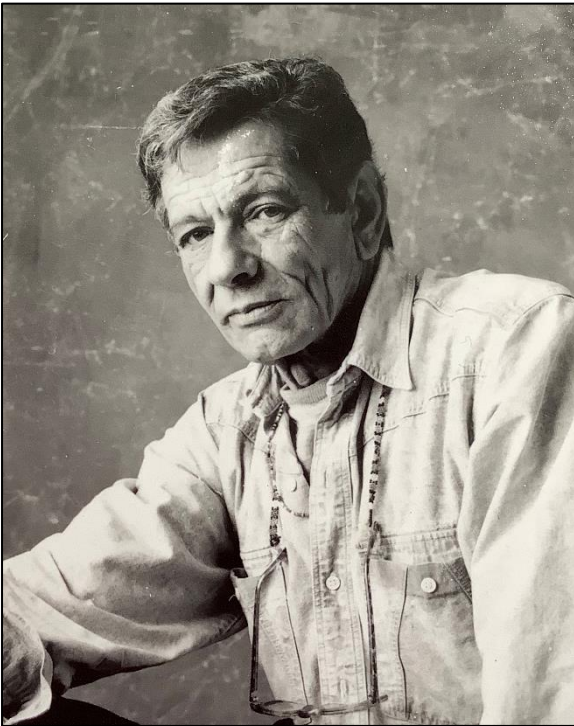


IN MEMORIAM: THE LIFE AND LIVES OF CARLOS SANTOS

The Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University has nurtured many remarkable students, but surely none more so than Carlos Santos. Born in colonial Mozambique early in the Second World War, Carlos died in the summer of 2020 in Covid Wales. He crammed many lives into his 79 years.



I first got to know Carlos shortly after I became Head of Department in 1999. As the new EH Carr Professor I organised a series of ‘Carr Workshops’ - monthly ‘teach-ins’ on Saturday mornings, open to all, on critical and contested issues in international politics. Among the institutions we specifically invited was Coleg Harlech, a historic adult educational establishment about 50 miles up the coast. Carlos, then in his late 50s, had

recently enrolled as a student, and together with a few friends became a regular attendee. He quickly made himself known, for he loved to talk, relished arguing, and invariably asked the first – long and challenging – question to the presenters. As Workshop Chair, my first contact with Carlos involved urging him to put a question-mark at the end of one of his sentences, so the presenters could reply.

After completing his Diploma in Coleg Harlech, Carlos moved down the coast and joined the Department. Following the completion of his Degree he lived in Aber for a few years and then moved to south Wales. Until the end of his life, he stayed in touch with the many students, lecturers, and people in Aber he had got to know.

I spoke to Carlos on the phone minutes before he went to hospital for the last time. I now sadly recall that when I first knew him – when he was a student - I had to try to stop him talking; I then became a friend who desperately wishes he were here now, to talk his heart out about his rich and fascinating life.

In helping me prepare this tribute, I have benefitted enormously from discussions with many people - members of his wonderful family, friends, former students in the Department, and past and present members of staff. I wish to record my thanks to them all for sharing so many poignant stories and recollections. Any mistakes of omission or commission are mine.

Ken Bush

Head of Department 1999-2005, and EH Carr Professor 1999-2008.

As old certainties caved in across southern Africa through the 1960s and beyond – imperialism, colonisation, Cold War, apartheid – Carlos struggled to navigate the complexities of identity, the entanglements of local and international politics, and simply living and providing for a family. He experienced this era of historic turmoil as a schoolboy, an entrepreneur, a political prisoner, a marine conservationist, an anti-communist, a congenital risk-taker, and above all a character for whom it was impossible to be a bystander.

In the early 1990s Carlos left South Africa and settled in the UK, where he and his family established a 'legendary' beach café in Cornwall – 'Café Mozambique'.

Following its collapse - and his own - he became a student of international affairs.

In the final quarter of his life he discovered a vocation - the pursuit of learning - he would never have imagined in his earlier wilder days.

Carlos Manuel de Carvalho e Azevedo Duarte Santos was born in the capital of Mozambique, Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) on 13 October 1940. His parents were Carlos Duarte Santos, a businessman, and Maria (née José de Carvalho e Azevedo) a volunteer nurse decorated by the Portuguese Red Cross. Both had been born in Lisbon and subsequently emigrated to Mozambique – then a Portuguese colony for over 400 years.

