



Portuguese Heritage Society of California

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SAVE THE DATE: DIA DE PORTUGAL ON JUNE 10

Dia de Portugal, the year's big event, is months away, but mark your calendar now for June 10, 2017. Always on the second Saturday of June, this year it is the actual date of Portugal's national holiday, the anniversary of the death of the great poet Camões on June 10, 1580. And this is a landmark year, the twentieth annual Portuguese celebration at History Park in San Jose's Kelley Park.



Is your family among the early settlers to come to Santa Clara Valley? Last year the Museum started an exhibit which we want to expand by adding more stories of pioneer families. Please call us (408-293-3053) or e-mail us (machado0568@sbcglobal.net) or write us (PO Box 18277, San Jose 95158), and we'll help with more details. Museum visitors are interested to learn that many well-known and important places were once the sites of Portuguese-owned dairy farms or orchards or businesses, such as Vasona Park in Los Gatos.

GUTERRES NEW UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

The new Secretary-General of the United Nations is Antonio Guterres, a diplomat and former Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002 and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 2005 until the end of 2015. Guterres began his duties as the UN's chief executive on January 1, 2017. He has pledged to seek peace in the world.

Guterres studied physics and electrical engineering and began teaching before turning to politics in 1974. He was active in Socialist Party leadership and was among negotiators who led Portugal's entry to the European Union. A popular prime minister, he worked to control government spending and inflation, to increase employment, to raise investment in education, and to involve the non-profit sector in providing welfare services.

As UN refugee commissioner he led one of the world's largest humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance to over 60 million displaced persons.

Guterres has received honors and awards from many countries and organizations and honorary doctorates from four universities.

The Portuguese community can take pride in his past and wish him success in the future.





PORTUGAL IN AFRICA

Portuguese explorers looking for a route to the valuable spices in the Orient went southward along Africa's west coast, around the Cape of Good Hope, then northwards along Africa's east coast before heading east to Asia. These early trips were the basis of the widespread colonial empire which Portugal once had.

Guinea-Bissau, 1446

In 1446 Portuguese traders first explored African coastal areas and established scattered settlements a little north of the equator. The area came to be known as Portuguese Guinea. The Europeans were mostly restricted to the towns of Cacheu and Bissau (the city whose name is in the country's present-day name, to distinguish it from other areas named Guinea).

From about 1462 the country was managed as a dependency of the Cabo Verde islands. Mestizo settlers from Cabo Verde controlled much of the region's trade and were a substantial portion of a privileged assimilated population. Colonial rule was harsh particularly during the regime of Antonio Salazar when there was liberal use of violence and forced labor. There was a lack of infrastructure - only one high school - and literacy was just 1%, the lowest in Portugal's African colonies.

An African Party for Independence had a strategy of peaceful negotiation until the 1959 massacre of 50 striking dock workers in Bissau. The struggle turned violent and became war until independence in 1974. Joint governance with Cabo Verde had continued, but there were social and political tensions between rural Portuguese Guinea and predominantly urban Cabo Verde. This suspended plans for unification and most Cabo Verdeans left.

Political factionalism and power struggles continued with a series of military revolts and elections. Sustainable peace, democracy, and development are particularly challenging. Once expected to be a model of African development, Guinea-Bissau is now one of the world's poorest countries. More than 2/3 of the population lives below the poverty level. Adding to its problems, the country has become a transshipment point for Latin American drugs destined for Europe.

Portuguese is the country's official language, but French is taught in schools because all surrounding countries are French speaking. There are now several high schools and even universities offering courses in medicine and law. Literacy is now estimated at 55%.

Cabo Verde, 1462

Cabo Verde is an archipelago of ten volcanic islands about 320 miles off the northwest coast of Africa. The islands were uninhabited until the Portuguese settled there in 1462. This was an ideal location for ocean-based trade—a commercial center for re-supplying ships and a stop-over on shipping routes. Early prosperity came from the intercontinental slave trade which ended in 1875. Settlers in Cabo Verde came from Portugal and intermarried with plantation workers brought from Africa. This produced a relatively homogenous mestizo (black/white) population with a distinctive creole culture.

