

THE PORTUGUESE IN GOA

BY TEOTONIO R. DE SOUZA

The identity of a people grows out of a long ongoing process of historical legacy that takes all kinds of inputs and agents, not all of them of one's choice. It is not unlike the way an individual acquires identity: We did not choose our parents, nor the country or nationality of birth!

Recent events in the Middle East only confirm this historic truth. Foreign interests, superior technology, local collaboration, all these factors have always played their part at all times in different forms, in varying doses. It was with Goa as it is with Iraq. Instead of oil, the Portuguese were in search of the most prized spices; they were also searching for the "Christians of St. Thomas" as potential allies who would help break the trade monopoly of the "Moors". When the Portuguese did find them, they discovered very soon to their great dismay that the Christians had far too limited commercial or military power to be valuable allies. They found a more useful ally in the ruler of Cochin, who was feeling threatened by his suzerain and rival, the Zamorin of Calicut.

Very useful also was the offer of a Hindu corsair in the service of Vijayanagar to collaborate in the capture of Goa. Timoja or Timmaya, who controlled the coastal belt from Cabo de Rama to Anjidiv, had very discreetly trailed Vasco da Gama's fleet in the vicinity of Anjidiv Island when da Gama first arrived off our shores. He then sought an alliance; vital information he passed on to D. Francisco de Almeida about disagreements between the Egyptian Sultan and Malik Ayaz, Governor of Diu, enabled the Portuguese to crush the Turkish fleet off Diu in 1509. It was

Almeida's successor Albuquerque who then accepted the offer of collaboration, and used Timmaya's mercenaries and his fleet to aid in the conquest of Goa.

Although Goan Hindus had their grudges against their Muslim rulers, Timmaya collaborated to promote his own interests. The chronicler Joao de Barros says the man was looked down on as a person of lowly extraction, but to the Portuguese this mattered little, since he met all the requirements needed in a good collaborator—he knew the political set-up, and had ambitions of becoming a *jaghirdar* under a new sovereign lord, themselves. Timmaya could hardly have imagined that the Portuguese, having come such a long distance to establish a New Order, still planned to retain direct control from far-off Lisbon.

No sooner had news of Albuquerque's victory over Adil Shah's forces spread through the countryside, than members of the Hindu elite made sure the Muslim rout was complete. In a letter to his king, dated December 22, 1510, Albuquerque reports that "Some Hindus, leading men [*homens principais*], from whom the Turks [*sic*] had taken their lands, learning of the destruction of Goa, came down from the hills where they had taken refuge, and came to my aid, and took control of the passes and the roads, and all the moors [that is, Muslims] who had escaped from Goa, were put to the sword, and not a living creature was allowed to live." The names of some of these men have come down to us: Balaji Naik, Madhav Rau, Gopu Naik, Nage Naik, Yojna, Maloji, Damu Naik, Dagu Naik, and Krishna—and there were others.



above: Although Vasco da Gama in 1498 opened up the sea route from Europe to India, and his fleet sailed into Goa's coastal waters, it was not he but Afonso de Albuquerque who sailed up the Mandovi River and captured the city.

Left: Map of the Asian Seas, drawn by Lopo Homem in 1519, shows regional inhabitants and flora and fauna, Turkish galleys and Chinese junks. (Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris: *Portugalia Monumenta Cartographica*.)

Timmaya was soon disillusioned with the Portuguese, and the Portuguese with him. Barros tells us that when Albuquerque first met Timmaya he thought he was hearing "a messenger of the Holy Spirit," but once Goa was safely in Albuquerque's hands, Timmaya was seen as a nuisance. For a while he controlled the shipping of horses through Goa for the benefit of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar, but was soon replaced with a more pliant collaborator, Melrao, brother of the ruler of neighbouring Honavar.

WHY THE PORTUGUESE NEEDED GOA

After their arrival in Malabar, the Portuguese had quickly learned the ground realities, as proven by Duarte Barbosa and Tome Pires's classic accounts written around 1512-15: They discovered that the real big mart of Asian products was Melaka, and also became painfully aware that spices and other goods continued to flow to Europe through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, despite their efforts to control the sea lanes.

It therefore became strategically necessary for them to move out of Cochin and establish new control posts in Goa, and further to the north in Chaul, Bassein, Daman, and Diu. Bassein became the headquarters of what the Portuguese designated their Province of the North. A special fleet guarded its port entrances. Its teak became the staple for building Portuguese merchant ships and warships, and its fertile rice fields fed the fort settlements of the entire *Estado da India*.

The Portuguese were not the first to realize Goa's importance. The Arabs in the 15th century used to build and refit their trading vessels in Goa; it was also through Goa that they supplied horses to the sultans and other powers in the hinterland. Earlier still, evidence shows that ships travelling between the Gulf and cities

further south on the Indian coast paid customs duties in Goa. A percentage of this income went to a mosque that cared for the needy in the city—a Muslim tradition probably inherited by the Portuguese as *Misericordias*.

