassalo e Silva. He states that he saw the telegram sent by Salazar to the governor, ruling out any surrender to the Indian demands, or leaving behind any Portuguese prisoners. Salazar only saw the possibility of his soldiers and sailors as victorious or as dead heroes. The dictator wished that the struggle would last for at least another week, time he thought would be sufficient for his administration to mobilize international support. Salazar also seems to have stated that God would not permit that the recipient of his instructions should be the last governor of Portuguese India (297-98).<sup>4</sup> Referring to a conversation he had with the governor, he cites him as stating that during the last three years of his governance it had been possible



to earn with ore exports more foreign exchange in India than Portugal did at home. None of this was heard in Salazar's speeches. For him Goa meant no economic benefits. He proclaimed that the Portuguese interest in Goa was exclusively of a moral nature (Silva 38). In his "*Dossier*" *Goa*, the Governor General reports how he tried his best to focus his administration upon the economic development of Goa and to promote Portuguese culture at the popular level after decades and centuries of disinterest. He reacts strongly to the literary and patriotic speeches that were being heard in the Portuguese media during the last days of the regime: "The reality is very different from the glorious past. It is the decadent present of obscurantist colonialism from which the lands and people desire to free themselves" (92). I had the privilege of welcoming General Vassalo e Silva at the Xavier Centre of Historical Research when he returned to Goa in 1980 as a guest of the government of India.

Next we have Francisco Cabral Couto's *O Fim do Estado Português da Índia*. This hardcover coffee-table publication is perhaps the latest addition to the surprisingly rich and often controversial historiography about the end of Portuguese colonial rule in India. The author, now a retired general, was a young 26-year-old, fresh from the military academy when he arrived in Goa on 27 March 1961 and was posted at the Afonso de Albuquerque military camp in the village of Navelim, with command over 47 *caçadores* ["hunters"] and with responsibility for the defence of the Borim Bridge, the Paroda Canal, the Sal River and Anjdiv Island. Within months, reinforcements raised the total to 158, including many greenhorns. They were mostly involved in reconnaissance missions to ward off terrorist attacks. He describes the lack of basic conditions for any sort of defence in terms of strategic or military means at his disposal. The camp headquarters at Navelim had a generator that did not work, and depended upon the use of kerosene lamps and stoves. With the exception of the delicious mangoes and abundant supply of bananas, he classifies the food resources in Goa as being of poor quality. There were canned supplies of quality food and drinks from the UK and Holland, but few could afford them. The author admits that he did not stay in Goa long enough to take the pulse of the civil society, but remained with the impression that most Goans favoured autonomy or integration with India. He felt that the Portuguese presence was tolerated and even respected, but not much loved: "Quanto aos portugueses, é importante dizê-lo, pareceu-me que eram, dum modo geral, respeitados, bem tolerados, mas não amados, a não ser por aqueles que com eles tinham fortes laços familiares" (20-21). While the acts of terrorism in

Goa were multiplying, the Portuguese authorities were curiously encouraging the families of the men posted in Goa to join them, giving a false impression that all was well in Portuguese India. The author had his first son born on the eve of his departure to India. His wife and five-month-old son arrived by the first flight of TAIP in July. While reporting about the relics of the Portuguese naval force in Goa, the author refers to a curious incident in September 1963 when Salazar ordered the ground batteries at the fort of Almada in Portugal to fire upon the cruiser *Afonso de Albuquerque* for having joined the republican forces in the Spanish civil war! Hence, ironically, the Indians were not the first to fire upon this veteran war vessel. The author does not fail to report that the commander of the warship was gravely hurt in the Vijay Operation, but his life was saved by the Indian military medics who treated him onshore in the Naval Club at Caranzalem. The author reveals that in an emergency defence planning meeting in September 1961 he had opposed the "Plano Sentinela," which was approved by the home government for resistance to Indian attack, suggesting that the defence should concentrate in the capital island, and not in Mormugão. He confesses that he was asked to drop his objections and withdraw his suggestions. He mentions a "Plano de Barragens," which finds no mention in earlier publications known to me. It complemented the "Plano Sentinela." It was meant to demolish the vital bridge links to delay the advance of the enemy forces. The same plan also envisaged the mining of the main roadways and beach approaches. But a lack of mines did not make it viable. We have a fairly detailed description of the events at Anjdiv on 23-24 November, when the Portuguese forces stationed there fired upon the passenger vessel *Sabarmati* passing between the island and Kochi harbour, causing some deaths. The Portuguese forces were convinced that Indians were planning to disembark on the island. The Indian press was agog with the news on 25 November and provoked a rapid escalation of diplomatic and military tensions. The Portuguese official sent from Goa to investigate the case reported that the soldier manning the gun had fired upon the ship, alleging that it was within Portuguese territorial waters on 17 November and had kept his action unreported. On 9 December the vessel *India* arrived from Timor on its way to Lisbon. With capacity for 380 passengers, it left on 12 December carrying 700, despite a telegram received from Lisbon ordering the Governor General to not permit any families to embark on the ship. The Governor General ignored the order and allowed all who wanted to leave to embark. The passengers were fitted even into the bathrooms at night. It arrived in Lisbon on the last day of the year.

