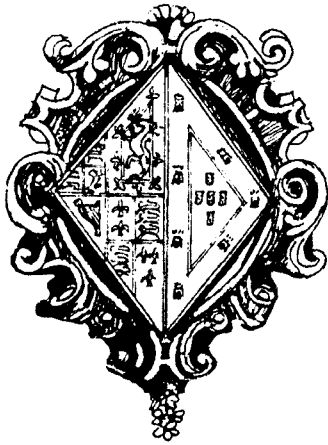


**THE BRITISH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF PORTUGAL**

THIRTY THIRD ANNUAL REPORT  
AND REVIEW 2006

Quinta Nova  
Carcavelos  
2777-601 PAREDE



## Queen Elizabeth's Visit to Portugal 1957

by Armando Marques Guedes



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh

It is not an overstatement to say that Queen Elisabeth II's visit to Portugal had two major objectives, a first one, **political** and another one of a rather more ceremonial nature: to **consolidate** the British Alliance, which had been tested during

World War II, and did so while returning General Higinio Craveiro Lopes visit to the United Kingdom less than one year before (October 1955). The Queen's visit had been planned for and arranged in great detail a long time previously.

The historical context helps to explain the mutual eagerness in the strengthening of bilateral relationships. During the world conflict, Portugal had adopted an attitude of "collaborative neutrality" in favour of the Allies and mainly focused on the old allied solicitations. After the war new questions emerged, some of defence and security, (with shared concerns on maintaining and strengthening transatlantic links as well as suspicions about any *political* processes of intercontinental integration), others, also consensual, related to the necessity felt by both States of an *economic* reconstruction-rehabilitation. The British Empire was weakened by the war effort and London was facing the disintegration of its multi-continental Empire. India was separated in 1947 and quickly and painfully was divided into the Indian Union and Pakistan; other colonies in Africa and Asia were about to follow the same process. Portugal felt under threat and for all these reasons, it was urgent to strengthen ties and to agree on positions.

The present paper is divided into two parts. Firstly a description of the Queen's trip, its rhythm and highlights. The process is approached as a sequence of symbolic acts aiming at reaffirming the historical main lines of bilateral relations that were to be reinforced; it embodied a range of actions concealing the will of engaging into more profound future negotiations about common positions to adopt in more critical front lines. A second, more analytical part of this communication elaborates on the explicit *political* and (at the

time) *present* dimensions of the visit to Portugal of the British sovereign.

1.

Beginning with the trip and the "historicist" symbolism that surrounded it: for the Queen's visit Portugal did not save on means and costs. Valuable gifts were offered, such as a *lusitana* stallion named *Bussaco* (certainly with the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, in mind), carriages were used as well as a *barge* belonging to the D. Maria I period, and the Queluz Palace was carefully prepared to lodge the British delegation.

The media was called in for an intense reporting of the event, the population was persuaded to massively acclaim the visitors anywhere they passed, in Lisbon, Oporto, or in the small towns of the West and the Ribatejo that were part of the tour.

It is easy to describe a tour that is symbolically interesting. The Queen, Prince Phillip and the children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, arrived by air, landing at the Montijo air base before boarding the *Britannia*. On February 18<sup>th</sup> the yacht crossed the Tagus harbour entrance. The Queen disembarked at the *Cais das Colunas* (Columns Quay) and was received by the President of the Republic, General Craveiro Lopes, and by the President of the Government, António de Oliveira Salazar whose "smiling face expressed respect and tenderness"<sup>1</sup>. People came to see the arrival of the Queen as they would on every occasion during the whole journey: the *Lisbona* text reads: "British crowns and Armillary spheres shined over damask drapery hung from windows"; "...the crowd, trembling with enthusiasm, waved with small British and Portuguese flags"<sup>2</sup>. After a military parade, the procession

<sup>1</sup> In the municipal magazine *Lisbona*, Lisbon City Council, year XVIII – number 72, 1st trimester 1957, pg.9.

<sup>2</sup> *Op.cit.* pg.10.

moved on, by carriage and by car, to the Queluz Palace, with a short stop at the Edward VII Park. The park is named after Elisabeth II's great-grandfather who had been there fifty years before. As the Lisbon municipal magazine reads: "thousands of persons gathered along the way, despite the constant threat of a storm"<sup>3</sup>.

