

MARCELLO
CAETANO

IN DEFENCE
OF LIBERTY

SPEECH DELIVERED AT
THE CLOSING SESSION
OF THE 1ST CONGRESS
OF THE N. P. A. M.
MAY 6TH 1973

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OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND TOURISM

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Delegates to the Congress,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I think we can be proud of the way the Congress has proceeded and of the conclusions that have been reached, which have just been so expressively approved.

As its Statutes lay down, the purpose of our civic association is to promote the participation of citizens in the study of the problems affecting the Portuguese Nation and the implementation of those solutions for such problems as are most in accordance with its basic principles.

In the several sections of the Congress, the delegates have had an opportunity to hear papers on such subjects and the solutions put forward by members who occupy positions of leadership, and by the Minister of Education. This seemed to be the best method to adopt, because the authors of such papers and solutions were those best placed to dispose of extensive information and to be able to foresee future trends. They were thus the most suitable people to introduce before this Congress the major present topics in Portuguese political life.

The debate on these basic papers and the consideration of a few hundred more submitted by members, many of them of great value, have enabled us to reach invaluable conclusions on the present circumstances of the nation, which the immediate publication of the papers read will extend to the greatest possible number of Portuguese people.

With the participation of our cadres we have thus been given an opportunity to reach conclusions which will serve as the basis of a programme of activities for the next few years. Note that I have said, the *basis* of a programme, because I think it would be dangerous, in a world so changeable as ours, to lay down rigid guidelines of action. Leaders must always maintain a broad margin of adaptability to circumstances. They must retain a considerable power of fitting in with realities.

What is essential is to respect the basic principles around which we have come together: subordination to the national interest, respect for the human personality interpreted as the insertion of individual values in social life, which has demands that cannot be put off, the defence of the family and of local and professional communities, recognition of private property and free enterprise, although conditioned by the demands of their social function, respect for the State in which the authorities express the general interest and which possesses authority to override the selfish interests of groups or classes, the repudiation of violence and a struggle for the progressive improvement of the living conditions of the Portuguese people through educa-

tion and the access to culture, the increase of production and the fair distribution of income.

Not all who accept these basic principles and consider their implementation in Portuguese life to be an essential condition of peace and progress are members of the National People's Action Movement.

In the first place, because the associative spirit of the Portuguese is not strong. Then, many have a long-lasting suspicion of political movements, which keeps them warily away even from a civic association. Thirdly, many people do not like to take up too definite positions. Finally, there are often personal or group local rivalries which prevent people of the same ideological beliefs from working together or even from getting on with each other.

Even so, I do not believe that any civic association in Portugal has ever had so many members as ours, or had such extensive cadres. I am sure that throughout our country our principles are accepted and supported by very many people for whom our policy is the only one truly suited to the future of the Portuguese people.

Much is said nowadays about 'openings'. The Movement is open, as an association, to all who would like to enter it to collaborate in the common task. It is open to collaboration with all those who share our principles, wherever they may be.

But the list of such principles, making up art. 2 of our Statutes, is an expression of values that we cannot renounce. There can be, in relation to them, no possible transigence or allowable compromise. Beyond them there does, however, remain a broad territory where we may admit

divergences of tactics, of methods, of rhythm, of ways of implementation.

We are thus ready to collaborate with all who are willing to fight by our side for the integrity of the Homeland, the dignity of Man, the defence of the family, for free enterprise, for the authority of the State, for public law and order, for social reform.

In this field those who join us can be sure that they are interpreting the inescapable desire of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese people.

The doctrinaires of social revolution put it about that the Portuguese are not politically minded, meaning that they neither accept them nor follow them. Anyone who imagines that our people do not know what they want and what is most to their advantage are quite mistaken.

The Portuguese people have fought generously to defend the Overseas Provinces, which they do not want to be handed over to movements set up, supplied, armed, subsidized, aided and manipulated by foreign interests.