The most valuable and original contribution of this book consists of the very personal experiences of the author after his detention by the invading forces. Such details as we read on pages 103-116 constitute the value that this kind of personal memoir can bring to historiography, despite and precisely because of the questionable nature of its subjective version. Every personal version counts and is important for the re-construction of an “objective” history. Francisco Cabral Couto describes the humiliation he experienced when the Indian troops forced the Portuguese to break up their weapons and arrange them in mounds. He got a gun-handle knock on his knuckles when he tried to act dumb. Greater humiliation awaited him when his group was taken to the Navelim camp, where he had been in command. He and his colleagues had to sleep on a cement floor, dig trenches to serve as open-air latrines, and had to make do with a jar of water that was supplied by tanks from the Margão municipality. He confesses that this shortage was caused by the Portuguese themselves by destroying the bridges and other supply routes. He remembers how Christmas was celebrated with some dry biscuits, which meant much in the given situation. Most interesting is the fact that, among the guards, soldiers of the Indian army, he recognized three who had served in Goa, one as a train TC, another as a servant in the Longuinhas bar and a third whom he would often find sitting under a banyan tree as a beggar. In the end, they seem to have been serving the Indian spy system, and nobody had sensed it. The Navelim internees were shifted to the Ponda camp in mid-January 1962, where the Alfa Detenues Camp was much better organised. The author admits that he and his Portuguese colleagues admired the discipline of the Indian army, which was equally just in punishing its own members who failed to comply with rules. He describes how he left Goa by air for Karachi on 8 May and embarked on the 9<sup>th</sup> for Lisbon aboard the *Vera Cruz*. Upon arrival in Lisbon eleven days later, they were taken away early in the dark of night under police escort and without access to the families that awaited them. In the following months all were subject to unending questionings until, on 22 March 1963, when a list was published of those who were subject to punishment of some kind, many were dismissed from service without the right for self-justification. The book ends by admitting that Salazar failed to calculate international support well, but also that the Indian invasion proved the Portuguese capacity to resist subversion. This conclusion appears to be a non sequitur after the author admits that Nehru had shown great patience for nearly two decades

and implying that no one can be tested indefinitely, as was the Portuguese diplomatic intransigence.

Finally, there is Carlos Manuel de Azeredo Pinto Melo e Leme's *Trabalhos e dias de um soldado do império*. He disembarked in Mormugão, Goa for the first time on 17 September 1954, age 23. His ancestor, Marquis of Távora, had been the 45<sup>th</sup> viceroy of Portuguese India. He retired recently as a general and as responsible for the military affairs of President Mário Soares. Some of his relatives still live in Goa, namely the Lobés and Távoras. Carlos Azeredo was posted at Tiracol, where the satyagrahis had tried to place an Indian flag. From there he was transferred to Mapusa. The military headquarters there are presently occupied by St. Mary's High School. There were still African soldiers from Mozambique serving in Goa. After 18 months of service, Carlos Azeredo returned to Portugal. Following the decision of The Hague Court and the visit of inspection by the Lieutenant Colonel Costa Gomes, the military presence in Portuguese India was reduced drastically from 12,000 to 3,500. Salazar believed that India would not resort to force. In January 1961, Carlos Azeredo was posted again in Goa as captain of the police headquarters. He arrived with his wife and three children. He tells about his friendship and collaboration with Governor Vassalo e Silva. He describes the sorry state of Portuguese fighting equipment at the time. He says that more urgent attention was required in Angola and Timor. He refers to "Plano Sentinela," which he considers totally inadequate without the support of mobile communications. He has words of great appreciation for the guerrilla force in Goa, considering it to be more organized than the Portuguese armed forces. He had known the Portuguese forces in action in Angola and Guinea. He details the Vijay Action in Goa. His wife and children were on the way to Lisbon along with 605 passengers on the vessel *India*, meant for 105. At 2 pm on 19 December, the Governor conveyed his written message to the commander of the Indian invading forces asking for surrender. Azeredo was with the Portuguese governor when he was very cordially received by General K. N. Chaudhury, and with words of praise for the Portuguese forces. Azeredo mentions gratefully the Goans who would visit him and his fellow POWs with food and other small gifts in the camp in Ponda. He has words of praise for the Indian military in charge of the camp. He manifests equally his anger about the way the Portuguese detainees were received in Portugal and judged very unfairly by a military court. This motivated Azeredo's active participation in the revolt against the Salazar regime in April 1974. He was then appointed to preside over the committee that