The Queen received the President of the Government on that same afternoon at the Queluz Palace. In the evening, there was a reception and a formal banquet in the palace Throne Room, during which "the many diverse medals glittered on the tailcoats of the ministers, the members of the diplomatic corps and of high personalities of the Portuguese social life"<sup>4</sup>. The Queen recalled the old Alliance between the two countries and the memory of Filipa de Lencastre, spouse of D. João I and mother of Infante D. Henrique. Elisabeth II also mentioned some common interests such as NATO, meaning the transatlantic tie, and the "common cultural heritage that should be protected". She also alluded repeatedly to the "civilized world" underlining how both countries were part of it. The speech, as well as the visit, would not be well received in States that had, at that time, controversial relationships with Portugal.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, the Queen, who had expressed interest in visiting a social housing area or a social institution, went to the Ajuda neighbourhood, on the top of the Restelo hill. She also visited the Jerónimos Monastery and the Coach Museum. Although Elisabeth II had informed the Portuguese

<sup>3</sup> *Op.cit.* pg.14.

<sup>4</sup> *Op.cit.* pg.17.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with President António Salazar

authorities that she did not wish to visit hospitals nor "sick people", she met with a former Portuguese maid of her household, who was bedridden<sup>5</sup>.

Later, there was a reception and banquet at the Town Hall (*Paços do Concelho*) in which some old customs were revived, such as the presence of a herald and some pages of honour. The banquet was a moment of celebration: awaiting her arrival at the *Paços do Concelho* were the President of the Town Council, Tenente-Coronel Salvação Barreto, the Municipal executive board and some Government members. Quoting *Lisbona*: "the royal procession (...) had a herald in the front – for the first time since the reign of Filipe II – and also the *almoxarife* (royal administrator) and the State Chief of Ceremony"<sup>6</sup>. The popular impact of this pomp and

<sup>5</sup> See "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier related to the visit of Elisabeth II to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive

<sup>6</sup> *Op.cit.* pg. 22.

circumstance – carefully arranged made by the Portuguese government – was huge. As the people gathered in the *Praça do Município* insisted, the Queen appeared at the balcony to receive enthusiastic and tender acclamations. The luncheon afterwards was served in the noble saloon that was decorated with masterpieces borrowed from important families like the Espírito Santo family. After lunch, there was a reception for approximately 250 guests at the council room. A gold jewellery box was presented to the Queen. On that same day, the Queen met with representatives of the British community in Portugal. There was a banquet at the British Embassy and the day ended with a musical event at the São Carlos Theatre.

The next day, the Queen visited Nazaré, as she had requested, and Alcobaça, where she had lunch at the Monastery (in the canteen of the Order of Cister where Students from the University of Coimbra covered the floor with their cloaks). Afterwards she went to the *Batalha* Monastery where there was a ceremony in honour of the Unknown Soldier and of D. João I. The memory of the Aljubarrota Battle was highlighted as a very important conflict for the nationalism that the *Estado Novo* wanted to stress. In this battle, the British war tactics developed during the One Hundred Years War were decisive, in particular the so-called "square tactic".

After this short tour outside Lisbon, the delegation returned to the capital city, making its way back through the Ribatejo region, the Queen hosted a banquet for General Craveiro Lopes on board the *Britannia*, during which there was a firework show over the Tagus River.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, the last day, the Queen bid farewell to Craveiro Lopes, formally and definitively – she would never see him again. After the national anthems were played,



Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh with General Higinio Craveiro Lopes

Isabel II proceeded to the airport, crossing *Campo Grande* and the *Avenidas Novas* area. At the airport, there was a parade of paratroopers and the farewell to the State high dignitaries. The departure occurred at 11.00 am with a stop in Oporto, where there was a quick visit to the city to meet with British citizens residing there and to see the *Feitoria Inglesa* and the *Palácio da Bolsa*, before the final departure to England.

It is not an exaggeration to say that, in terms of public impact, the visit was a huge success for a post-war period in which the Portuguese position as part of the winning "Western Club" could be questioned, just as the Spanish position was too. Armino Monteiro, deceased at the time of the visit, had been one of the most responsible persons for the success of the visit. His untiring work as Portuguese Ambassador in London

during the War, and his efforts in favour of a strong collaboration with the United Kingdom had produced among the British a feeling of sympathy towards Portugal and even towards Salazar. Churchill had decorated Monteiro, even after his retirement, with the Order of the Bath, in a public demonstration of gratitude by the British Government.

2.

Let me now focus on the political dimension of Elizabeth II's visit to Portugal. As I already mentioned, the visit received some criticism, coming namely from the Indian Union of Nehru, because of the latent conflict on the Portuguese territories. This conflict had already caused the occupation of Dadrá and Nagar-Aveli in 1954. Let us recall that India had become independent in 1947.