The Portuguese people want to go on with the work which every day leads to the opening of new schools and to new prospects for their children. But, on the other hand, they quite definitely do not want disorder, indiscipline and subversion to occupy positions in the schools opened for the education of our young people. Nor can they accept that, in the face of the passivity of the teaching staffs, daring revolutionary minorities should impose their dictatorship on students and pupils, hindering work and study, and gravely harming the training of the technicians and the directive cadres that the country needs.

The disturbances in schools and colleges are part of a perfectly thought-out process. The frank intention is to deprive the so-called 'bourgeois' society of its active elements. No one can now be in any doubt that agitation in the universities is commanded by purely political, not pedagogical or academic, considerations. The colleges have been chosen because they are the source of new social cadres and also because they enjoy the traditional forms of immunity which have made them sanctuaries which it is difficult for the civil authorities to penetrate. But if academic authority ceases to be respected or is clearly inoperative, then another form of authority will have to be imposed, and I do not mean by this the authority of the student Soviets which decide for the students and impose their decisions tyrannically on them.

Nowadays the students of certain schools and colleges know what popular democracy is, and the penalty for disagreeing, to however slight a degree, from the decisions of the communized associative movements. I believe that these students are now sufficiently enlightened on the concept and implementation of civic liberties held by these new democrats ...

The Portuguese people wish to be allowed to work in peace. They are conscious of realities, they know the true worth of impossible promises and what, on the contrary, is meant by a constant honest effort directed towards meeting their real needs and finding a serious solution for their problems.

The opposition speculates with emigration and would like to give a political bias to what is an endemic phenome-

non of our national life. It hides the fact that in the last twenty years the development of the industrial powers of central and northern Europe has drawn in manpower by the payment of high wages, in return for harsh working conditions. Long before this trend affected Portugal, those countries had already absorbed enormous numbers of workers from democratic Italy, Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey... Long accustomed to emigrating to the other side of the Atlantic, the Portuguese suddenly took notice of Europe as a nearer destiny, which enables them to come back now and again to visit their families and birth-places, their thoughts always concentrated on the day when possession of a reasonable sum of money will allow them to return to their Homeland.

Frequent inquiries among emigrants by impartial organizations confirm that almost all of them give as the reason for their departure from Portugal their desire to earn some capital of their own as quickly as possible. Any repression of emigration would only lead to an encouragement of clandestine emigration, with all its inevitable legal, moral and social drawbacks. Apart from anything else, it would make visiting Portugal and an eventual return much more difficult.

Improvement in the conditions of living here, and the inevitable satiety that will be reached abroad, will bring emigration down to normal proportions, if only because the worker, in his own town or village, is always *somebody*; whereas in a foreign land he can never be more than the hired hand and the foreigner who is tolerated, no more.

What we can be sure of is that the introduction of the regime desired by the democratic opposition would be a

catastrophe, in this as in other domains. Many undesirables would return to the country, without doubt: deserters who, from cowardice, ran away from performing military service, and agitators who in foreign countries spend their lives plotting and preparing acts of terrorism ... On the other hand the disorganization of the national economy and the resulting unemployment would not only not induce men to return but would in fact lead many others to emigrate.

The Portuguese people watch with impatience all these subversive manoeuvres, from the flourishing of immorality, which uses pornography as a disgusting factor of perversity, and the consumption of drugs as a method of destroying young people, to the conversion of the theatre, the cinema and literature to revolutionary instruments, very often financed by capitalists — ingenuous or cunning? — and so on to the noisiest forms of contestation, by setting off bombs or by acts of sabotage to weaken the morale of the population and disorganize the life of the community.

On his point, ladies and gentlemen, let us be in no doubt: what the Portuguese people want is for the changes that will affect our society to take place without any alienation of what makes up the spiritual patrimony of the Portuguese Nation, which forms the background of the nature of their children. They do not wish sight to be lost of the existence of lasting moral and social values, any destruction of which would reduce men to the state of irrational beings, like the celebrated 'naked ape'. They want no forgetfulness of the fact that material progress, when unaccompanied by moral progress, cannot lead to the oft-proclaimed state of evolu-

tion in which the superman takes to himself all the glory of divine creation. They have no desire to see the triumph of a materialism which transforms individuals into mere units of a mass society, where so-called natural laws inexorably impose their tyrannical standards.