handled the Indian dossier, leading to the legislation of the new democratic regime on 19 December 1974, restoring justice to all those who had been unfairly judged or condemned.<sup>5</sup>

### Internationalizing Goa's Freedom Struggle

We now pass on to the recorded reminiscences of the Goans: Dr. P. D. Gaitonde (1913-1996), trained at the Goa Medical School and later in surgery in Lisbon, was a renowned medical practitioner in Goa. During a farewell dinner in honour of Judge Semedo on 17 February 1954, one among those present referred to Goa as part of Portugal. Dr. Gaitonde reacted spontaneously to it with "I protest." This was enough for PIDE to arrest him and deport him to Portugal along with his Portuguese-born wife. This imprisonment agitated Indian public opinion, and the government of India presented a formal note of protest to the Portuguese legation in New Delhi. Dr. Gaitonde was known to Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been seeking his counsel on Goan affairs. Gaitonde's imprisonment led to disturbances and some freedom-fighters occupied Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The Satyagraha campaign that was initiated by the Socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia on 18 June 1946 was now revived. The Portuguese responded with machine-guns against unarmed satyagrahis, including women. The campaign, involving the repression of civil rights within Goa, judgements under torture by PIDE and the Military Tribunal, and the deportation of select political prisoners to Peniche in Portugal, led the government of India to impose an economic blockade. The reports of Portuguese violence by American journalists who accompanied the satyagrahis in 1955 to mark the anniversary of "Gaitonde Day" on 17 February and on other occasions and the meeting of Nehru with Pope Pius XII at the Vatican made the Portuguese authorities more cautious and attentive to international opinion. They decided to release Dr. Gaitonde, who returned to Bombay and resumed his active participation in Goa's freedom struggle at the highest level of Indian diplomacy. He even represented Goa in the Indian Parliament. Among several published texts is his *The Liberation of Goa: A Participant's View of History*. He died in the UK, where he had fixed his residence. An interview with him by Manuel Sertório, a close Brazilian follower of General Humberto Delgado, was published in the journal *História* in Lisbon, in April 1997.

Dr. Gaitonde was responsible for the organization of the Afro-Asian seminars at Casablanca and in New Delhi in 1961 to mobilize international opinion against Portuguese colonialism in India and in Africa. During his first

visit to Nehru in August of 1953, he sensed the reluctance of Nehru to listen to a Goan about the "Goa case," but Dr. Gaitonde succeeded in convincing Nehru that he had no political ambitions and that the majority of Goans was in favour of Goa's merger with India, excepting perhaps some 200 families that were benefiting from the colonial administration; their voices alone were publicised by Portuguese diplomacy and heard abroad. Dr. Gaitonde tried to convince Nehru about the negative results of the contraband of gold and other goods for the Indian economy. He described to Nehru a medical case treated by him in which the sick person had swallowed three gold chains. At the end of the interview, Nehru advised Dr. Gaitonde to have patience because India had urgent, pressing problems to resolve (Gaitonde 72). It was then that Dr. Gaitonde approached Peter Alvares (1908-1975), an influential trade-union leader of Goan origin and a leading figure in the Praja Socialist Party. He asked for his help to organise activities that could raise Goans' political consciousness (Lopes 11-12).<sup>6</sup> Dr. Gaitonde offered to cover the costs of the experienced personnel for the purpose (Gaitonde 74). In these clandestine activities Dr. Gaitonde was backed by some other Goans who were well placed in the social and professional life of Goa. Among these were the Advocate Apa Gopal Kamat (1917-1990), who was later speaker of the Goa Assembly, in 1968-1972; Pandurang Mulgaonkar, a lawyer who suffered imprisonment in 1954-1959 for his participation in satyagraha; and Dr. José Francisco Martins. They were the links between the organization of Peter Alvares and the village-based volunteers for the freedom struggle.