The head of the *Estado da India* represented the Portuguese crown in the East, and when in 1530 he as viceroy moved his headquarters from Cochin to Goa, he brought with him the whole paraphernalia of administrative, commercial, and religious establishments. Goa became the real hub of the Portuguese empire; it was in Goa that one could feel its pulse. It was from Goa that diplomatic missions were sent out, and the religious orders fanned out to their mission fields all over Asia; it was in Goa that foreign ambassadors were received.

DRAMATIC CHANGE IN RHYTHM OF GOAN LIFE

All this dramatically changed the rhythm of Goan life, in the capital as well as in the surrounding countryside. As long as Portuguese commerce flourished, the blotter effect must have conveyed some prosperity to zones close to the capital city. The Dutch traveller and spy, Huyghen van Linschotten, left such a graphic account of those times that it became cause and prelude to the Dutch arrival in Asian waters. The English, too, did not delay their arrival much longer.

These North European rivals revealed Portugal's weaknesses to the native rulers, who heretofore had been somewhat overawed by Portuguese military might. For these and for political reasons back home, Portugal's commercial fortunes in Asian waters rapidly began to fade; Portuguese investors in Goa now had to come up with a fresh set of calculations. Village agricultural resources had been left largely undisturbed till then, but from the beginning of the 17th century Portuguese white settlers and others became interested in encroaching upon the traditional rights and privileges of native owners. The process continued despite local resistance and legislative measures designed to curb the encroachments. The mounting needs of colonial defence, coupled with insufficient resources, gradually reduced village agriculture to subsistence level. Many Goans migrated for this and other reasons, particularly the campaigns of Christianization and the methods of the Inquisition.

How were the natives regarded in this new dispensation? In the late 17th century, when the Portuguese Jesuit Superior of the Japanese mission was obstructing a Jesuit visitor's plans to welcome Japanese natives into the Order, the Brazilian-born

A CENTURY-OLD CRY FOR SELF-GOVERNANCE

"If Portugal sincerely desired the prosperity of its colonies, it would not place at their head as governors some petty officers from its navy. Land of the Marquis of Pombal, in the name of Christ, leave us alone!"

---*Hipólito Caetano Pinto*, rural landowner and patriot, editorializing in Portuguese in his influential *O Correio de Goa* on March 10, 1888. Pinto was a friend of the Ranes; he published the paper from his own home in Porvorim. The Government shut down the *Correio* soon after the editorial appeared.

Fr. Francisco de Souza wrote quite bluntly: "It comes as no surprise, because the Portuguese tend naturally to despise all these Orientals."

The French traveller François Pyrard de Laval, a keen observer who had spent a considerable time in Portuguese Asia earlier the same century, expressed similar views, recording in his memoirs that as soon as they cross the Cape, all Portuguese tend to regard themselves as "fidalgos" in order to fool the Indians, and love to be called whites and to look down on all the poor Indians whom they heartily despise. Laval further adds that Indians were greatly surprised when told that most of those Portuguese belonged to families of shippies, cobblers, and other menial professions. Recent critical accounts of the Portuguese "discoveries" reveal that, aside from the zealous and self-sacrificing missionaries and the few chosen authorities from the middle range of the nobility who had a tenured and paid posting in the overseas administration and in military projects, the great majority of those who were dispatched as "discoverers" were the riff-raff of Portuguese society, picked up from Portuguese jails. It should not surprise us therefore if such "discoverers" sought compensation overseas for their social rejection at home.

ALBUQUERQUE FOUND MANY COLLABORATORS

Timmaya was not the only collaborator of the Portuguese in Goa. Most Goans who had not chosen to go into exile accepted the reality of Portuguese rule for what it was. There were the local women who accepted the Portuguese carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, and caulkers as their husbands, or otherwise, to lay the foundations of Albuquerque's *casado* strategy. We have seen the list of prominent Goans who came down from the hills, vying with each other to chop off the heads of their erstwhile Muslim rulers. We also know that several Goans played in Albuquerque's military band.

Albuquerque had promised the local inhabitants that they would be left in peaceful possession of their lands. But his colonial strategy, and his willingness to renege, becomes clear from a letter he wrote to King Manuel in 1512: "If the Portuguese continue to marry and settle down at the present rate, it looks to me that Your Highness may have to drive out the natives of this island and transfer the lands to the Portuguese settlers. These lands are nobody's exclusive patrimony, but they belong to the king and lord of the land."

Scant documentation does not permit us to say much more



The Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa, former capital of the Portuguese Empire of the East. Along with the Se Cathedral and the Church of St. Cajetan, the Basilica has been declared a World Heritage Monument by UNESCO.

about the treatment meted out to Goans during the first decades of Portuguese rule, but we know that even after a charter of their rights (*Foral*) was worked out by one Afonso Mexia in 1526, doubts remained, partly because the natives did not follow all the implications of western-style codification, and partly because they seemed less than keen to disclose all information.