The Portuguese people, those whom we meet throughout our country, not to be mistaken for some would-be intellectuals who talk about the 'people' without knowing them, without loving them and above all without serving their interests, know very well what they want: they want Portugal to go on. And they are quite definite that they do not want to see their Country transformed into the ideological colony of any more or less red International, or of any great imperialist powers.

Thus, since democracy is government in accordance with the will of the people, we are carrying out true democracy. Through suffrage and a multitude of ways of expression, patent in the open, easy contacts, now so frequent, with their leaders, the Portuguese have constantly revealed their firm desire. Constantly we are attuned to that desire and we do our best to satisfy it. Democracy is not the turbulent Babel of the *bases*, where there is doctrinaire repetition of slogans hurriedly conned and learned in propaganda literature to give the impression that summit is being commanded. It is the permanent diagnosis of the needs, the ambitions, the hopes of the people and the endeavour to find the formulae most effective to solve in the best possible manner all those problems affecting the interests of the greatest number.

We are living in an eminently critical period, in which the world is suffering from what might be termed the 'dissolution disease'. Both in their internal existence and in their international relationships, societies must observe certain norms of behaviour that are generally accepted. By a consensus they must obey given rules defined by reason in accordance with observation and experience.

But what is the present panorama?

In economic affairs we see that command has been lost of its main element, which is also its basic instrument to measure values and to carry out exchanges: the currency. This dissolution of the economy is taking the form of universal inflation, with all the succession of drawbacks deriving from the generalized rise in prices, both in production and in trade, whether in individuals' private lives or in the affairs of States. This evil is undermining all the Nations, whatever their political system and economic structure, and not one of them, acting alone, is powerful enough to overcome it: only international collaboration can put an end to this far-reaching imbalance.

In the moral sphere we see that the nature is being questioned of all values, customs, attitudes, habits and long-established conventions, set up to moderate selfishness, to restrain instincts, to dominate vices, to polish manners, to eliminate friction, to make man's behaviour more rational and to facilitate human relationships. This systematic doubt is even affecting those values which, in traditionally religious societies, were formerly venerated, obeyed and handed down as being based on the divine Word or on the

authority of a firmly based Church against which all the storms of History would come to nothing.

In social matters we see the contestation of all forms of authority, in the family, in the school, in the professions, in civic life. Hasty pundits and solicitous pedagogues hasten to discover in the old arsenal of utopias and the bric-à-brac of systems such libertarian formulae of education and intercourse as have already been widely tried out, and which further experiment will once again show to be quite unadjusted to human realities.

In so-called civilized countries we see that workers belonging to occupations which directly affect the protection of the health, the life and the safety of the whole society may licitly impose their own interests, very often no more than minor selfish claims, on the interests of the community. In the name of such private interests they abandon patients, sacrifice lives and property, prevent the circulation of goods and the supply of towns and cities, multiply the risks of accidents ... all in the name of a trade union supremacy which ignores, repels or denies the supremacy of human solidarity.

In politics we find two concepts of life locked in deadly struggle: one, the State where the essential characteristics of Man's freedom, that is, his initiative and his ability to use it to improve his condition and to acquire and dispose of material goods, are fully respected; the other, the all-controlling and deciding State, through an omnipresent, omnipotent network of officials, who dominate, in spite of any deceptive illusions of autonomy, all individuals, all communities, all co-operatives, all public undertakings. I shall

not speak of anarchy, because this exaggeration of liberalism, being a powerful force of negation and destruction, is unable to become a formula of social life, however attractive the libertarian dream, which inebriates and intoxicates the young, the idealistic, the romantically minded.