### **Goa's Freedom Struggle as an Extension of India's Independence**

I published James Fernandes' *In Quest of Freedom* in 1990 while I was directing the Xavier Centre of Historical Research. The author is now retired from his post as a lecturer at St. Xavier's College, in Mapusa, Goa. One can read in this book about the idealism that made many Goan youth sacrifice their future, or perhaps to express their despair from seeing no future for themselves in colonial Goa. His narrative contains details about the sufferings of the many freedom-fighters who are generally little known or recognized by the public. James Fernandes was born in Asnoda, Bicholim taluka of North Goa, in 1933. He was twenty when he joined as a satyagrahi and took up the responsibility on behalf of the National Congress of Goa for organising and gaining recruits for the clandestine, but peaceful, protests inside Goa. James Fernandes spent four-and-a-half years in the prison cells in Goa, until the Goan administration felt there was no space

for more prisoners. International pressure also did not permit more. The visits of sociologist Gilberto Freyre (Freyre 260-312) and of journalist Émile Marini<sup>7</sup> were promoted by the Portuguese regime to help create a favourable public opinion that would be more tolerant of the Portuguese policies for overseas territories. But these efforts were not sufficient to neutralize the Cold War pressure that was opposed to the continuation of European colonialism.

*In Search of Self-Fulfilment*, by Dr. José Francisco Martins, is prefaced by James Fernandes. Dr. Martins did his secondary school in Goa. He studied medicine in Goa as a worker-student, while teaching at a private English school, but continued his medical studies in Bombay before returning to his native village in Goa, where he set up a private English school and also a private medical practice. These professional occupations gave him ample opportunities and a cover to promote his interest in Goa's political freedom. Dr. Gaitonde, as already mentioned, entrusted to him a part of the responsibility for the coordination of the freedom movement. Following the imprisonment of Dr. Gaitonde, it was in the house of Dr. Martins that clandestine political activities were planned. Dr. Martins and most other leaders of the movement were jailed in 1954, anticipating the commemoration of 18 June 1946, the date that marked the start of the freedom movement in Margão under the leadership of Ram Manohar Lohia. From then until 1954, the movement had remained dormant for lack of organizational infrastructures. Dr. Martins recounts in his book many details of his prison life at the Aguada fort. Both he and Professor Fernandes do not forget to praise the sympathetic behaviour of many a police representative from Portugal (Martins 165-66), as compared with the native doctors, police personnel and others in official jobs, who tended to be more aggressive and hostile. He attributes this difference in treatment to the social prejudices of the Goan natives, and to their eagerness to please the colonial masters due to fear or to impress and gain favours. To quote Dr. Martins: "Goans, however high the post they occupied, were mentally slaves to a system which did not allow them room to think and to act freely. They were suffering from a fear complex—loss of job, and, ultimately, the bogey of imprisonment which would make them lose face in society, which was based on false values" (164).<sup>8</sup> Worth noticing is a reference he makes to a political proposal of Adv. Bruto da Costa, Dr. António Colaço and some other Goans from Margão to the leaders of the satyagraha movement. They wanted that their own political plan be given publicity among the Goan masses. They wanted autonomy, but without delinking from Portugal. That segment of