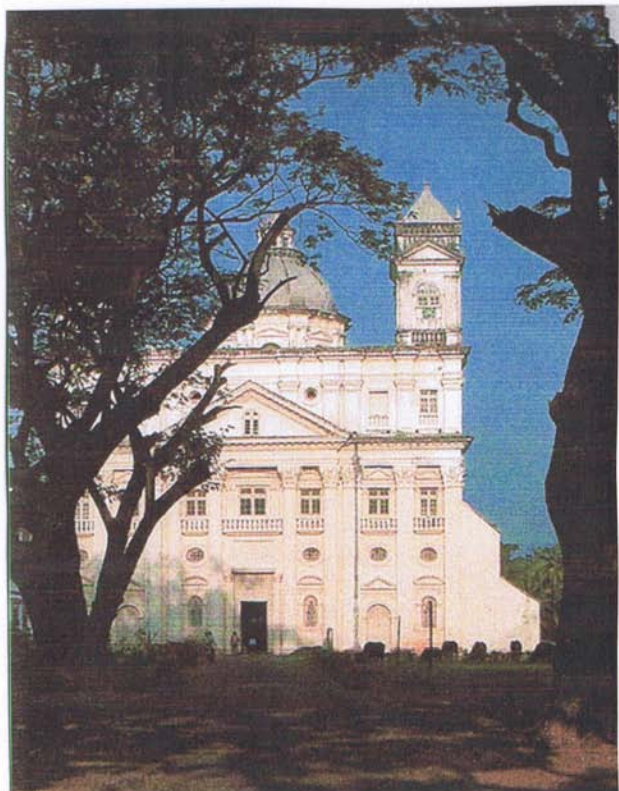
They came awake after a crown proclamation opened the way to a distribution among Portuguese settlers of all lands that did not already belong to *native Christians*, or to those who were already Christian prior to the conquest of Goa! The proclamation either ignored the fact that most Goan natives were still non-Christian, or was meant to convey to them that Goa was being treated as a conquered land.

Presumably in response to indignation that may have followed such a shocking ruling, there was an immediate counter-ruling from the crown. It referred to an order by Afonso Mexia prohibiting Portuguese city-dwellers from acquiring any lands or palm-groves belonging to any inhabitant of the island, even if such properties were considered to belong to the crown.

Despite the implied desire to respect the population's customary rights, new pressures would soon be brought into play by Goa's growing role as headquarters of the *Estado da India*. Two factors that contributed to the growing tensions were the religious policy inspired by the Tridentine reforms backed by the Society of Jesus, and the official establishment of the Inquisition in Goa in 1560.

LOCALS LOST CONTROL OF THEIR LANDS

A third contributing factor was the increased pressure on land. There was no way that the rural population in close



The Church of Our Lady of Divine Providence, popularly known as St. Cajetan's Church, was built in Old Goa in 1655 in the style of the Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome.

proximity to the megacity of Goa could remain unaffected by the large-scale mercantile and missionary operations initiated by the Portuguese. By the end of the 16th century this was clearly showing its marks upon Goan rural life. Despite the official protection of the *Foral* and the traditional rights it was meant to safeguard, native *gavkars* were gradually losing control of their lands and revenues to external interests. The traditional rural set-up was being systematically subverted by the socio-economic forces released by the Portuguese colonial presence.

The opportunities for adventure and gain had affected the Portuguese deeply and in ways that the administration and church authorities were finding hard to curb. A Dominican

friar, Vicente de Laguna, reported to the king in 1530 that many Portuguese married men had married again, more than 20 of them in Goa. He advised the king to look into these abuses and order the men to return to their wives and children who were dying of hunger at home, while here they were busy trading and avoiding service in the state fleets.

Two years later, Franciscan Fr. Rodrigo de Serpa reported from Goa that "India has this quality: even if Our Lord had descended from heaven and walked as he did among the apostles, that would not make them happy here. . . . The unhappiness results from the desire of all to rule, and if all were to do that, there would be none to obey."

However, according to Viceroy Martim Afonso de Sousa in 1542, the friars were causing him no less worry. They wanted to set up monasteries all over, and usually got their way, because they knew that the king favoured them. Behind their zeal the viceroy saw a quest for material gain, and hatred for the other Orders. The Franciscans in Goa had opposed the construction of the Se Cathedral bell tower and had threatened to abandon their monastery. With clerics behaving so independently,

the viceroy did not see how God or King could benefit from their service.

It was against this background of unruly and scandalous behaviour of the Portuguese, especially of the "new Christians" or pseudo-converted Jews who had fled from Portugal to the East, that Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary in India, advised the king of Portugal in 1546 to set up the Inquisition in Goa. It is against the same background that we can understand the frustration felt by the vicar general, Sebastiao Pires, when as early as 1527 he had reported to the king the maltreatment of Christian converts in Goa: "I was in Goa last year and an entire

village became Christian. Many more would accept Christianity if they were favoured by your captains. Your Highness should know that as soon as they become Christians they are treated as captives, and for that reason many natives do not wish to become Christians. This sort of thing happens in Goa and also in Cochín and other places. As soon as they are baptized, they are ill-treated and disfavoured. Had it not been for my constant vigilance, many more would have suffered."