In this political crisis, the difficulties are all the greater because in Europe there has been spread a mentality which totally paralyses the defences of the liberal world. Even capitalists, and perhaps they above all, are afraid to defend the order of things which, to a varying degree of efficiency, sustains them. No one wants to be nicknamed a 'fascist', the name generally given by the communists and their myrmidons to all who dare to stand in their way. The defence reflex has been lost; we might even say the instinct of self-preservation is now missing. Faced with a frontal attack launched on the largest scale by the forces of Revolution, the so-called Western World is unable to react and is reduced to muttering words which had a meaning in the 19th century, and repeating the attitudes proper to times of peace, both completely ineffective for the battle with which they are now threatened.

Freedom? Of course, but to maintain the essence of an individualist society, to preserve the dignity of Man as the centre of decisions and the lord of his destiny, to engage individuals in building the future with their own hands; but not to leave the way open to forms of totalitarianism which only seek middle-class liberty and rights so as to exterminate the middle-class and to install the outrageous materialistic dictatorship which, in the name of a false humanism,

reduces Man to a mere productive unit in a mechanical society dominated by a despotic power.

No one in this Government has any liking for restricting liberties, far less for suppressing them. We would all like to be living in a broadly permissive society, where the solid upbringing of individuals would prepare them to control themselves, would train them for the intelligent understanding of their rights and the limitations on them, would teach them to respect the rights of others, to accept the essential bases of social contact, would train them in the balanced, reasonable search for the paths of community progress and personal improvement and enhancement.

Unhappily this is not the case. There is no cause to say that in our Country this is the result of so-called specific features of our social organization or our political system. It is enough to look around at the contemporary world to realise, as I said a few minutes ago, that men are less and less governed by reason; increasingly they are being swept along by an impatient delirium of change and agitation, led by motives in which selfishness, instinct and emotion predominate. This intemperate activity on the part of activist minorities gives rise to violent methods that ruthlessly thrust aside the rights of others and trample on the interests of the majority. Unless we prevent them, such minorities will be, as they have always been, the leaders and guides of History.

Protests are made against the authority of the State, precautions are taken against totalitarian tendencies of the political power, but nowadays the danger of totalitarianism comes from these extremist movements, both because their victory would necessarily mean the despotism of the victors

and also because unless the threat they represent is checked, one day a desperate reaction to it may be provoked, and may also be uncontrollable in its turn.

We occupy a central position where we seek to make a continual appeal to reason. We seek to maintain a sense of rules in a society which tends towards dissolution, the paladins of balance at a time when everything seems about to come down in ruins. A very difficult position indeed, far more so than would appear because at every moment we are faced with provocation and challenges.

Legislative elections are to be held within a few months which we would like to take place in a climate of serene competition of ideas and persons, to find the best ways to carry into practice the precepts of the constitutional order.

But what has happened on other occasions is that the so-called Portuguese Communist Party, long banned in Portugal, as in so many other countries, always turns up in the election campaigns to take advantage, as its central committee puts it, of the legal and semi-legal methods of action facilitated by the occasion, to seek to transform what should be a simple act to carry out, in a regular manner, the provisions of the Constitution, into the critical phase of revolutionary preparation. This they have said, admitted and recommended on several occasions.

A few days ago a statement was made to a foreign newspaper to the effect that the opposition's part in the forthcoming elections was not to win seats in the National Assembly but to bring about internal tumult and start a crisis. One leader told his supporters, varying a slogan used in the last days of the monarchy, that the Government had

to be forced 'to make such concessions as would weaken it internally or to use violence so as to degrade it and make it lose all credibility with public opinion'.

They forget that there is a third option: to go on maintaining, clearly and firmly, the intention to fulfil laws within the letter and the spirit of the Constitution in force, not to hesitate to defend the rights of those who sincerely wish to collaborate in observing the law, and to apply the sanctions provided for those who infringe it.

Violence is the use of force against the law and its representatives. But force to serve Right, the force that defends, preserves and conserves society, the force applied under a legitimate command, and with a regular mandate, is not violent. It is the force on which is based the defence of the life, the security, the tranquillity of citizens, without which Justice is powerless, without whose action anarchy is installed and irresponsible bands and gangs rule, revolutionary chekas dominate, tyrannical oppression reigns.