the Margão aristocracy did not wish to face the risk of imprisonment. They wished to pass on their message through those who had spent years together in the jails for their political ideal of integration in India (169-70). Dr. Martins describes the political divisions among the Goans, including also the “freedom-fighters.” The party-based democracy was a new experience for all and turned out to be a great disillusionment to the freedom-fighters. A recent experience of Dr. Martins was his own imprisonment for defending his right to his own family property against an illegal occupation. He saw it as a fresh evolution of the imperial logic. The issue of *Goa Today* for June 2001 carried a write-up entitled “Dejá vu Days?,” by Vinayak Naik, which reminded the Goans of their fears of protesting in colonial times. He referred to Dr. Francisco José Martins, 82-years old, dragged by the police from his own house without giving him time even to put on his shirt. The police were acting in connivance with two party politicians who were backing a Hindu lady, Bugde, who had accused Dr. Martins of preventing her from entering the *caju* plantation and who alleged that he had caused her material damage worth about Rs. 10,000. I am not sure how the case ended in the courts, but the representatives of the Association of Freedom Fighters started a hunger-strike in front of the monument dedicated to Tristão Bragança-Cunha, at Azad Maidan, in Panjim. The Chief Minister belonging to the ruling BJP party made public apologies for the high-handedness of the police in dealing with Dr. Martins when he addressed an official function that commemorated the 18<sup>th</sup> of June a few days later.

A clear linkage between the past and the present was suggested by Dr. José Francisco Martins himself while speaking to the pressmen after his arrest: “Not even the fascist regime of the Portuguese treated prisoners so badly [...]. Had I known that such would be the state of affairs in a democratic state, I would never have fought for freedom” (297).<sup>9</sup>

*Panthasth* is a publication of yet another Goan who fought for political freedom, Ravindra Kelekar. His struggle was more directed to cultural aspects, particularly for the recovery of Goan language. He is renowned for his contribution to Konkani literature and for its recognition as the official language of the Goan state. He narrates his own experiences when he was 21-23 years old. He took part in the political protests as a satyagrahi under the leadership of Lohia in 1946. He explains how he learned to appreciate the importance of Konkani to defend the interests of the Goan people: “A mother-tongue sustains its children without having to make efforts to learn



it.” He proclaims the role of Varde Valaulikar (Shenoy Goembab) and his inspiration for his own fight for promoting Konkani.

This publication does not contain any claim to being an autobiography. The author prefers to see it as the “reminiscences of a pilgrim,” or a *panthasth*, in the historic march of resistance to colonialism. He too reveals the personal conflicts among the Goan freedom-fighters and points out that this factionalism was greatly responsible for their inability to obtain greater support from Mahatma Gandhi. He seems convinced that with greater support from Mahatma the political liberation of Goa could have arrived long before 1961.

The author praises the role of some Goan Catholics, such as Luis de Menezes Bragança, his daughter Berta and his cousin Tristão Bragança Cunha, of Evágrio Jorge, all of whom were regarded as renegades by the majority of the Goan Catholic population, who were “prisoners” of colonial ideology. The opinion that prevailed among the freedom-fighters was that only the Hindus were patriotic and that all Christians were like Froilano de Melo (Kelekar 29)!<sup>10</sup> Kelekar describes the arrogance of the “mestiços” (*descendentes*) and of the white officials who were more interested in pleasing Salazar. He illustrates his statements with many concrete cases that he witnessed.

Incidentally, Ravindra Kelekar dedicates many pages at the end of the book (pp. 164-206) to the murder of General Humberto Delgado. The role of Casimiro Monteiro in this murder is brought to the fore because this same police agent was responsible for torturing many a freedom-fighter in Goa. The real interest of the author in these pages is to make it clear to the Goans who fought for freedom that many Portuguese in Portugal also suffered for their own freedom from the dictatorship of the Estado Novo. He concludes with advice for the Goans: “We need to restore our links of friendship with the freedom-loving Portuguese, and cease from transferring to all the Portuguese people our anger against the deeds of Salazar rule.” Ravindra Kelekar reminds Goans that the Portugal of today is not the Portugal of Salazar, and advises Goans to make an effort to get to know this new Portugal better.

### No Political Barriers for Good Business

In Ivan Arthur’s *Once more upon a time*, Pascoal J. Menezes (1910-1998), who succeeded in building a sizable business venture, starting with the pharmacy of his father, reveals his own handling of the imperial logic in Goa. The CMM Group of Companies, with an investment of 2,500 million rupees, ten production units of medical and cosmetic items, one hospital, one travel agency and

various shops for the sale of electrical items, still maintains its traditional interest in pharmacies. It remains a family enterprise, but with a high level of professional management. The old man Pascoal narrates with pride that, excepting tobacco, alcohol, cars and atom bombs, he sells everything else! Even holes! He sold holes to a company that was exporting Venezuelan pearls. Piercing pearls was the most difficult part of the business. Pascoal entered this risky business. He discovered some ladies of Rajasthan in North India who traditionally pierced pearls. With very little cost they brought immense profits to CMM.