Several years later, Miguel Vaz, who succeeded Fr. Pires, confirmed such abusive treatment: The poor natives were forced to help anchor the fleets and also to take the vessels out to sea, but in doing so were prevented from working their own fields or from earning a living. Fr. Vaz considered it unfair that poor natives who paid taxes should be obliged to undertake forced labour, receiving no remuneration, but only ill-treatment. He concludes: "I know how cruel this situation is, and I can hardly write all about it. . . . The court beadies treat these natives very harshly, and impose cash fines on them, often without any prior official judgement. Any cash fine is a serious form of oppression for these poor natives."

Some complaints found a willing response. The government ruled in 1562 that minor quarrels among poor native Christians or Hindus, who were fond of suing each other for the most futile reasons, should not be referred to the capital, but should be decided locally by the presidents of the parish confraternities without appeal and with fines not exceeding three *tangas*.

Corrective measures against some reported administrative abuses seem to have been less rigorously implemented. Responding to the *ganvkars* complaints that instead of being favoured for becoming Christians they only suffered much injustice and oppression, resulting in serious property losses, danger to their lives, and humiliations before the non-Christians, Viceroy D. Antonio de Noronha in 1572 also responded to the grievances about the native obligation to supply sailors for the state galleys and free labour for defence works. He agreed that the complaints were greatly justified and that all extraordinary services rendered by the natives should be duly compensated.

In 1594 the king went a step further, specifically directing the viceroy to stop the practice of forcing *ganvkars* and other native Christians to serve in galleys and other vessels of the State fleet.

In some situations in which administrative measures were taken to benefit the natives, the colonial interest underlying such

decisions is also evident. In 1596, a royal letter referred to the native custom of celebrating weddings for two weeks; following the celebration they then had to sell their land or borrow money to meet the heavy expenses they incurred, and often ended up in prison or enmeshed in costly court cases due to their inability to repay. Some would flee across the border to escape justice.

A royal order limited celebrations by native Christians in Goa, Salcete, and Bardez to a single day. While this protected them from the harsher economic consequences of extended celebrations, it is clear from the same order that many of these natives were actually carpenters, masons, and other wage-labourers whose long absences caused inconvenience and harm to the Portuguese city dwellers who depended upon their services. One could apply well here that old Konkani saying: *Panvelichea dhorman muxingak udok*—when a favourite plant gets watered, others benefit from the runoff. To make sure that the limit on celebrations was observed, *ganvkars* caught violating it were liable to three months imprisonment, while others could be jailed up to six months.

VIOLATIONS OF 1526 AGREEMENT

Following the arrival of the Jesuits, the first Church Provincial Council was held in Goa in 1567 to implement the spirit of the Council of Trent, and decisions were taken to reform the customs of the people. With the crown giving its full support, the social and economic life of rural Goa began to change dramatically. The new legislation called for Hindu orphan children to be handed over to the Jesuits for education and conversion; it also decreed that no Hindu could occupy any public office or produce Christian devotional objects; further, it granted to their converted women and daughters the right to inherit, all in clear violation of the *Foral* of 1526.

It was also legislated that village councils that had a sufficiently large number of Christian *ganvkars* could take valid decisions without waiting for the non-Christian members to be present. Hindu clerks of the village community were to be replaced by converts to Christianity. It was also decreed that no village council decision would be valid if it was adopted in the absence of all Christian members of the council. Signatures of Christian members had to appear first in written proceedings, implying a serious disrespect for the Hindu elders of the village.

Even though *ganvkar* representatives in Salcete and Bardez had already agreed that no new temples would be built and

that old ones could not be repaired, the Jesuits felt this process was too slow; they demanded quick demolitions, and took active part in the official demolition squads. A royal letter of 1569 mentions that all temples had been *desfeitos e queimados* (dismantled and burnt).

But while the Jesuits were granted almost a free hand to exercise their zeal over the natives, they could not extend it to the white population. A Jesuit plan to set up a confraternity for white soldiers in 1595 was quickly quashed by the viceroy and by the home authorities.

The increasing defence needs of the Portuguese in India, combined with the resulting losses of trade revenues, placed frequent heavy additional burdens upon Goan villages. Then, the *Foral* of 1526 became a rallying point, with natives demanding that Portuguese authorities honour their promise to respect the rights and privileges in that document. The home authorities in Portugal, far away in space and time, realized that native complaints were not always false or exaggerated, as the local administration often represented them to be.

Large-scale migrations of the natives, and not only of non-Christians, point to the hardships and injustice experienced by sections of the population at various times. In 1566, the *ganvkars* and some other inhabitants of Divar island had left the village. The administration gave them 15 days to return and cultivate their lands, under penalty of losing them and their rights as *ganvkars*. In 1590, the decree of pardon was reissued for all the provinces.