Carlos attended schools in Lourenço Marques until, aged 17, he was sent by his father to Middleburg High School in the Transvaal to learn English. This immersion into racially-obsessed Afrikaner society was a demanding test of character for a boy who was not only an extrovert but also had olive-skin and black curly hair. He did not speak a word of Afrikaans, and his heritage was 'Portuguese'. Those with whom he lived and studied - true white South Africans in their own world view - might accept the Portuguese as fellow colonisers, but at best as only honorary 'whites'. Carlos suffered being the butt of jokes and name-calling. This teenage experience – away from home and struggling to belong in an unwelcoming environment - was one he never forgot. He was still talking about it 60 years later.

After High School Matriculation it had been Carlos's intention to become a vet, but he soon left his university in Pretoria and followed his father's footsteps into

business. He did not return to his native Mozambique, however, opting instead to take the chance to live among the white elite in one of South Africa's most fashionable areas in Cape Town. With his first wife Renee (née Divaris) he established a successful and long-lasting scrap metal business: 'CDS Junk Store'. This represented business as pleasure, for throughout his life he loved rescuing 'good junk' and haggling a satisfactory price with buyers and sellers. Among his multiple entrepreneurial ventures over the years was the setting up of 'Miniways' in 1968, which introduced Scalextric to South Africa – the ultimate slot racing car system for boys of all ages. A massive racing track for enthusiasts was laid out on the Cape Town foreshore.

In 1963 Frelimo (the Mozambique Liberation Front) had initiated a guerrilla war seeking independence from Portugal. Carlos had grown up with some of its leading figures while at school in Lourenço Marques. On a business trip in 1973, crossing the border from South Africa into Mozambique, he was arrested by the DGS (*Direcção-General de Segurança*), the successor to the notorious Portuguese secret police PIDE (*Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*). He suffered 22 days in solitary confinement in Machava prison. Though never formally charged, he was physically maltreated and had to endure the helplessness and terror of being an inmate in a dictator's prison.

The alleged crime was involvement years earlier, at his school in Lourenço Marques, in the blowing up of a statue of the Portuguese dictator, António de Salazar. Carlos was eventually freed due to lack of proof. Later, he sometimes told friends and family that he had been innocent and had simply been unlucky, picked out randomly; at other times he speculated whether he had been falsely

snatched upon by former schoolmates when they themselves had faced tough interrogation. Sometimes, he hinted that the South African Security Police had somehow assisted in his release. His default position - to his own amusement but his listeners' frustration - was to declare that the truth would go with him to the grave; and so far, it has. Though Carlos was eventually freed, only those who have endured the trauma of incarceration under 'solitary' in a colonial prison can fully identify with such a nightmare.

In the years that followed, Carlos's business interests developed, but in 1976 his marriage to Renee (with whom he had one daughter and two step-children) ended in divorce. In 1978 his entrepreneurship and love of the sea attracted the attention of the South African press when he won the tender to acquire two decommissioned warships: SAS *Transvaal* and SAS *Good Hope* - the latter having been the flagship of the South African Navy. Initially the plan had simply been to strip them for metal, but priorities changed when Carlos learned of the need to rehabilitate the seabed destroyed by illegal fishing in the Smitswinkel stretch of False Bay, one of the world's iconic coastlines.

As an enthusiastic scuba-diver, with an interest in marine conservation, Carlos offered to sink the *Transvaal* to create an artificial reef. The job went well, and it secured him permission to repeat it with the *Good Hope*. Several government ministries now objected - Carlos thought he was being treated as an 'awkward Portuguese' - and questions were asked in Parliament. Carlos nevertheless stood his ground: he was determined to carry on unless he was formally challenged in court. No formal charges came up, so the *Good Hope* went down.

The artificial reef created by the sinkings proved successful, and contributed to the ecology of an area important to South Africa's tourist industry. Years later, Carlos was invited back to dive in the area to inspect his work. He did so enthusiastically, and declared himself very pleased. He was not impressed when a Mozambiquan associate later told him that the South African government was planning to claim the success for themselves, and write him out of the story.

The following 15 years were momentous in the history of South Africa. Violence intensified as the apartheid state faced growing internal and external challenges. The white elite – for the most part – sought to protect its supremacy against demands for justice from the country's majority population and the expanding anti-apartheid movement across the world. At the same time, the government in Pretoria posed as a bulwark for 'the West' against what was claimed to be the threat of communism. The intricacies of this complex period, with the advantage of looking backwards, are still being explored by historians of the region; Carlos's life was entangled in them daily, not knowing their future trajectory.