Not long before 1954, India had been, in Bandung, one of the promoters of the Non-Aligned Movement and was developing a strong anti-colonial policy, including, of course, the Portuguese India. In 1956, while the visit was under preparation, an editorialist for the Indian Congress party official newspaper wrote explicitly: "we regret that the world is not able to assess (...) the bloodshed caused by the Portuguese in Goa". We regret Elizabeth II's low intelligence level". Despite Nehru's subsequent apologies, the Indian *pandita* was not able to clear British suspicions, also because he had not condemned the Soviet invasion of Hungary and because of the position he had taken on that same year of 1956 (three months before the visit) defending Egypt on the Suez conflict. It is likely that this editorial was meant as non-official reply to some British Government members, like Winston Churchill, who wanted to preserve the British Empire at any cost – particularly its jewel – and had asserted that Mahatma Gandhi could be a "semi-naked fakir".

Churchill's colonial and imperial policy was not sustainable, at least since the signature of the United Nations Charter and because of World War II related costs for the international system at many levels, some of them affecting the United Kingdom. The United States and the Soviet Union, the new global potencies, were strongly against the old colonial empires, in part because they wanted to gain influence there. After the disaster of the Suez intervention, in which both the United Kingdom and France failed to control Nasser and were forced to withdraw by the United States, revealing how weak the European potencies were, the few empires remaining after the collapse of the "central empires" in 1919 in Versailles, began to collapse. The whole World born from the 1884-1885 Conference in Berlin was disappearing. France had lost Indochina after the Dien-Bien Phu disaster, was at war in Algeria, and would soon concede independence to every colony it possessed in Africa. The United Kingdom gave in as well. Harold MacMillan took the helm in January 1957, one month before the Queen's visit to Portugal, succeeding to Anthony Eden. In that same year, independence was granted to Malaysia and to Ghana, in anticipation of many other similar secession events. Conformed to the new international board, MacMillan started a less colonial international policy, closer to the United States, becoming its preferred ally. He made an attempt also to come closer to the young EEC, but it was cut short by the Gaullist France to whom the British adherence to the European Communities was out of the question, as de Gaulle considered that "*entre l'Europe et le grand large, les Anglais preferiront toujours le grand large*".

By the time of the visit, Portuguese-British relations were complex and fragile despite an apparent solidity. In the new emerging framework, in the new international board, not everything was favourable for the old Alliance. British

manoeuvring capacity was small, even considering the good relations between the two countries. In 1958, when the Foreign Office State Secretary declared at the House of Commons, in reference to the Azores facilities, it became apparent that United Kingdom was not obligated to defend Portugal in other than the European and the Atlantic areas, leaving aside the overseas. Portuguese reaction to Britain position on the annexation of the Portuguese territories in India in 1954 (later repeated in 1960) strongly criticized the passivity of old allied Albion. It was not a unique case in this troubled epoch: the issue of Rhodesian secession – Ian Smith "white independence" – would reveal disagreement between the two countries. Since the sixties, it became clear that each country's colonial policy would follow different directions and, since then, the British would distinguish "Portugal, a colonial potency" from "Portugal, a NATO ally" (equally positive was the participation of Portugal in EFTA since 1960). The end of the British Empire and the foreign policy change in order to give preferential support to the United States (following the idea that Britain was like "Greece in the American Rome", an image that became famous) isolated Portugal in its peculiar overseas vision: Portuguese colonization was different from other models, as it involved profound ties with local populations. This vision left Portugal "proudly alone" in a changing world.

Let us return to the political aspect of Elisabeth II's visit to Portugal in February 1957. The visit raised interest and curiosity not only in India. The motive for the visit was discussed, first, in Britain, after the publishing of an article on the *News Chronicle* on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1957. The article suggested that the British and Portuguese governments were conducting secret negotiations to create an economic association between Portugal, homeland and overseas, and the

Commonwealth. This was possibly the reason why Parliament member Emrys Hughes asked the British State Secretary Selwyn Lloyd about the objective of his participation in Elisabeth II visit to Portugal. The Foreign Office Parliament Vice-Secretary, Ian Harvey, replied simply saying that Selwyn Lloyd trip to Portugal was only because he was the Minister chosen by the Queen to accompany her<sup>7</sup>. In this sense, they could be trying to remove the idea that the Queen's visit to Portugal would mean, for Portuguese-British relations, anything *more* than a simple diplomatic retribution of the visit Craveiro Lopes had made to England in 1955, or a mere reaffirmation of a long-lasting friendship and alliance. I shall return to this point.



Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

<sup>7</sup> See João de Lucena (Affairs Attaché at the Embassy of Portugal in London) mail to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paulo Cunha, on February 1957, "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier related to the visit of Elisabeth II to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Let me first extend the scope of this analysis. Taking for analytical reference Elisabeth II's speech in *Queluz*, I will try to elaborate on the visit context in view of the new geo-strategic environment, in the perspective of Portugal and Britain common vectors – the Atlantic (including the new *transatlanticism*), the colonial and the new regional winds blowing towards a bigger European integration. I will focus, naturally, on the Portuguese perspective. My text will enhance how these three vectors are intertwined and mutually constituting.

In fact, in the *Queluz* speech, one can identify *two essential images of the bilateral Portuguese-British relationship, including a political and institutional context in its regional and global dimensions*. The first one (almost trans-historic) reflects respect and satisfaction for the exclusive ancientness and continuity of an alliance that has served the interest of both parts<sup>8</sup>. This has no real meaning unless considered in the framework of contingencies and structural changes emerging since then in the international society. This resourceful link was, in fact, explicit. The Queen said, for example, "*in a changing world, the 600 years old Alliance between our two countries shines out as an example of constancy which can well hearten others besides ourselves*."

<sup>8</sup> This image gains evidence through references to the visit of Edward VII, to John of Gaunt and his daughter Filipa de Lencastre, as well as in the following statement: "[t]hose times seem now very remote. Yet at that epoch was laid the foundation of that alliance and friendship which today, to their mutual benefit, binds our two countries together. I do not think any two countries in the world can point to a friendship so ancient yet so solid." On the other hand, a notion of the historic affinity of Portuguese-British aims is vehemently expressed in the idea that both countries shared the ambition of – this sentence is remarkable – "*convert the dreams and fables of contemporary Europe in to the coastlines and rivers of the Known world*". See Queen Elisabeth II speech at the banquet offered by the President of the Republic of Portugal on February 18, 1957, "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier related to the visit of Elisabeth II to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive, pgs.1 and 2.

*May it continue to inspire generations yet unborn*"<sup>9</sup>. This seems to show not only a preference for a relative stability of the political-strategic planning, but also an *ethic* option (may be even, *aesthetic*) on *identity permanence* anchors, an *ontological* security (a characteristic of the institutional monarchic thinking), to the detriment of the authentic epistemological revolution the new regime was spelled out.

The second image (current and localised) refers to the proximity and convenience of the Portuguese-British relationship as an emancipating force, framed by the complex and troubled international political-institutional and ideological context of the Cold War. In effect, Elisabeth II declared, loud and clear, the solidity of the economic relationship between Portugal and Britain, expressing interest in its further development. She placed both States within the shared institutional framework of NATO and OECE, referring these as *the two basic* organizations of the Western world. She acknowledged the shared civilisation heritage, pointing to a mutual duty to preserve it from threatening dangers and to enrich it through effective Portuguese-British cooperation<sup>10</sup>.

This all makes a lot of sense when it is placed within the historical context of those times and as far as it is confronted with the bilateral and multilateral conjuncture. In effect, at that time, Britain was Portugal's major economic partner. The same is true for the bilateral financial relationship – for instance, the huge debt to Portugal assumed by Britain during the world conflict. However, the scope and the strategic depth of this relationship were far beyond the realm of

<sup>9</sup> See Queen Elisabeth II speech at the banquet offered by the President of the Republic of Portugal on February 18, 1957, "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier related to the visit of Elisabeth II to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive, pg. 2.

<sup>10</sup> See Queen Elisabeth II speech at the banquet offered by the President of the Republic of Portugal on February 18, 1957, "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier related to the visit of Elisabeth II to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive, pg. 2.



exchanges between the two countries. Historically, in key moments, the United Kingdom represented for Portugal, within the bilateral alliance, an Atlantic mediator against the dominance of Continental European States threatening to suffocate the Western part of the Iberia Peninsula (e.g. Windsor Treaty and the Avis agreement against "Spanish" hegemony, e.g. British support during Napoleon invasions).

Since the Windsor Treaty Portugal bet on the strategic notion of the Atlantic as some sort of *great equilibrator* (even the way down to Africa can easily be framed into this Atlantic logic), although it meant accepting every associated opportunity cost<sup>11</sup>. By the time of the foundation of NATO and of Portuguese integration, in 1949, the centre of the Western power had already moved to the other side of the Atlantic, ending the so-called euroworld (a phenomena enhanced by the Suez crisis in 1956).

