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Richard A. Lobban, Jr. *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation.* Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995. xiii + 186 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8133-8451-1.

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This is an interesting book on the "other Africa"–that is, Portuguese-speaking Africa. Precious little research is done on these countries, and Richard Lobban's book is a welcome contribution. The approach is clearly cultural but includes a deep exploration of political history. There is an impressive richness of information in this book, which may also be its main weakness; too much information requires a more organized and systematic presentation. Sometimes there is a risk of becoming lost in the details. At other places the text becomes a bit repetitive about some Cape Verdean cultural elements.

Cape Verde's existence is a result of Portugal's commercial adventure, which sent traders and sailor to explore the world. Originally an uninhabited group of islands, Cape Verde was populated mostly by African slaves under a small elite of Portuguese traders and a few of their European and North African trade partners. Most of the slave population originated in the Senegambia with a later contribution from Angola. The role attributed to this island within the Portuguese maritime empire was strongly oriented toward trade with the Western coast of Africa and heavily focused on the slave trade. The strategic position of Cape Verde on the shipping lanes of Western Africa also contributed to the creation of rich international contacts.

The first Portuguese occupation of the islands introduced the *donatario* plantations, exploited with slave labor. Lobban sees here a feudal system transported from Portugal. This is my only important disagreement with Lobban. The labor relationships within the *donatario* plantation are not feudal, and neither are its political and military roles.

Nature was not prodigal with Cape Verde. Agricultural possibilities are quite limited, and the islands suffer from periodic drought. This has encouraged emigration, and seamanship is a long-implanted tradition in the islands. Today there is a significant Cape Verdean population living abroad. Their remittances are a significant contribution to the otherwise troubled balance of payments.

The complex ethnic mosaic, a close relationship with the Senegambian trade, close political and administrative links with Guinea-Bissau, a richness of international contacts, and a harsh nature contributed to create the Crioulo culture. This culture expresses itself mainly in language, but also in the music, religious practices, and other social elements nicely described by Lobban. His discussion of the Crioulo culture is possibly the best part of this book.

Cape Verdeans fought abroad for independence from Portugal. Cape Verdeans had prominent roles in the Portuguese colonial administration, at least within its non-European part. The consequences were a somewhat higher educational level than in other Portuguese colonies, closer contacts with Portuguese revolutionary movements fighting against Salazar's fascist dictatorship, and intellectuals with an earlier interest in politics and independence.

However, Cape Verdeans chose to fight Portuguese colonialism in the jungles of Guinea-Bissau rather than in their own islands. At least two factors were decisive in this choice. First, there were inherent difficulties in conducting a clandestine struggle in the small and closed society of the islands. Second, close administrative, political, and cultural links with Guinea-Bissau made natural the choice of this country's jungles as the battlefield for independence. Thus when Amilcar Cabral, born in Guinea-Bissau to Cape Verdean parents, formed the "African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde" (PAIGC), Cape Verdeans played a central role in it and in the subsequent struggle against Portugal.

Lobban presents this struggle for independence with the authority and the engagement of an eyewitness. The administrative and military levels of efficiency reached by the PAIGC are a bit surprising. Guinean and Cape Verdean independence fighters were more successful than expected. However, military success and effective

control of territory was a reality only in Guinea-Bissau at the moment of the Portuguese Revolution. Massive demonstrations in the islands rapidly dissipated any illusions that Portugal had about keeping its colonial power on Cape Verde after independence in Guinea-Bissau.

Thus, governments led by the PAIGC were installed both in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in a one-party, two-country system. Later after a military coup led by Nino Vieira deposed Luis Cabral's government in Bissau, the unity of the party broke and Cape Verde turned to a one-party and one-country system. During the 1990s the islands moved to a multi-party democratic system. Recently Cape Verde went through a rare experience for Africa: a shift of power through open and democratic elections.

Lobban's book is an excellent source of information and an important reference about Cape Verde. However, the book would have benefited a great deal from a better organization of the information offered. And, as mentioned earlier, I disagree with his interpretation of the *donatario* plantation as a feudal structure.

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