On the surface he was simply climbing the corporate ladder; this involved leaving the Cape for Johannesburg to pursue entrepreneurial interests with his second wife, Diana (née Parker) and their two daughters. Among his ventures he became Director of Swimline, a pool company, which gave him a chance to deploy his verbal skills and humour on primetime radio as 'The Pool Doctor'. At the same time, he expanded business links with newly independent Mozambique – for which he was able to draw upon Frelimo contacts from the past, including his schooldays. He also built up a network of contacts with South Africa's ruling

political, security, and media elites, and was especially fascinated by associations with the intelligence community. Carlos could not remove himself from the dynamics and intrigues of the situation; consequently, his family was never quite sure where he was, or what he was doing, when he left the house.

Later in life, Carlos defined himself politically as a 'liberal' and a 'pragmatist'. By *liberal* he meant support for free enterprise and as little interference in personal freedom by the state as possible; being a *pragmatist* involved accommodating to power realities. In the South Africa of the time, the latter, for Carlos, involved networking with the governing National Party. This did not necessarily entail endorsing apartheid, and in daily practice he sought to help black workers in his company evade the authorities if they lacked the proper paperwork. In 1973 he and Renee had supported the newly founded Democratic Party, established by disillusioned enlightened (*verligte*) Nationalists. Later he was involved with the liberal Progressive Party and Progressive Federal Party. As the violence in the country intensified, however, the last straw for Diana, his British-born wife, was the kidnapping of a friend on the driveway next door.

Against Carlos's wishes, he and Diana and their two daughters left for the UK in 1993. Carlos's resistance to emigrating was not based on anti-British feelings as such but rather his attachment to his roots in southern Africa, then undergoing radical transformation. In the following year Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President, and the country's first-ever elections under universal suffrage were held, resulting in the transfer of power to the ANC. Carlos arrived in the UK on crutches, having recently fallen through a window.

Free to settle anywhere in the country, the car in which the family was exploring the UK broke down in Falmouth, a small port and holiday destination on the south coast of Cornwall. While waiting for the car to be repaired, the family decided the area felt like home. A small business was bought consisting of a flat, a florist's shop, and an attached restaurant which Carlos nostalgically named 'Café Mozambique'. It promised well, but the venture failed within a couple of years because of financial difficulties and the breakdown of the marriage with Diana.

Irrepressible, Carlos quickly took on another loan and Café Mozambique was reborn. This time the location was a prominent site above Swanpool Beach in Falmouth. Soon the venue began to attract extravagant plaudits ('legendary!' and 'exotic!') from its loyal fans. Drawn by the mix of exciting food, music, drink, and late-night parties Café Mozambique's clientele included musicians, students, South African ex-pats and bohemian locals. Less welcome was the regular attention of the police, shady characters, and some unappreciative locals. Before Diana and Carlos divorced in 1996, she and her daughters helped to keep the place going, but police raids, fines, a fraudster, negative vibes locally, and loan repayments to the bank proved a heavy strain on them all. The end was reached when the bank repossessed the property. Carlos now believed he had lost everything he had worked for. His mental health deteriorated disastrously and he had to be hospitalised. This collapse, added to his teenage torments in Transvaal and imprisonment in Machava was his third traumatic life experience.

Rehabilitation threatened to be a long journey, especially as Carlos was still in a relatively unfamiliar country. A friend from Café Mozambique days, Pixie Keirle,

offered him shelter when he left hospital, and also helped a move to Lostwithiel – the ‘antiques capital of Cornwall’. Here he started – what else? - a small junkshop, and joined local environmental campaigns and became a figure in the community. Two of his daughters, now making their own way in London, urged him to return to education, sensing it as a route to greater self-realisation following his breakdown. Through their and Pixie’s support, Carlos – now 59 - arrived somewhat improbably at Coleg Harlech, overlooking Cardigan Bay in Wales. Widely known as ‘the college of second chance’, Carlos grabbed his opportunity with lasting gratitude. It proved a transformative move.

Coleg Harlech had been founded in 1927 by Dr Thomas Jones, an intimate of David Lloyd George, long-term Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (1916-30), and a leading supporter of the Workers’ Educational Association. The was established a few miles from Lloyd George’s childhood home, and offered a broad, radical, and free education to adults with no formal or relevant qualifications. Crucially, it was residential, offering mature students the opportunity for reflection, a fresh start, good teachers, and the chance to move on. It was perfect for Carlos.