The pro-conversion legislation that supported the conversion

drive included a 1559 proclamation by Dona Catarina, Portugal's Queen Regent, granting converted natives the same citizenship rights as the Portuguese in India. The implications are that they did not have those rights prior to this period, and also that thereafter non-Christians were subject to legal discrimination, with no right to claim equal treatment with those who had converted.

HARSH TREATMENT DREW SHIVAJI'S WRATH

The neighbouring ruler Shivaji invaded Goa in 1667, and his son Sambhaji did so in 1683, not just to punish the Portuguese for sheltering the *desais* who were rebelling against Maratha rule, but also as retaliation for the harsh treatment Hindus were receiving in Goa and in the Portuguese Province of the North. Goa was on the verge of collapse in 1683, and the capital city would have been captured, had not a Mughal invasion of Maratha territory forced Sambhaji to withdraw post-haste. The helpless Portuguese governor had already placed his wand of office into the hands of St. Francis Xavier, seeking his miraculous intervention! A purported miracle, whose repeat performance was sought in vain by the Portuguese colonial authority on the eve of Goa's occupation by Indian forces in 1961.

An official report tells us that in 1710 a serious problem arose because native Christians were abandoning the territory and seeking their livelihood on the mainland. Several had settled there for good and were returning to their villages only to collect their annual *zomm*. It was estimated that forty thousand such emigrants lived in the neighbouring region of Canara.



The cemetery that the British built during their occupation of Goa from 1799 to 1813 is now a municipal burial ground open to all. Of the old tombs, the only ones that are identifiable are of British personnel of the Western Indian Portuguese Railway whose coffins were brought by launch from Mormugao to Dona Paula.



The beautiful Tiracol fort, built by Kem Sawant Bhonsle, ruler of neighbouring Sawantwadi, was captured by the Portuguese in 1746. It is now a heritage resort.

The exodus of Christians was followed four years later by a migration for a different reason when the Jesuits decided to force all Hindus to come regularly to learn Christian doctrine, to hand over their orphans, and to stop bringing their priests into Portuguese territory to celebrate their weddings.

The Hindus decided to leave Goa in protest. Since there apparently were only two native Christian businessmen of any consequence in Goa at that time, the Hindu exodus brought all business and professional life to a standstill. As a result, the State was losing a thousand *xerafins* of revenue every day. A compromise retained past laws, but made an exception for revenue farmers and physicians. Meanwhile, the theologians insisted that the Hindus were bluffing and would return. When a month went by without anyone returning, the State had to offer more generous terms.

In 1715 the High Court was asked to review all past pro-conversion legislation. When it came to the issue of native Christians having the same privileges as Portuguese citizens, the court concluded *that the decree was never revoked, but it had never been applied either*. In effect, Goan Christians had not been accorded privileges they had been guaranteed.

The Maratha capture of the Portuguese Province of the North in 1739 dealt a severe economic blow to several *mestizo* families who owned large landed properties there. Many moved to Goa, and sought to compensate for their losses by acquiring political power and militia control. Unconsciously, they transferred against Goan natives the anger they felt against the Marathas, whose victory had humiliated them.



The Patriarch's Palace on the Altinho (high ground) of Panjim has been the seat, since 1533, of the Archdiocese of Goa and the Patriarchate of the East Indies, which once had jurisdiction over territories extending from the southern tip of Africa to China.

NATIVE PRIESTS FELT RACIST BARBS

Goan rural society had by this time a very sizable number of educated persons, particularly clerics, whose number in 1705 had been estimated at 2500. As the great majority of these were Brahmins, the *Charde* (Maratha group of Goan Christians) allied themselves

with the Portuguese administration to gain social ascendancy vis-à-vis their traditional caste rivals. There is no case

known of any serious revolt of this group against the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, while we know of three—Matheus de Castro in the seventeenth century, the Pinto Conspiracy in the 18th century, and the unrest stirred up by Padre Alvares in the 19th century—that were all led by Goans belonging to the Brahmin caste.

Native Christian priests had experienced a type of racist discrimination since very early days, but as they grew in number and had new means of expression, their accumulated frustrations became more manifest. White clergy continued



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The Penha de Franca church, fronting the Mandovi River north east of Panjim, represents part of the distinctive socio-cultural identity that is Goa. The greater part is represented by the Hindu population and the Hindu temples that dot both the Old and the New Conquests.

to dominate the scene with their ethnic and political links with the colonizers. In the initial phase the racist feelings were less expressed by either side, but as the natives gained self-confidence and proved their competence, or even superiority, in comparison to many Portuguese who served in the East, the colonizers from the 18th century on had to rely increasingly on skin colour and patriotism as reasons to feel superior. This was noticeable in the attitude of the white friars and the mestizos (and *descendentes*) who felt threatened in their careers; in turn this invited nationalist reaction from the natives.

