

## BOOK REVIEW

**“A PRESENÇA PORTUGUESA NA GUINÉ.  
HISTÓRIA POLÍTICA E MILITAR, 1878-1926”**by Armando Tavares da Silva<sup>1</sup>Carlos Alberto Alves<sup>2</sup>

The author of the book is a member of the Lisbon Geographic Society<sup>3</sup>, of the Portuguese Institute of Heraldry<sup>4</sup> and the Society of the Independence of Portugal<sup>5</sup>; a retired professor at the Faculty of Science and Technology from the University of Coimbra, since 2002, when he began research in the area of history. *A Presença Portuguesa na Guiné. História política e militar, 1878-1926* a book with thirty-two chapters, with a preface by Nuno Vieira Matias, President of the Academy of the Portuguese Navy<sup>6</sup>, granted the author the “Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Prize” in 2016, awarded by the Portuguese Academy of History<sup>7</sup>.

Armando Tavares da Silva, to facilitate the reading of his historical research, elaborated analytical, onomastic, toponymical, geographical and author indexes; the cartography shows the Portuguese paths through Bissau, Oio, Buba, Geba, Cacheu and Canhabac (Canhambaque); and he reproduces pictures of the ships of the Portuguese Armada that sailed in Guinean waters

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1 Silva, Armando Tavares da. 2016. *A Presença Portuguesa na Guiné. História política e militar, 1878-1926*. S/l: Caminhos Romanos, 972 páginas.

2 Center for Literature and Lusophone and European Cultures, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal. E-mail: caa30@hotmail.com.

3 In Portuguese, *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*.

4 In Portuguese, *Instituto Português de Heráldica*.

5 In Portuguese, *Sociedade da Independência de Portugal*.

6 In Portuguese, *Academia da Marinha Portuguesa*.

7 In Portuguese, *Academia Portuguesa de História*.

at that time, namely Corvettes, Steamboats, Gunboats, Motorboat-Gunboats, Tugboats and Cruisers.

When Guinea became an independent province of Cape Verde in 1879, the secretary of the general government, resident of the island of São Tiago, highlighted the lack of human and material resources, positioning himself against the independent government of Guinea. At the ecclesiastical level, for example, that territory had a reduced number of priests, scarce objects of worship, vestments and implements for the churches; the Catholic ministers in Bolama, Bissau and Cacheu were few and those who carried out the missionary activity were from India and Cape Verde.

In 1892, Guinea became an autonomous military district, with a special administrative and judicial regime. The county of Bolama was the district headquarters and the military commands were in Bissau, Cacheu and Geba. The Caçadores' battalion, which was located in the island of São Tiago in Cape Verde, was sent to Guinea in 1879. At that time, the military garrisons were being remodelled, the troops organized in companies, with barracks in Bolama and in Bissau. The book highlights the presence of the exiles in Guinea, where there was no penal colony, with them being "integrated into the military forces of the provinces" (Silva 2016, 45).

The behavior of the soldiers of the Guinean garrison was disturbing, since the soldiers were mostly "from Angola and the deportees who come from Portugal" (Silva 2016, 125). The investigation highlights Guinea's military reorganization, which envisaged the existence of a military artillery and infantry company, including infantry companies made up of natives, native police corps, native cavalry squad for surveillance, as well as the replacement of European soldiers in the mixed company, due to the difficulties of acclimatization, by soldiers from Angola and Cape Verde, and the creation of military posts in Cacheu, Geba and Farim.

Portugal reinforced the relations with the captive-fulas (*fulas-pretos*), residents in the surroundings of the prison of Geba, considered inferior by the freeborn-fulas (*fulas-forros*); the oath of obedience and fidelity to the Portuguese flag made by the chief of Ganadú, Ambucú, who was responsible for the expulsion of Mussá Moló to the Feridú, led the Portuguese to establish relations with other chiefs and to contact in Bolama the envoys of the chief Buducú, Sylaty Mané, with whom a treaty of vassalage was celebrated. A peace treaty was concluded with the rulers of the Forreá and the Futa Djalon during the expedition against the beafadas of jabadá and against the freeborn-fulas of Cadica; the peace treaty with the regents of the Indorné was concluded at a time when the Portuguese were concerned about the peace treaty with

the ruler of Djeta; the peace treaty between beafadas and fulas lasted a short time, due to the attack of a fula village, by the beafadas of Cubisseque, in 1885, which made the Portuguese occupation of Rio Grande more difficult.

The resistance against the Portuguese authorities and the disagreement between the peoples continued until 1883, when a primary school was created in Bissau. In that village, in 1894, there were moments of great tension, because of the rebellion that took place there, which led to the deportation of some cabin boys. In relation to Xerne Bokar, “for preaching rebellion against our sovereignty, abusing its religious preponderance among Muslims” (Silva 2016, 620), he was deported to São Tome and Principe.