In this respect, the question if the United States, as a strategic Atlantic centre, would ever have a role, *mutatis mutandis*, somehow equivalent to Britain's functional role, replacing it in its *great equilibrator* function, would be relevant. However, Salazar's suspicions regarding the United States, as well as his strategic priority - the preservation of the Empire - made him view NATO as a complementary tool of the Portuguese-British alliance. In theory, the alliance was a potential support for the implementation of Salazar's thesis about "Euro-Africa", favouring a systemic tri/multipolarization. It could also guarantee the feasibility of the relative isolation that Salazar wanted. In this perspective, Britain still played, in the middle fifties, a role of *partial equilibrator*, at least as Salazar understood it. However, the

<sup>11</sup> See Methuen, and the constant British interference in the coisa pública soberana Portuguesa, particularly by the time of emergence of the Nineteenth century liberal revolution, in Portugal entry in World War I in 1916, in World War II Portuguese neutrality compromised by favouritism towards Britain and the rest of the Allies.

world had changed and some time later Britain refused to comply with the Euro-African thesis defended by the Portuguese Ancient Regime.

Nevertheless, the equilibrium presented by Britain did not stop here. Let us see. OECE was not restricted to the implementation of the Marshall Plan. It became the centre of the reorganisation and intensification of intra-European economic links. At this higher level, Portuguese and British positions were very close. Both Britain and Portugal traditionally rejected federal and supranational projects. The 1951 CECA and the "French" project on the Customs union produced by the Messina Conference in 1955 (EEC embryo) incorporated hints of a federal logic for its six members (France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and Germany). For this reason, Britain and Portugal did not want to participate in these projects. It is worth underlining why: on one hand, in name of their own sovereignty, they rejected any supranational image *per se*; on the other hand, they believed that Europe *alone* could not face the United States (also seen as equilibrator) as a competing unified bloc; they needed their colonies. For these "euro-sceptic" States, as far as Europe was concerned, union yes, *ma non troppo*. Therefore, for Britain and for Portugal, OECE was the best venue for economic cooperation; hence, a free trade project was launched. In 1957, the "Six" signed the Treaty of Rome, creating EEC in a more unified economic logic, rejecting the British proposal for OECE. Neither Portugal nor the United Kingdom were part of the group.

However, the benefits of some reinforced economic interdependence, as one would call it today, did not escape the two "Euro-reluctant" countries. In 1958-1959, Portugal managed to access the Geneva Conference (supposedly secret)

which would create EFTA in 1960, as a reliable alternative to the failed British project. This kind of economic integration suited well Salazar's interests without affecting his independency concerns and, once more, confirmed the equilibrator role of Britain – in this case, in relation to a more integrated EEC bloc. In fact, the notion that Britain acted as Portugal's doorway to the European and the new international community was correct. EFTA helped Portugal to gain stability and credibility, producing a cycle of exceptional economic growth, exceeding the trade between the Mainland and Africa.

In this sense, it is possible to say that Portuguese-British relationships created a Salazar type of *Weltanschauung*, not excluding a Euro-vision, although a very peculiar one. It is in this complex framework that the Queen's visit occurred, reinforcing the centrality of an alliance that seemed to serve and protect the civilisation heritage common to both countries, and always with NATO and OECE institutional interaction.

I should like to conclude with some critical considerations. The visit had, in fact, repercussions in some parts of the world. It was documented on film in Hong Kong and was much appreciated by Goanese gathered in Nairobi<sup>12</sup>. In Portugal, popular impact was tremendous. In a perspective not so public or celebrating as political, Elisabeth II visit to Portugal did *not* have the all the effect expected, *at least in the mid-term*. Although it consolidated the Portuguese-British Alliance, the visit did not help as potential protection against the loss of the Overseas by the *Estado Novo* regime, because of the British foreign policy. The following years and events did not show much support by the British on the preservation of

---

<sup>12</sup> See "Assuntos Políticos" Dossier relative to Elisabeth II visit to Portugal in 1957, Diplomatic Archive.

the Portuguese colonies. Harold MacMillan offered, unsuccessfully, to act as mediator between Portugal and India in the Goan issue. This turned out no more than a dilatory action: the de-colonisation job and the approximation to the United States (so much hope for by the old Albion), did not allow any help to Portugal.

However, let us not forget that it was the equilibrium favoured by the Portuguese-British relationship, in association with the western institutions – both on the Atlantic and European dimensions – that allowed a significant reduction of the Portuguese strategic vulnerability, particularly in the face of a Europe in which Portugal was participating less and less. In this perspective, the visit of the Queen was not only successful: it was a very important symbolic milestone, even more than the visit of her great-grandfather, King Edward VII, at the beginning of the twentieth century, which occurred in another framework and in a context less resolvable through large scale diplomatic manoeuvres.