Franciscan friars resented and resisted the pressure of native

clerics who, with the backing of Archbishop Fr. Ignacio de Santa Thereza, wanted to take over control of their parishes in Bardez in 1724-28. The overtly racist language used by the friars against the native clerics is shockingly noteworthy: "All these black priests (with the exception of some, by a miracle) are by their very nature ill-natured and ill-behaved, lascivious, drunkards, etc., and therefore, most unworthy of taking charge of churches. . . . These natives hate the Portuguese and all who are white-skinned. Their hatred is directed more specially against the parish priests, who live in their villages and keep a close watch on their behaviour. That is why white priests and religious are a burden to them."

Discontent among the native clergy boiled over into the Pinto Conspiracy of 1787, in which several priests and the military were implicated; it was brutally suppressed. Discrimination against competent Goan clergy did not change till the end of the colonial regime, when a couple of Goans were appointed bishops in Africa at the tail

end of colonial rule. Still, no Goan cleric was found fit to occupy the highest post of responsibility in Goa. It is interesting to note what the Portuguese Minister for Colonies, Vieira Machado, had to say in a report to Salazar on February 18, 1943 regarding the nomination of African bishops: "I cannot have the same confidence in the patriotism and the nationalist convictions of the blacks and the whites. . . . I wonder what a native will think of a white man who kneels at the feet of a black man to confess to him his sins and to receive his absolution." The Portuguese Jesuits in Goa had used similar rhetoric on the eve of the suppression of the Society of Jesus, when it had been proposed

that their Salcete parishes be handed over to native priests. Not surprisingly, a *Te Deum* was sung by native priests at the Se Catedral when the Society of Jesus was suppressed in 1759 and the Jesuits were put under house arrest before being shipped to Lisbon.

What caused the mestizos and descendentes to behave arrogantly and to manifest racist tendencies? The Marquis of Pombal's administrative reforms in Goa had led the viceroy to issue an ordinance that identified the source: "The arrogance that dominates in this part of the world is the main reason for the despair of these unfortunate natives. . . . When I say Portuguese I also mean mestizos, and these suffer more from diabolic pride than the

Europeans proper." The decree warned the whites against calling the natives *negros* (niggers) and *cachorros* (pups).

LIBERALISM RAISED LEVEL OF DISCONTENT

The Napoleonic occupation of Portugal, and the Portuguese



The body of St. Francis Xavier rests in this ornate tomb in the Basilica of Bom Jesus. The saint, who was born in Navarra, Spain, in 1506, is said to have converted 700,000 souls between 1542, when he first arrived in India, and 1552, the year he died on China's Shachien coast.

royal family's migration to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil at the opening of the 19th century were responsible for deep political changes in Portugal and its territories. Political liberalism had come to Portugal to stay; the English, while driving out the French and helping to restore Portuguese political autonomy, extracted a heavy commercial price and gradually put an end to Portugal's profitable slave trade. It was also under British pressure that Portugal put an end to its Inquisition.

The establishment of a government press in Goa in the first quarter of the 19th century gave a hefty push to the political discontent of native Goans. Interested individuals exploited the press to promote "nativism", which irritated and provoked the descendents. It is in this context that one should analyse the great enthusiasm demonstrated at this time in documenting the history of Goan village communities.

It also contributed to the creation of some stereotypes that served Goan natives to affirm their past traditions of self-government. Though it was caste-oligarchical and a far cry from any democratic system, it gave Goan liberals sufficient grounds to look down on Portuguese liberal politics as no great novelty. If the positions of Filipe Nery Xavier and Francisco Luis Gomes about the future of the village communities differed diametrically, that confirms what we said earlier about the traditional caste rivalry. Filipe Nery Xavier represented the Brahmin interests, while Francisco Luis Gomes represented the Chardo point of view in a modern technocratic garb.

The acquisition of the New Conquests in the second half of the 18th century was a masterstroke of the limited military force the Portuguese had at their disposal. The Marathas had suffered a major defeat at Panipat in 1761; the Portuguese took advantage of their weakness to extend

Goa's borders till the Ghats, but it meant no great compensation for the loss of the Province of the North.

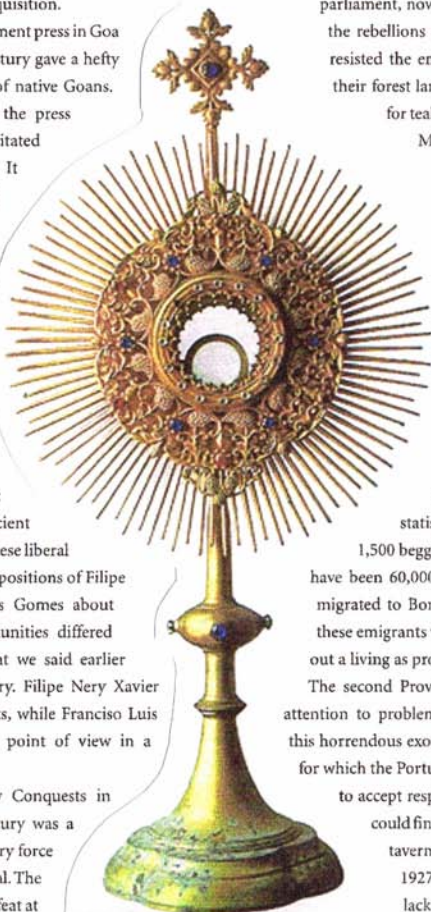
An unexpected consequence was that the campaigns of pacification of Satari psychologically boosted the "nativism" of the Brahmins in the Old Conquests. These Brahmins, who had had a tough time challenging the government-backed descendents in elections for seats in the Portuguese parliament, now derived vicarious satisfaction from the rebellions of the Ranes, who by force of arms resisted the encroachment of alien interests upon their forest lands, following the increased demand for teak that had occurred in the wake of the Mormugao railway project.