France pressed to occupy areas where the Portuguese administration was not established. In this context, the French occupation of Casamansa provoked incidents with the Portuguese authorities in 1884 and two years later, when Portugal was interested in maintaining influence in the territories it controlled, opposing France. This country was present at the tip of Casamansa and intended to establish a trading post at Selho, on the bank of the river of Zeguinchor, because of the trade and the French presence in Carabane. The Paris Convention, to mark the borders, faced Portuguese opposition. The commissioners of Portugal and France arrived in the territory of Guinea to demarcate the border, after the French incited the people against Portugal “to ensure the transfer of Portuguese Guinea to them without great cost” (Silva 2016, 238). The negotiations were held at a time when trade and agriculture went through difficulties.

Despite the incidents caused by the demarcation of the borders with the neighboring territories of Guinea, in 1888 and ten years later, France remained uninterested, because it intended to occupy Zenguichor, so that the Casamansa River would be under its tutelage, in order to establish a military post in Componi, to serve as a communications base with Cadé, in Futa Djalon. The demarcation of borders was resumed in 1902, since the French delegation did not show up in the previous year, as it was established, “claiming the existence of a raging epidemic of yellow fever in Senegal” (Silva 2016, 449). The southern and eastern borders were delimited in 1903 “through exchange of diplomatic notes” (Silva 2016, 449), but the border demarcation between Casamansa and the Cacheu River in 1904 allowed the evaluation of the Cacheu and Casamansa rivers to be the dividing line, in accordance to the Convention of 1886, signed between France and Portugal.

Abdul Injai, a former travelling merchant from Senegal, was arrested for having slaughtered papeis, in Bór, in April 1906. After being deported to S. Tomé, Abdul Injai was authorized by the Portuguese king, in October

1907 (Silva 2016, note 20, 663), to return to Guinea, where complaints piled up against him – he died in January 1921 in Praia, Cape Verde, where he was considered deported “in transit to Mozambique” (Silva 2016, 752). *Abdul Injai, a conquista portuguesa e o levante de 1919 na Guiné- Bissau: manifestação pública de um discurso oculto*, theme of the graduation monograph presented at the Department of History of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, 2016, with 62 pages, by Michelle Sost dos Santos, analyzes the relationship between Abdul Injai and the Portuguese, who according to Michelle dos Santos contributed to the weakening of some groups of the Guineas, such as the balantas, the papeis, the mandingas, the manjacos, among others. Michelle Sost dos Santos, on page 54 of her investigation, concluded that “in the first moment, Abdul Injai saw in the alliance with the Portuguese representatives a means of gaining power in the region, to become lord of the territory”.

The Guinean League was created in a natives’ assembly of Guinea, in Bissau. The statutes were approved in 1910 and five years later the League was dissolved for not allowing “the pacification of the province” (Silva 2016, 653). In 1911, the Statutes of the Cacheu Republican Education Center and the approval of the indigenous labor regime were presented, in a time when the Portuguese in Guinea did not have sufficient financial means: “Would the Republic resolve these issues now?” (Silva 2016, 595). The increase in taxes on tobacco and alcohol, as well as the imposition of a hut tax of \$500 escudos, were measures taken to cover the excess expenditures resulting from the increase in the salaries of civil servants in Guinea, which after an alteration of the administrative division, in 1916, came to include the municipalities of Bolama and Bissau: the constituencies of Geba, based in Bafatá; Farim, Cacheu and Buba, based in Xitoli; Cacine and Bijagós, based in Bubaque; Brames, based in Bula; Costa de Baixo, based in Canchungo; Balantas, based in Encheia.

The first Republic (1910-1926) implemented measures to allow the access of Guinean natives to education, health and justice; the creation of the primary school in the indigenous district of Bissau, as well as the creation of Bolama, Bafatá and Canchingo arts and crafts schools to graduate locksmiths, turners, metal smelters, smiths, boilers, tinkers, drivers, firemen, carpenters, woodworkers, masons, tailors, cobblers, seamen, shipbuilders, caulkers, and farmers.

The Portuguese occupation of Guinea was made possible by the Canhambaque campaign, in 1925, and by operations in the Felupes region, in 1933, in the midst of the Portuguese Estado Novo, an anti-communist,

anti-democratic, anti-liberal, authoritarian and colonialist political regime, deposed in 1974. The reduction of civil districts in half, in 1926, sought to reduce the temporary staff, to reduce expenses, at a time when there were two currents that wanted “the rule of Guinea” and that would “now manifest itself openly” (Silva 2016, 819).

The book gathers immense information deposited in the Portuguese Archives; highlighting the feats of the protagonists, be the Guineans, Portuguese or French. This is undoubtedly a study that assists in finding clues for future researches and also to better understand the Portuguese and French presence and the resistance of the local populations of Guinea, the adjacent territories, rivers, islands, archipelagos, capes and cities that are not part of Guinea. This country attracted the attention of several authors, namely René Pélissier, French historian, author of *History of Portuguese Guinea and Africans in Senegambia (1841-1936)*, published in Portugal in 1989 by Editorial Estampa, in two volumes. This is an inescapable study of Portuguese political and military history, as well as of the African resistance during the Portuguese occupation to establish a relationship of power and domination in the West African country that lasted many years.

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