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S A L A Z A R S A Y S

**COMMENTS
ON THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

*SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, H. E. PROF. OLIVEIRA
SALAZAR, ON NOVEMBER 5th 1965*

SECRETARIADO NACIONAL DA INFORMAÇÃO

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I am told that I should say some words to close the electioneering period. I do not quite see the need for this, but I will do what others believe to be necessary. I shall, however, limit myself to two or three brief observations.

It is a fact that the election campaign has been held almost entirely in the absence and silence of the opposition group. I am sorry that this should have been the case, but not because we see any advantage in the work of the National Assembly being done in an atmosphere of disturbance, so harmful to that absolute freedom of thought and conscience which should prevail over debating and voting in such assemblies. My reason is a different one. Had not the opposition candidates withdrawn, we should have had the advantage of more developed ideas, or more substantial criticisms, than those to be found in the election manifestoes that have been published. Moreover, we should have been able to compare the number of those who supported such ideas and criticisms with those who at once rejected them, without further argument and on the grounds of certain initial attitudes.

In the penultimate presidential elections we found that the opposition candidate could count on rather less than

one quarter of those who voted. This told us how many Portuguese citizens found it preferable to substitute for our methods of government other noisier, unexpected ones, and who desired to replace the fundamental concepts on which the Nation has maintained its personality, based its progress and sought to guarantee its future, by a synthesis of contradictions. This comparison of number also undeniably showed the legitimacy of a mandate which came from over three quarters of the electorate and from the mass support of conscientious voters, the vast majority, who were not afraid to express their opinion by voting. This was a definite gain, in spite of the harm done to the good name and reputation of our country by a campaign that was in every respect contrary to our sensitivity.

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The opposition's campaign produced only four official manifestoes. Of them the press gave wide publicity to three. The other could not be published because we did not consider it according to official etiquette for its authors to give the Head of the State a time limit in which he was to give a decision on their claims, even if they had been legitimate, which in this case they were not.

In one manifesto we might justifiably have expected to find either a system of ideas to be applied, or a programme of solutions to be advocated, or some indication of the problems to be dealt with in parliamentary debates. But it seemed to me to have given preference to sterile criticisms of the work of the Government and of the authorities, and to considerations crudely full of grave insinuations. Instead of a view of the future towards which we are travelling, there was only a retrospect of the past, good or bad, that we

have already experienced. So the main topics referred to the censorship on the press, the situation of persons detained by the International Police, the non-translation of a United Nations report that we thought sufficiently intelligible in the official languages of the Organization, and, above all, the investigation into the murder of ex-General Delgado, being effected by the Spanish legal authorities, the delay in which was said to be due to the negligence of our own authorities.

The ex-General worked with me for many years in succession. So long a period of work together always leaves some mark on the mind, independently of the human warmth that stems from personal relations. In spite of his intelligence, his dynamism, his natural sincerity, it is true that his impetuous nature and his contradictory opinions stamped his work with the mark of the unexpected and the inconsistent. He was enthralled with certain aspects of American political life, which poured into his already willing mind the poison of self-sufficiency and a flair for the spectacular. He thought the time had come, and that it would be easy, to import them into Portugal, in spite of the fact that they would run up against traditions of hierarchy, of prudence and of the dignity of power. So he put himself forward as a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic and in the course of his campaign proved to have a genius for causing disturbance. Now, the masses react everywhere in the same manner when they are rocked by waves of emotion centred on rash promises and repressed ambitions and hate, so that his activity caused some apprehension, but it was not a real danger. In this country of gentle customs and tranquil life the spirit of adventure at the level of the highest organs of the State stirs up invincible reservations and suspicions in thinking people's minds. But in any case he was a banner that ideologies foreign to his political training did not hesitate to wave in the service of subversive movements.

He lent himself to these manoeuvres without thinking. When abroad, exiled for no serious reason and due rather to others' will than to his own, he took to himself the moral responsibility for anti-national acts and blackened the country's good name. In Brazil, in Prague, in Algeria, he was the magnet for the revolutionary opposition, and this was, at bottom, to the advantage of the regime. One day, tired of the uselessness of his activities, having lost faith in shady conspiracies, perhaps betrayed by those who styled themselves his political companions, he seems to have reached a definite decision, either to agree with other conspirators on an «immediate» revolution, or to surrender to the Portuguese authorities and «make a clean breast» of things.

No revolutionary movement could have succeeded, so it was to our advantage for him to speak out. No doubt it was more to other's advantage for him to keep silent, and this could only be assured by his death. But if the Spanish authorities are successful in laying bare the circumstances of the crime in the smallest detail, then we may well eventually discover through others what he would undoubtedly have confessed to us. That is why, apart from any other reasons, we find the matter a very important one and why, for that reason, we have acted honestly and swiftly.