Twentieth century African nationalism led to efforts towards independence. After independence in 1974 Cabo Verde had a one-party government system but changed to a multi-party system in 1990. There was no violence, no civil war, and elections have been democratic and peaceful. Cabo Verde is now considered one of the most democratic nations in the world.

Despite a lack of natural resources, Cabo Verde's economic growth and improved living conditions have won international recognition. Since 2007 the UN has classified it as a "developing nation" rather than a "least developed country." The economy is service-oriented. Tourism is the growing sector. The many Cabo Verdeans who have gone to other countries contribute to the economy by sending money to their homeland. They had left because of the scarcity of arable land for farming. Nowadays more people are going to Cabo Verde than are leaving. These arrivals include people from the West African coast and China who enjoy the relatively high per capita income, political and social stability, and freedom.

Cabo Verde has an excellent educational system with over 90% literacy, and roughly 25% of the people have a college degree. The official language is Portuguese but kriolo, a dialect from Portuguese, is the mother tongue of almost everyone. One of Cabo Verde's most famous persons is the late singer Cesária Évora, whose songs were emblems of the country and its culture.

Angola, 1484

The first Portuguese settlement in Angola was limited to coastal trading posts principally for sending Angolan slaves to Brazilian plantations in exchange for manufactured goods from Europe. Inland development began at the end of the 1800's with establishment of coffee and sugar plantations. Between 1890 and 1922 there were more than 90 Portuguese military campaigns to establish control, but there was little investment in education or infrastructure. Under the government of Antonio Salazar (1930's-1960's) there was a program of settling poor Portuguese peasants in Angola's central highlands where the land was taken from the Africans who were forced to work. Local discontent increased and was met with more settlers, more repression, more soldiers, more forced labor. Armed conflict began in 1961 and Portugal responded with ever-larger military campaigns. By 1970 there were 60,000 Portuguese soldiers in Angola.



There were three insurgent groups that immediately fought for dominance after Angola gained independence in 1975. Portuguese citizens, who had been the majority of skilled workers living there, fled and Angola's economy fell into bankruptcy. The mass exodus created up to 300,000 destitute refugees, the retornados who had to find homes back in Portugal.

Civil war in Angola lasted almost 30 years until 2002. For most of 1975-1990 the regime was Marxist, backed by Cuban support. There were reforms, and the government has moderated but is still not a democracy. Besides the tragedy of millions of deaths due to war, there is a serious situation of land mines still closely placed in many regions. People cannot farm these lands because of the danger from the mines.

Angola is rich in oil, especially, and in diamonds and other minerals. In recent years, now that fighting has stopped, there has been great economic improvement. Education and infrastructure have improved in this very large country, bigger than Texas and California combined!

São Tomé and Príncipe, 1493

One of the world's smallest countries (only 380 square miles) is São Tomé and Príncipe, two islands right on the equator off the west coast of Africa. Uninhabited until the Portuguese came in 1493 to establish a plantation economy based on sugar cane and slaves brought from the mainland, it was flourishing in the 1500's, and by 1600 the annual production was 12,000 tons. But competition from Brazil, a poor sugar quality, and assaults from runaway slaves caused a huge drop in production. By the 17th century the plantation system was replaced by subsistence farming, the land holders being the creole descendants of the white settlers and the African slave women. In 1787 coffee was introduced and cocoa in 1822. Again the Portuguese established plantations. When slavery was abolished in 1875 contract workers came from Angola, Cabo Verde, and Mozambique. The Portuguese owned 90% of the land. Cocoa production surpassed coffee; 30,000 tons of cocoa were produced in 1909. When British cocoa buyers learned of harsh living conditions of the workers, they boycotted the product.