But what gave the decisive push to Pascoal's business was his ability to pierce the economic blockade that was imposed by India. The Portuguese administration had decided to establish a direct air link between Goa and Daman, Diu and Karachi. CMM bought the monopoly for selling the package. The company opened a counter in Karachi and Pascoal was given a diplomatic passport and as many free tickets as he would need to visit his new office counter. Following the sale of radios and gramophones, Pascoal got the idea of acquiring a Phillips transmitter for the Goa radio station. This enabled the Portuguese in Goa to start their counter-propaganda drive. CMM paid for another transmitter on condition that it be allowed uncontrolled commercial publicity. During the military invasion of Goa, the radio station was targeted. The Indian armed forces took away the transmitters, but they were lost in the river Mandovi due to a transportation mishap. CMM sued the government of India and won the case. Pascoal was paid the costs of the transmitters with interest! What the book does not tell us, but what the gossip-loving Goan public seems to have picked-up, is that the air link and diplomatic passport were well exploited by Pascoal to engage in the very profitable black market for gold.

If I kept this case for the very end of this essay, it was meant to convey that the contemporary processes related to the imperial logic need not be seen always as conflict-generating. The CMM case proves how the same processes could represent a convergence of interests and a fair continuity under the new political dispensation. Pascoal Menezes tells us also that, in 1991, when the officials of the Portuguese *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* appeared in Goa to effect the return of gold reserves and other pawned objects that were confiscated and transferred to Portugal in 1961, the bank authorities handed a note of thanks to Pascoal Menezes. The note reminded Pascoal that the Portuguese authorities had not forgotten his gesture in 1961: He had paid Rs. 5,000 as surety for obtaining the release of five bank officials who were detained by the Indian authorities in Goa. The bank promised him all possible assistance they

could offer during his visits to Portugal. I was invited once by Pascoal's brother David and his wife to visit them in their apartment on Rua da Junqueira. Pascoal had acquired it in 1960 and he lived there during his visits to Lisbon. Pascoal confirms in this book that during his visits to Portugal, the *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* never failed to place a car at his disposal, from the moment of his arrival at the Lisbon airport (Arthur 53, 130-37, 203).

### **Appreciating the past, handling the present, dreaming a future**

Maria Aurora Couto's autobiographical *Goa—A daughters's story*<sup>11</sup> provides the author an opportunity for catharsis by seeking to unveil the main causes of the declining and dying feudal elite to which a large part of her ancestry belonged. The style of presentation adopted by Maria Couto has enabled her to win a wide readership for usually drab research on Goa's agrarian economy and the baroque style of Christianity introduced by the Portuguese (158); the imposition in *Goa Portuguesa* of a "xendy" tax along the Mughal "jizya" model (200); the Mhamays of Goa; the debt owed by Jesuits to Bhagvatiny Camotiny at the time of their suppression; African slavery in Goa (219); Lam Jaku's (the reviewer's grandfather) tirades against the pants-wearing ("calção-kar") rulers and their native lackeys (239); the Jesuit impact upon Goan agriculture and culture (251); the native Oratorians of Goa (319); the Pinto Revolt (324); and many other bits and pieces of information. Maria Aurora Couto's wide and rich survey of oral traditions and her encyclopaedic readings also validate many of my own research conclusions, including the fact that Portuguese colonialism was sustained with the active collaboration of Hindu artisans, traders and diplomats (263).

Maria Aurora Couto discovered in her genealogical lists a great-great-grandfather, Antonio Caetano Pacheco, who has a road named after him in Margão. In 1955, the postal services of Portuguese India issued a stamp with his picture and name, to commemorate 450 years of the foundation of the "Estado Português da Índia," to which he was elected as MP to serve in the Portuguese parliament in 1839. Had Couto gone beyond oral tradition, finding more time and patience to glance at the records of the Portuguese parliament (many of them can now be consulted online), she could have traced interesting details about her ancestor's great capacity to draft legislative projects in the company of Bernardo Peres da Silva, who made his mark in the Portuguese parliament and in Goa's colonial history as the first ever Goan appointed to be Goa's governor, though with the title of Prefect and with a tenure that lasted just one month.