Economically, Goa had become a client state of British India, particularly after the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1878. Goa became a supplier of emigrant labour to British India and a consumer of the cheaper foodstuffs from across the border. Goa's rural scene became increasingly more desolate. When the first Goan Provincial Congress met in 1915, one participant presented

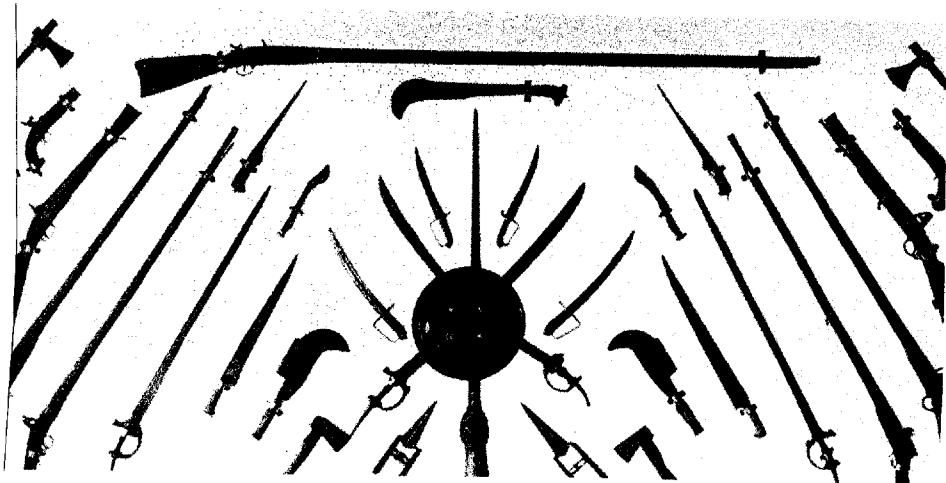
statistics of unemployment: 5,000 jobless, 1,500 beggars, 150,000 idle bodies. There would have been 60,000 more idlers, if that many had not migrated to Bombay before that date. One-third of these emigrants were women, and many of them eked out a living as prostitutes.

The second Provincial Congress in 1917 paid more attention to problems of emigration; it concluded that this horrendous exodus was a pathological phenomenon for which the Portuguese colonial administration ought to accept responsibility. Those who stayed behind could find relief in the ever-growing number of taverns. The seventh Provincial Congress in 1927 regretted the government's manifest lack of concern in controlling this vice.

Obviously, the licensing of more taverns brought more



This imposing monstrance is one of several precious examples of the superb workmanship of Goan goldsmiths. (Museum of Christian Art, Old Goa.)



The Rane clan of Sanquelim, North Goa, rebelled numerous times against Portuguese rule. Ancient firearms and swords and other weapons grace a wall of their ancestral home. (Private collection, Rane mansion, Sanquelim.)

income to a revenue-starved administration.

Despite the myth of a Portuguese common civil code of justice for all religious communities or for treating women and men on equal terms on family and inheritance issues, Hindus in Goa gained access to public office only after the proclamation of the Republic in 1910, and women in Portugal hardly enjoyed equal educational and political rights till the fall of the Salazar regime. Besides, the political and economic conditions in Goa did not allow ordinary people to benefit from such juridical plums to any significant extent.

EARLY LINK WITH INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The move for Indian independence could not but affect the colonial regime in Goa. The great majority of Goans had little voice in running their own affairs, despite the visibility of hand-picked Goan faces occupying many important positions in the administration. Some of them behaved as Salazar's "petty hirelings" and have been identified by Tristao de Braganca-Cunha in his collected essays, *Goa's Freedom Struggle*. Against such a background of colonial servitude, Braganca-Cunha played a pioneering role, setting up a Goa Congress Committee in 1928 and affiliating it with the All-India Congress Committee, thereby linking Goa's freedom with India's larger struggle for freedom. But despite the end of British rule in India, the

Portuguese considered themselves a special and different brand of "civilizers", who believed in the equal welfare of all Portuguese, at home and overseas—even though they were themselves unable to put those beliefs into practice, even at home.

