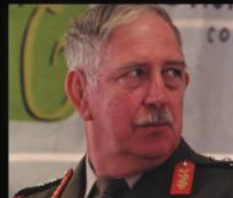


HILTON HAMANN

“Essential reading for history buffs and those interested in politics and the military.”
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DAYS OF THE GENERALS



The untold story of South Africa's
apartheid-era military generals

ZEBRA





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THE ROAD TO LUANDA

In 1973, when António de Spínola, a hero in Portugal's colonial wars and one-time governor of Guinea-Bissau, sat down to write a book, he could never have imagined that it would help change the course of world history, affecting millions of lives. He probably figured the worst that could happen would be to be stripped of his military commission and fired from the civil service. But *Portugal and the Future* (*Portugal e o Futuro*) toppled the first domino in a worldwide cascade:

- The Portuguese government fell in a coup and De Spínola became head of state.
- The Soviet Union and the United States become embroiled in a conflict lasting 15 years.
- Around half a million South Africans went to war.
- South Africa became a major armaments producer.
- Thousands of soldiers and civilians died and countless more were maimed and crippled.
- South Africa lost the protectorate of South West Africa (Namibia).
- The destruction of apartheid began, with the eventual handover of power to a black majority government in South Africa.

When *Portugal and the Future* was published in Lisbon on 22 February 1974, the timing for maximum impact was perfect. The country was in political and economic chaos.

Portugal's troubles had started 64 years earlier, in 1910, when the monarchy was toppled in a popular republican revolution. Political, social and economic disasters followed in rapid succession and the country quickly slid into ruin. In the 16 years of the republic's existence it averaged three governments and one revolution per year – 1921, for example, saw seven changes of administration.

In 1926 the country breathed a collective sigh of relief when General António de Fragoso Carmona took power in a military coup. The new military rulers' first order of business was to restore the devastated economy – a task they assigned to Dr António de Oliveira Salazar, a young professor of economics at the University of Coimbra, who had come to prominence after publishing a number of articles. Salazar was appointed Minister of Finance in 1928 and immediately put tough economic policies in place. These, although unpopular with the country's workers, resulted in a budget surplus the following year – the first time that had happened in 15 years.

Over the next few years Salazar repeated this feat and slowly restored Portugal's economic and political self-respect. In 1932 he became Prime Minister, and in 1933 he introduced a new constitution that effectively made him dictator of the country. During the 50 years of his rule, having declared a 'new state', and banning all opposition parties, trade unions and strikes, he tightened control over Portugal's African colonies. This he did by vigorously pursuing a policy of closer integration with the mother country and officially designating the colonies 'overseas provinces'. Salazar encouraged immigration by white settlers and decreed Portuguese the only language taught in colonial schools – a situation that made indigenous populations very unhappy.

In 1961 the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) began to launch armed attacks against its colonial masters. Its example was quickly followed in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Salazar was under pressure, and countered by introducing military conscription, calling up thousands of soldiers. But the African wars were unpopular. Ordinary mothers were reluctant to send their sons to die in a faraway country, and, increasingly, conscripts were no longer prepared to be called up for military duty. Over a period of 13 years, 11 000 Portuguese boys died in combat (a figure not considered excessive by military commanders), while 30 000 more were wounded or mutilated and became a constant reminder of a war that seemed unwinnable. Draft-dodging and emigration gathered momentum. In 1973 half of all soldiers called up for military service refused to report. As a result of emigration and conscription, Portugal lost half its labour force. This held back the development of industry and saw large agricul-