Following his successful Diploma course in Coleg Harlech, Carlos was accepted to study ‘International Politics and the Third World’ in the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University. He embraced being a regular student in this famous institution – perhaps too enthusiastically sometimes for those of his classmates who did not understand the privilege Carlos was learning education to be. In 2004 he graduated with a very good degree. One of his former lecturers recently remarked that ‘Carlos loved life, people, and learning – in no particular order’.

Carlos could not be ignored. On one notable occasion an internationally famous International Relations specialist from the United States delivered a public lecture to a packed audience. There is invariably a moment's silence before the first person raises a hand in the question period following a lecture: but Carlos stepped in. He began by apologising for being a bit wobbly, saying that he had drunk a bottle of vodka during the day, and then went on to explain that he was celebrating having heard from his doctor that morning that he was now free of the life-threatening problem for which he had recently been having treatment. Somewhere in his remarks he may have mentioned the lecture, but nobody remembered what he said about it: the audience only remembered Carlos and his emotional thanks for being alive. The momentarily overlooked distinguished speaker joined in the tumultuous applause that greeted Carlos's words.

Around the same time, the Department was tasked by the University to help raise money for a new building, given the (then) unsatisfactory accommodation over the previous few years. The main responsibility fell on my shoulders as Head of Department. As ever, Carlos had been keeping his ear to the ground, and asked to see me; he did, and unusually wore a blazer and tie for the occasion. He attempted to persuade me that we might get financial support for the building from the Mandela Foundation, that he knew everybody who counted (or somebody who did), and most importantly he knew Nelson Mandela's personal lawyer. And by the way, he added, it was his dream to get Nelson himself to open the new building when the time came. He was confident it could be made to work.

I was persuaded a pitch to the Foundation might be worth a try, and organised a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor. I let Carlos speak, and Professor Noel Lloyd, the

VC, was not optimistic but he was sufficiently impressed by Carlos that he gave him permission to explore the matter further. Carlos's high-level contacts proved real enough, but unfortunately supporting a new building in the UK did not coincide with the priorities of the hard-pressed Foundation. No matter: the point is that Carlos did not know how to be a bystander whatever the issue or prospects - win or lose, feasible or dream.

After graduating Carlos stayed in Aberystwyth, where he conducted private research. He participated in several influential international conferences on the study of intelligence in international affairs. Such interest was not surprising given his personal experiences in the 1970s and 1980s. Carlos put his direct worldly knowledge to excellent use: to argue, to puncture what he considered inflated or false interpretations, and to respond to invitations to give presentations on topics such as colonialism in southern Africa, and BOSS (South Africa's notorious 'Bureau of State Security'). All this led to one prominent scholar of Intelligence Studies to describe Carlos as 'a living repository of contemporary history'.

Memorably, Carlos acted for a number of years as the informal mentor to a succession of students – the keen, the curious, and the homesick – and particularly from the Lusophone world. His apartment on the promenade became a sanctuary, a seminar room, or a shebeen, depending on the visitors' needs. His generosity was legendary, sharing time, contacts, ideas, books, and primary materials for their dissertations. His love of 'good junk' came in more than useful because he had amassed paper as well as objects; his treasures included underground pamphlets from the 1980s, illegal tracts, newspaper cuttings, and

books. As it happened, his own library expanded radically after Coleg Harlech was forced to close – much to his disgust and that of many other former students. It was one of the many casualties of UK Higher Education putting business before learning. Carlos helped the students he mentored to achieve their best, and his eyes twinkled with their successes, as well as filled up when they moved on and sometimes lost touch.

Outside academia he was one of those larger-than-life characters who attracted stories whether or not they were true; they *felt* as if they were. One day he set up a barbeque on the pavement outside his apartment, to offer passers-by some food and with it an occasion for a chat, perhaps leading to a good discussion about politics. He was spotted and challenged by a police constable, and a legal argument ensued about his right to cook on the promenade. Carlos stood his ground. The constable returned to the police station to report the incident, and was told by the senior officer on duty that Carlos was in his rights. The constable returned to Carlos and apologised. In return, Carlos laughed his friendliest laugh, gave the constable a hug, and invited him back for a beer once his shift had. All this, I have been told, was duly reported in the local newspaper, so it must have been true.