The winds of freedom blowing into Goa from across the borders led to *satyagraha* campaigns that started in 1946 under the leadership of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, and reached their peak in 1954. The Portuguese began reacting ferociously to these campaigns. Indian political interests could not remain aloof, and India's role as a leader of the non-aligned movement in the world scenario required it to play up its image among the African nations that were fighting for their independence against Portuguese rule. The politics of the Cold War and India's image permitted a diplomatic isolation of Portugal internationally.

In 1951, Salazar sponsored a visit to Goa by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, whose theories of *lusotropicalism* had gained wide acclaim in the Anglo-American world. Salazar wished to tap his fame to back up his own political ideology that had enabled him to convert Portuguese colonies into "overseas provinces" by a legislative gimmick at home. However, to convince international opinion was more difficult.

FREYRE SAW GOA AS A "QUASI-NATION"

Gilberto Freyre was a sharp observer and courageous enough

to record a few truths that were certainly not palatable to the Portuguese dictator. He wrote in his *Aventura e Rotina*, a journal of his trips, that he noticed a lack of political will in Portugal to recognize the Goan talent for governing their own land. He saw no need for governors to be sent from Portugal: "Justice would require that, as a Portuguese province with so many cultured and intelligent inhabitants as one finds in India, Goa might feel it has the right to be treated as a quasi-nation and no longer as a sub-nation." Hipolito Caetano Pinto had made that case almost a century earlier.

I would like to quote here a Portuguese geographer, Orlando Ribeiro, who in 1956 was sent on a research mission to Goa along with anthropologist Mariano Feio and other specialists, to advise the Portuguese administration on planning and utilization of resources. Salazar did not like some of the observations and recommendations in Ribeiro's confidential report and shelved it; it was published only a few years ago!

The geographer had an open mind on some issues, but his patriotism clouded his vision on others. He refers to D. Altino Ribeiro de Santana as the first Goan bishop, obviously ignorant of the existence of 15 other Goan bishops, including two cardinals in independent India and in Pakistan. He also refers to some Goan doctors who graduated from the Goa Medical School, considers them ignorant of African diseases, and declares them unfit to serve there. He ignores the fact that without the dedicated service of Goan doctors trained in Goa, Africa would have continued to be a graveyard for the Portuguese who went there, hoping to find a new Brazil after Brazil itself had declared its independence.

Orlando Ribeiro also accuses Goans of having too much racial pride: "I am not personally in favour of utilizing Indians in the overseas administration," he wrote. "Contrary to Cape-Verdians, our very loyal collaborators and very Portuguese in their feelings and mentality, these Goans, even though Christians, do not give up their racial pride (considering themselves superior to the whites), their caste prejudices, and their revulsion for the blacks, whom they consider inferior. This means: as collaborators in the policy of racial non-discrimination and true assimilation, they will tend to do just the opposite of what is required. This is an obvious risk."

Even more interesting for our purpose are the following observations of the same geographer, who did not hide his wounded national pride when he wrote: "Among all Portuguese territories that I have known, Goa appears to me to be the *least*

influenced by the Portuguese, less influenced than Guinea, which was pacified in 1912! Our language is widely ignored; the local society is alien and indifferent to us, at times even hostile to our presence; Portuguese influence is very scanty; Goa is like a cancerous growth on the body of a reviving Hinduism; I was very disappointed in Goa."

His disappointment is revealed also in the sad descriptions he left of the functioning of the only two prime institutions of higher education, the Lyceum and the *Escola Medica*. The former he even named "liceu-sanatorio"! That designation had been foreshadowed in the Portuguese Parliament in 1947 by the famous Goan parasitologist, Dr. Froilano de Melo, who provided detailed statistics of the English schools growing in Goa while the Lyceum languished! He listed 63 private English schools in Goa employing 389 local teachers and 71 foreigners. They had a total of 8890 pupils, 22 times the number of those who attended the Portuguese lyceum!

LEGACY HELPED GOA ATTAIN STATEHOOD

The perceptions of Orlando Ribeiro and Gilberto Freyre are very valuable, coming as they do from well-informed intellectuals who were favourably disposed towards the colonial regime. They provide insight into what made the integration of Goa into India in 1961 a socio-political inevitability.

Goa experienced its first free and fair elections in 1963 to constitute village panchayats, replacing the outdated village communities that the colonial administration had sustained on artificial respiration and under the worn-out myth of *Fonal*. Goans elected their first legislative assembly a year later, and in a 1967 referendum (the Opinion Poll) rejected merger into the neighbouring state of Maharashtra.

Goa thus anticipated modern Portugal's democratic experience by more than a decade. But there is no denying the fact that many elements of 450 years of colonial experience contributed to Goa's preparedness to benefit from the change, and to enrich the Indian Union with its distinctive socio-cultural identity.

There may be differences of conviction and opinion about the impact of the Portuguese rule in Goa, but there is certainly a general consensus: Had it not been for Portugal's prolonged and intrusive colonial presence, Goa would never have been entitled to enjoy its statehood in the Union of India.