One is left with the impression that, while filial and human sensitivity makes Couto seek to mitigate the personal culpability of Goans who drowned their frustrations in alcoholism, she seems to be at a loss to explain how several others could resist and act within the same socio-political context with an intense sense of mission. Should we believe that most Goans, and many of the elite, like her cherished father, could only find sublimation in faith and “alma”-driven music? If so, are we to conclude that the “violence-free” Portuguese colonialism did very well through the strategic promotion of a “lamb of God” or a “suffering servant of Yahweh” theology with Lenten motets and what Salman Rushdie describes in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* as “kababed saints and tandooried martyrs”? Did music truly liberate the Christian soul (237)? Did it not rather lull and dull the pains and sufferings under colonial rule, preventing an adequate political response of the masses? Couto’s preliminary disavowal of academic history left me with some misgivings, but as I reached the end of the book, I could not help recalling the sixteenth-century Portuguese adventurer in Asia and author of the world-famous *Peregrinação*. Until very recently, literary critics believed that Fernão Mendes Pinto was lying or exaggerating in most of the incidents he narrated. Now it is admitted by serious researchers that he was truthful in most details, but was forced to put into the mouths of others whatever he himself wanted to say about the Portuguese atrocities and opportunistic behaviour in Asia. The Portuguese Inquisition would not let him publish a single line had he said those things as personal testimony. He had devised a literary style. Maria Aurora Couto seems to have laboured under some kind of self-inquisitorial pressure and done a superb job of making many others, including the present reviewer, say whatever could go counter to her determination to avoid extreme positions. Just as I cherish Jawaharlal Nehru’s approach to Indian and world history through his well-known *The Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History*, I have no doubts that Maria Aurora’s *Goa—A daughter’s story* will go a long way in presenting the social and cultural (which is always political, as the author admits in one place) in a language that is both polished and passionate, conveying deep love and the “Indian-ness of pluralism,” as another reviewer has summed up in his conclusions of the book.

Despite my wholehearted concurrence, I fear that the “mestiços” who are presented as the real enemies, feared and hated by Goans from both communities (193), may feel themselves at the receiving end of this otherwise suave treatment of Goan cultural pluralism. The recently published second edition

of a massive three-volume listing of *Os luso-descendentes da Índia Portuguesa*, by Jorge Forjaz, could provide much powder for commemorative salvos, if not for even more provocative exercises, as the fifth centenary of the conquest of Goa and Afonso de Albuquerque's policy and politics of miscegenation is approaching. Could the "mestiços" or their descendents be brushed aside in Couto's account of *Goa Portuguesa*? Were they dismissed summarily (134-35) to avoid getting sucked into less pleasant reflections and interpretations? How about Goan natives, men and women, who sought matrimonial alliances with the white Portuguese, and who are now integrated on either side of the present-day political divide? Where do they figure in the evolution of Goan identity as presented in *Goa—A daughter's story*? While it is easy to present the "mestiços" as enemies in the context of the liberal politics and pre-liberation conflicts of Goan society, a more systematic treatment of their long-lasting presence in Goan identity could surely enrich our understanding of Goa's cultural history.

I wish to conclude Goa's "handling of the present and dreaming the future" with a quick glance at Luizinho Faleiro's *My Goa—An autobiography*. The title itself makes it quite distinct in approach from my own *Goa to Me*, the only common feature being the "humble" origins of the authors. Here, the 47-year-old Goan politician, who rose to be Goa's chief minister for some months, confesses that he comes from the grass-roots, the hardest of ways (4). Throughout the book the author attributes a large part of his success to his poor and hardworking mother, who instilled in him as a small boy the importance of studying. Luizinho Faleiro admits his many failures, but not his lack of honesty and desire to improve good governance or make of Goa a centre of excellence. He recalls the colonial bureaucracy that would tell its petitioners "Venha amanhã" ["Come tomorrow"] (5), though some pages later he appreciates the *Escola Comercial* where he studied and where the teachers practised the "exacting standards laid down by the Portuguese" (12). Luizinho Faleiro, son of the village of Navelim in Goa, refers repeatedly to Francisco Luis Gomes and Cardinal Valerian Gracias, two Navelim-born stalwarts of Goan history who left their mark in politics and the church respectively, as champions of Goan freedom in the context of Portuguese colonial rule. Luizinho Faleiro recalls how, as a "lad hardly ten, brought up in the belief that between God in Heaven and Salazar on earth, in the *Estado português da Índia*, we had all that we needed to peacefully transit from this 'vale of tears' to the joys of the hereafter" (27). In 1991, Luizinho Faleiro represented India in Portugal at a conference organized for implementing Agenda 21 of the Rio

