



ISSN 2336-3274 (Print) ISSN 2570-7558 (Online)

<https://edu.uhk.cz/africa>

Lopes, José Vicente. 2012. Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memórias E Verdades (Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths) [Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths]. 2nd edition, Praia: Instituto da Investigação e do Património Culturais (IIPC), Vol. I – 249 pages,

Author:

Jan Klíma – Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové, The Czech Republic

Recommended citation:

Klíma, J. (2013). Lopes, José Vicente. 2012. Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memórias E Verdades (Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths) [Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths]. 2nd edition, Praia: Instituto da Investigação e do Património Culturais (IIPC), Vol. I – 249 pages, *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, 1(1), 146147. Retrieved from <https://edu.uhk.cz/africa/index.php/ModAfr/article/view/54>



University of Hradec Králové
Philosophical Faculty

Lopes, José Vicente. 2012. *Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memórias E Verdades (Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths)* [Tarrafal – Chão Bom, Memories and Truths]. 2nd edition, Praia: Instituto da Investigação e do Património Culturais (IIPC), Vol. I – 249 pages, Vol. II – 390 pages.

The leading Cape Verdean historian José Vicente Lopes (*1959, Mindelo, São Vicente Island, Cape Verde) became famous after publishing his works dealing with the independence of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. His *Cabo Verde. Bastidores da Independência* (1996) and the 2nd enlarged edition in 2002 (Praia: Spleen Edições) the 3rd edition is currently being prepared. The short complement called *Cabo Verde. As Causas da Independência* (Praia: Spleen Edições, 2003) is indispensable as well for those who want to know all the circumstances of the independence process. When conceiving these works the author made use of his journalist profession to gather unique information not only by studying primary and secondary sources, but also by interviewing personalities from different countries and political orientations.

The same method can be observed in the monumental twin-book concerning the history of Tarrafal. So far the first phase of the Tarrafal penal colony has been well analyzed (Francisco Soares. 1977. *Tarrafal, campo da morte lenta*. 3ª ed., Lisboa: Editorial Avante; José Manuel Soares Tavares. 2006. *O Campo de Concentração do Tarrafal: a origem e o quotidiano /1936-1954/*. Lisboa: Colibri) when Portuguese adversaries of the Salazar authoritarian regime were kept in the prison, José Vicente Lopes describes and documents the second phase (1961-1974) of the “camp of the slow death” situated in the northern part of the Santiago island, Cape Verde. After the “African Year” the reopened jail in Chão Bom close to the town of Tarrafal served for persecuting African nationalists from Portuguese “overseas provinces”, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde above all.

The shorter (without specifying whether first or second) of the two volumes gives the history of the Tarrafal camp along with the “disease of the 20th century” - political persecution and the erection of concentration camps all over the world. The author’s speech makes it possible to get acquainted with the origins of the Tarrafal prison and with its Angolan, Guinean and Cape Verdean prisoners. Due to its international condemnation the concentration camp even received visits from the Red Cross officials considering activities of the jail directors and the quotidian life of its African prisoners. Their work and endeavour to survive is depicted by means of individual stories and fates.

In the more extensive volume the author reveals his journalist profession. He gathers numerous interviews in four main parts headed Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and Other Statements. After spending a shorter or a longer period of time in Tarrafal the prisoners answer the author’s questions to

explain their postures, experiences and conclusions. José Vicente Lopes has taken notes directly in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, spoke with Portuguese, Mozambican and other prisoners and officials. For the historical evaluation of the African resistance and the nationalist struggle for the independence of several African countries testimonies of e. g. José Luandino Vieira (Angola), Constantino Lopes da Costa (Guinea-Bissau) or Fernando dos Reis Tavares (Cape Verde) among others are precious contributions which would have disappeared without the author's diligence.

José Vicente Lopes uses mostly the term "working camp" instead of the expression "concentration camp" which was used before. While providing the space for many personal witness statements and other evidence he gives a broad historical account of the real process leading up to the independence of African countries from Portugal. The work with many references, rare illustrations, prisoner lists and indexes is therefore an important source of information about the history of the "African awakening" (Basil Davidson) born in oppression, struggle and solidarity.

Jan Klíma

Lopes, José Vicente. 2012. *Aristides Pereira. Minha Vida, Nossa História* [Aristides Pereira. My Life, Our History]. Praia: Spleen Edições, 493 pages.

The life and work of the leading PAIGC/PAICV representative and first president of Cape Verde (1975-1991) Aristides Maria Pereira (1923-2011) is a chronicle of the events which took place in the vast Portuguese overseas empire, particularly Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, during the second half of the 20th century. Although Pereira himself published his political biography (*Uma luta, um partido, dois países*. Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2003) the skilled journalist José Vicente Lopes gives a new account of this statesman's legacy. In the form of an extensive interview he describes briefly the childhood of this Catholic priest's son in the Boa Vista and Santiago islands, Cape Verde. Later on, the author presents Pereira's colonial career in Guinea-Bissau in more detail. However, he dedicates his principal attention to activities of Cape Verdeans including Pereira in the liberation struggle between 1960 and 1974. Pereira's top period 1975-1991 when executing the highest post in Cape Verde deserves the detailed depiction as well. Then, the author completes the work with shorter concluding chapters "Private life" and "Final balance".