When independence was granted in 1975, a one-party state based on the Soviet model was established. The government nationalized the Portuguese-owned properties. The state-owned companies were mismanaged; production dropped from 10,000 tons in 1974 to 3,400 tons in 1984, and the country became dependent on foreign aid. A multi-party democracy was established in 1990. The plantations were dismantled, and lands were distributed to former workers. Living conditions are primitive; mass poverty has increased. There are schools to the high school level, no universities. Literacy is about 70%.

Mozambique, 1498

Explorer Vasco da Gama claimed this coastal area of southwest Africa in 1498. Arab merchants had traded with local Africans for centuries, trading in slaves as well as in gold and ivory. Because Portugal was more occupied with trade with India and in the Far East and with the colonization of Brazil, much of the administration of Mozambique was left to private companies (in effect, by leases). In the 1940's Portugal took a greater interest in the area, establishing settlements of Portuguese by taking land from native Africans. Movements for African independence spread to Mozambique. Sporadic warfare began in 1964, and it became independent after the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal. Thousands of Portuguese living in Mozambique left, either fleeing in fear or forced out.

The new government established a one-party state based on Marxist principles. A violent civil war, 1977 to 1992, between communists and anti-communists took a million lives, and 1.7 million fled to nearby countries. A new constitution in 1990 provided for capitalism over Marxism, a multi-party system, and free elections. Civil war ended in 1992. By 1993 more than 1.5 million who had fled were now back home in Mozambique.

Despite recent economic growth, the country remains one of the world's poorest and most underdeveloped. Corruption is a problem. Educational facilities are inadequate. Portuguese is the national language but there are many local languages. Literacy is about 55%.

Comments

Today we look upon the slave trade from Africa as a shameful blot on history. The facts that there was slavery as far back as Roman times and that African rulers sold their own people, don't make slavery right but do explain how it seemed acceptable at one time.

The failure of colonial powers, including Portugal, to invest in their colonies is partly responsible for later hard times, especially in Africa. The violence in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique has contributed to their lagging economic development and political instability. Compare the present-day good government and freedom in peaceful Cabo Verde.





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ADEGA RESTAURANT EARNS PRIZED STAR

The first ever and the only Michelin starred restaurant in San Jose is *Adega* serving dinners of Portuguese specialties at 1614 Alum Rock Avenue. It is a huge honor and accomplishment to earn the coveted Michelin star; only 54 restaurants in all of Northern California (Bay Area/Wine Country) have achieved this (33 of them in San Francisco). *Adega* is the first Portuguese restaurant on the West Coast to receive a star; there is one on the East Coast.

Be sure to make reservations for fine dining at *Adega*: 408-926-9075 or www.adegarest.com.

Congratulations to chefs David Costa and Jessica Carreira and owners Carlos and Fernanda Carreira.

We can be very proud of this wonderful asset in the Portuguese community!



FORMER PRESIDENT MARIO SOARES DIES



Mario Soares, one of the most important figures in modern Portuguese history, died January 7, 2017 at age 92. Elected in 1976, he was the first prime minister after the 1974 Carnation Revolution which ended 40 years of dictatorship established by Antonio Salazar in the 1930’s. He thwarted attempts at a communist takeover. In 1986 he was elected Portugal’s first civilian president in 60 years. His broad popularity assured his reelection to a second five-year term. He was respected by leaders worldwide.

Of Interest to Portuguese: NEW MOVIE, *SILENCE*

Silence is a new (general release, mid-January 2017) movie with an important Portuguese connection. It is a historical drama set in Nagasaki, Japan in 1670 where two Portuguese Catholic priests are searching for their mentor, another Portuguese priest. This is the time of the “Hidden Christians” which followed the defeat of Japanese Roman Catholics in the Shimabara Rebellion against the Tokugawa shogunate.

The film was directed by the prominent Martin Scorsese and has received good reviews.



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