Summit. Faleiro recalls that while a minister in the Goan cabinet he considered it worthwhile and took initiatives to promote a commercial partnership of Goa with Portugal. Most significant for this analysis is the title of the last chapter of his memoirs, re-affirming the value of his mother's struggle and of his own: "Valeu a pena," words drawn from a classic poem by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, in which the poet declared: "tudo vale a pena, se a alma não é pequena" ["all is worthwhile when the soul is not petty"]. That seems to translate well how much Goa owes to the past five centuries of its history, which give it a unique identity among the other "Parts of Asia."

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Souza "De Ceuta ao Japão."

<sup>2</sup> See Boxer, both *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 75 and 149, and *Race Relations*, 2, 57-58.

<sup>3</sup> See also Souza, *Gilberto Freyre na Índia e o "Luso-Tropicalismo Transnacional."*

<sup>4</sup> This corresponds to the text of the telegram cited by the governor in "Dossier" Goa (88). The attitude of Salazar was not very different when Macau was threatened during the Cultural Revolution in China in 1966. The governor of Macau was also instructed to resist to the end. The following order was penned by Salazar personally to Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho on 14 January 1967: "Não temos aí forças para bater as forças chinesas—seria uma impossibilidade"; the goal given to the military was that of "garantir a ordem e lutar até ao extremo limite pela dignidade e pela soberania nacional." He concluded: "Confiamos aqui em que em caso de necessidade todos cumprirão o seu dever, mesmo com os maiores sacrifícios." But Lisbon caved in and authorized the governor to accept the ultimatum. It was perhaps the shine of *patacas* that made the difference and permitted a compromise.

<sup>5</sup> See Revista, *Expresso* 1519 (Dec. 2001): 74-98.

<sup>6</sup> António dos Mártires Lopes' description of *satyagraha* and *satyagrahis* is very negative and offensive to the honour of freedom-fighters and to the concept and reality of the Goan freedom-struggle. Here is a quote: "Em regra geral, e na maioria dos casos, eles não têm nenhum ideal político. São arrebanhados a soldo de tanto por dia, com cama e mesa à nossa custa na cadeia, fazendo dos seus actos criminosos uma profissão e do calabouço um abrigo confortável."

<sup>7</sup> French, English and Italian versions of Marini's book were brought out simultaneously with the help of the Portuguese administration.

<sup>8</sup> One such native was António dos Mártires Lopes. He is mentioned more than once as his teacher of Latin during Lyceum studies in 1939-40. Among other commentaries, we read: "Our Professor, António dos Mártires Lopes, a drop-out from the seminary, but intelligent, knew Portuguese and Latin very well. He also knew how to teach and solve your difficulties. He was anti-Salazar and anti-Pope and Church and expressed his feelings without any fear [...]. Many people would not take him seriously because he drank too much at times, and came to teach feeling like after the night before. He was also a heavy smoker" (80). It would be interesting to know how the anti-Salazarism of this Goan permitted him to prosper as a state bureaucrat in Goa, Guinea and Mozambique. And to receive the state honour of Infante! It is not surprising that his services were connected with the Department of Information and Tourism in Goa and

in Guinea, and his association until 1974 with the “Comissariado para os Assuntos da Índia.”

<sup>9</sup> Martins also refers to his public address in Portuguese on the occasion of the visit of Dr. Mário Soares in 1994 to Goa, and mentions the Portuguese soldiers and officials he met at Aguada and how he learned about their opposition to Salazar regime.

<sup>10</sup> Froilano de Melo was an eminent Goan doctor. He represented Goa in the Portuguese Parliament. He exiled himself to Brazil when the Salazar regime refused to listen to his proposal of autonomy for Goa. More on him may be read in Bailon de Sá's *Goa's Hall of Fame* (9-11).

<sup>11</sup> See Souza, “Goa—An aurorised story.”

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