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In their manifesto the opposition groups also advocated a broad discussion of the overseas policy that we have been adopting. The purpose of this debate would be to decide to what extent the Nation agreed or disagreed with it, and to define what other policies would more surely safeguard the national interest. It was quite clear that we could not contemplate at this juncture engaging in such a discussion,

but it is the custom of the democracy that the candidates asserted they represented never to take anything to be fixed or liquid, and continually to restart argument.

But it so happened that the bald statement of this intention set off so violent an outburst of protest everywhere that it was only too clear what the nation thought about it. Not only here in European Portugal, but in the Atlantic territories and in the lands of Africa, Asia or Oceania, especially those that are the victims of fierce attacks and the prey of foreign greed, the inhabitants reacted, utterly offended at the idea that their sacrifices should be held to be useless and that their patriotic rights as Portuguese should be abolished by the arbitrary decision of other Portuguese citizens. It was generally considered intolerable that the Nation should be anything if not united and firm in the defence of a reality clearly defined down the centuries and considered to be indisputable, or that it should seem to doubt its rights and appear unsure of its determination to exercise them. These manifestations constituted a gigantic plebiscite that must have convinced all men of good will of the uselessness of any such discussion.

This is not the place for me to go into the problem in detail. I hope soon to consider the topic of contemporary African politics before you, the mistaken concepts that gave birth to it and the catastrophic results it has brought to those peoples who are, by definition, its supposed beneficiaries. For the moment I will merely express my regret that, at a time when the Portuguese case is considered, almost unanimously among responsible leaders, as a special one in the problems of colonization, some Portuguese should consider it to be amenable to the stereotyped, disastrous treatment that has been applied to other cases. I cannot believe this attitude to be based on ignorance of the facts in question and their seriousness. I am inclined to think that in some cases the

tendency towards political agitation was so strong as to tempt them to try to sacrifice the highest interest of the Nation to it, if at all possible.

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In fact the regime under which we have lived since the 28th May has been impervious to the political hysteria of the world at large, and that is why the opposition groups often refer to our **immobility**. This word means that in politics we are not moving at the same speed as many foreign countries. But I do not think that there is any justification for applying this term pejoratively, as has been done, to the administration or even the Government of Portugal.

Anyone who opens the newspaper each morning may well ask himself if there is any more room on the earth for plots, coups d'État, revolutions, wars, military intervention, social conflicts, political assassinations, party purges and internecine strife. All through Africa, Asia and America, sometimes even in Europe, there has begun and still continues a period of upheavals that many airily dismiss on the grounds that such calamities are only the growing pains of a new world. But our own understanding of such events would lead us to say that these events are in some cases due to the imposition of unsuitable institutions on the spirit of the nations, and in others are caused by the embodying of hatred and violence in theories of action by fashionable doctrinaire systems.

Here and there a Constitution is drafted, a Head of State is killed, a government dismissed or, more swiftly, the ministers and high authorities assassinated. Later, when the bewildered, uncomprehending common folk have been shot at now and again, it is discovered that a mistaken policy has

been adopted and back everything goes to the beginning. The party driven from office regains the reins of power, and men and institutions are replaced, the latter being blamed for what is no more than the play and struggle of interests that are only too often foreign to the country where these events take place.

Many are so dazzled by such events and the rapid, delirious transfer of power that they cannot hide their enthusiasm for them. This they consider to be real, active, dynamic, progressive politics. I merely consider that all this disorder may be a fatality but it can never be a benefit. Those politicians imbued with theories and thirsty for power, in love with revolutionary changes, are in fact only an insignificant minority of the Nation. Its structural elements have other concerns, other needs, such as the guarantee of a job, the provision of education, means of progress, the security of life and a little happiness here on earth.

In the past we too have experienced this political effervescence of governments that lasted only a few days, Presidents murdered or deposed by violence, public figures assassinated, parliaments often dissolved, election by gunfire and debates of fists and not of voices. In spite of that agitation, which gave such liveliness to the Portuguese political scene, no one would dare nowadays to advocate its repetition. The reason is that political agitation is inimical to good government, and useful work can only be done by the best minds of a nation in a healthy atmosphere in which institutions function in a regular manner.

We should thank Providence that over the last few decades we have managed to obtain a desirable balance in our political life. It continues to function at the normal rhythm, with the election or re-election of Heads of the State within the periods laid down by the Constitution, the regular election of the National Assembly and the Corporative

Chamber, the stability of governments and the efficient work of the Administration. We do not seek to make people believe that the welfare of the people is this normality, and no more, but it is of vital importance to maintain it, without thereby hampering those alterations or reviews made necessary by time to guarantee the Nation's life and progress through the best possible solution of its problems.

This is my justification for asking all Portuguese citizens to vote in the forthcoming elections for members of Parliament, with or without opposition candidates, to vote firmly, determinedly and in an orderly manner, the better to demonstrate their patriotism and their faith in the future.

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