On another occasion – which I witnessed from across the road - Carlos was surrounded by a crowd of students on the promenade one evening. He was wearing a pirate's tricorn hat and vigorously waving a plastic cutlass. When I saw him the following day he duly explained that students were making too much noise at weekends, and so he was patrolling that stretch of the promenade on behalf of the locals who lived nearby (including himself). As I witnessed the event,

he was also having lots of fun with the students enveloping him, and no doubt sharing stories of drinking and derring-do. As a former Professor who knew him always says: 'We shall not see his like again.'

After a decade in Aberystwyth, Carlos moved to south Wales to live near Pixie, his friend from Falmouth days. He maintained his ties with Aber and with his expanding Lusophone network. But these were not always easy times. Not only was he periodically in poor health, but his personal relations once more became entangled in the vicissitudes of international politics. This time it was 'Europe'. As the debate about the UK leaving the EU intensified in the lead-up to the 2016 Referendum, Carlos took up the cudgel on behalf of the Leave campaign. Brexit was not a matter of identity for him (about whether one felt *European* or *British*), but of ideology and pragmatism. He saw the UK's relationship with Brussels as inconsistent with his core political values of free trade and minimal governmental interference in peoples' lives. As he took to social media and attracted supporters from the xenophobe wing of the Leave campaign, his own views became increasingly extreme. Brexit proved narrowly victorious (including in Wales, with 52.5 per cent of the vote) but Carlos lost or almost lost several old friends as a result of what they saw as his dogmatism. I once felt the need to put the phone down on him, when his 'fake news' about the EU (in my view) crossed a line. Carlos was easy to love, but not always easy to like.

Carlos could not sit on a fence if he tried. But he never tried. In one return visit to Aberystwyth from south Wales he learned that a group of campaigners, including some friends, were trying to save a much-loved purpose-built Day Centre for the

elderly. It was being threatened from destruction by the development of two supermarkets in a plan backed by the Plaid-run Ceredigion County, though it had been overwhelmingly opposed from the start in a local petition. Carlos returned to attend the public inquiry into the development. Discovering that only certain named petitioners were allowed to speak, he was not in a mood to accept such bureaucratic gagging of the peoples' voices. He stood up first in the proceedings to ask a question of the Inspector – an intervention that took everybody by surprise. The campaigners greeted Carlos's contribution with pleasure and admiration, and one of them felt legitimised to follow his lead. The proceedings were then held up; the developer requested a lull in order to find answers to issues raised.

In the event, the developer and County Council got their way – it is not unusual - but not as easily as they had hoped. Meanwhile, the campaigners were praised by the Inspector for their 'erudite' skills in opposition; and they came out of the experience with a greater sense of empowerment. Like others over the years, they learned that if Carlos regarded you as a friend he would not only avoid sitting on the fence, he would help you try and knock it down.

At the start of 2020 Carlos suffered a succession of serious health problems, and had spells in hospital. As his energy slipped away, he still loved to reminisce about what he always called 'my old Department', as well as expressing pride in his expanding family. He continued to collect 'good junk' and was even joking about 'his' auctioneers just before his final hospitalisation. He had been looking forward to reaching 80 in a few months' time, and welcoming the birth of another granddaughter, but sadly he did not make it. He died peacefully, of liver disease, in Bridgend hospital. In the period since, he has been widely and deeply mourned.

When his daughters were still young, Carlos loved to show them how to make things grow. One of them recalls watching him break pieces off a cactus, and getting them to flourish. ‘You didn’t need roots to grow’ she learned. It took her father a long time, including a serious mental breakdown, to appreciate that roots do not have to be destiny, and that it is possible to construct a different self. Albeit eccentrically, in the final quarter of his life Carlos became the embodiment of an old-fashioned scholar: reading, arguing, puzzling, researching, discovering, listening – but not feeling the pressure to publish - and still drinking and storytelling and having fun. His close family and friends watched with pride as he blossomed and found inner peace.

Carlos Santos, born in colonial Mozambique 10 October 1940, died in Covid Wales 18 June 2020. He is survived by his former wives, Renee and Diana; his daughters Alexia from his first marriage, and Dominique and Natasha from his second; his grandchildren Jack, Erin, Naliyah, Kenzo, Laik, and Celia; his sister Vera; and Pixie. Since his death, another granddaughter, Sylvie, has been born.



Carlos Santos

10th October 1940 to 18th June 2020