We must not lose our ability to distinguish between the unrestrained violence of banditry, terrorism or subversion and the force employed by the responsible authority on behalf of the law and based on it.

When the aim is to carry out the law, the electoral law like any other, then all freedom, all understanding, all collaboration from the authorities should be granted. But if, instead of carrying out the Constitution and the law, the intention is to start or prepare a revolution, to strengthen or generalize revolutionary bodies and doctrines, then we have no alternative but to say 'no', firmly, conscientiously and calmly.

Nor should we be blind to the fact that all the opposition's documents so far in circulation give, as their first aim, what they call 'the struggle against the colonial war', the only division of opinion in the ranks of the opposition being between those who call for negotiations with the so-called 'freedom movements' and those who indignantly protest that the overseas provinces should be handed over at once, without prior conditions of any sort, to the terrorists.

That is the present state of affairs.

For this purpose, the creation of 'internal tumult', the 'setting-up of the pre-revolutionary phase', the 'struggle against the colonial war', the Opposition calls for basic liberties.

If any Government seriously is concerned to guarantee basic liberties it is mine. The basic liberties are the right to life and personal integrity, to a good name and reputation, the right to work and enjoy the fruit of one's work, the right to profess a religion, the right to personal and home privacy, to start a family and to bring up one's children, the right to use one's initiative in choosing an activity or profession, the right to hold an opinion, the right to make use of one's own legally acquired property. All these things, which largely disappear in communist or communized societies, are basic freedoms for which we fight against totalitarian pretensions. Beyond them there are instrumental rights which have to be conditioned by an awareness of what is truly essential.

What surprises me is to see, in the present circumstances, in this critical period, the appearance of thorough-going liberals, their ideas set in the style of the year 1820, and this

in spite of the clear lesson of so many foreign experiments, when it is clear that unless the western world defends itself, enmeshed as it is in old concepts and prejudices, it will fall an easy prey to unscrupulous adversaries, when it is obvious that we should travel towards the formula of a Social State, where the defence of the individual will be ensured by the sacrifice of certain forms of individual extravagance to the benefit of the interests of the community as a whole.

I have said time and again, and continue to insist: if we really wish to safeguard human freedom, we must distinguish between its essential content and those merely accessory and circumstantial forms of its social context, which will have to be limited to the extent that any misuse of them may lead to the destruction of what we so ardently seek to preserve.

To pave the way to the Revolution, unreservedly facilitating every channel along which it could infiltrate into people's minds before it sets to work to destroy institutions, — this task can only be done through innocence or by connivance. The innocents are those ingenuous people who, from callowness or inability to think clearly, often shutting their eyes to most obvious facts, think that unrestricted freedom, a flood of liberty, will save everything, clean everything, redeem everything. The accomplices are those who have already sold their souls to the devil but, without admitting it, still maintain old political labels, the more easily to aid in the effectuation of revolutionary plans.

I have always considered myself to be a liberal, but I do not belong to the number of such innocents, nor can I be expected to support those accomplices. I am thinking of the

case of Kerenski, in Russia, who had not even the benefit of so many lessons of contemporary history. Or Edward Benes, in Czechoslovakia. Or Eduardo Frei, in Chile. And so many other causes for thought and reflection.

* * *

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the last few days this Congress has devoted its energies to the real, living problems of the Portuguese Nation, at home and overseas. I believe that the result of our common reflexions and deliberations justifies a healthy optimism.

Members of the Government have been present at this Congress to tell you what is being done, and to prepare and hear others' opinions. Here the other Congress delegates have been able to clear up doubts, obtain information, make their criticisms, put forward their suggestions. I believe that all have been in a position to reach one conclusion, that the whole Country can reach, if it considers what has been said here: that every sector of Government is active.

The conditions are difficult, in some cases highly unfavourable. There is a shortage of staff, a war to be fought in the Overseas Provinces, internal forms of resistance, the need to combat unstable prices as a result of world inflation, all these adverse factors. Yet we are working steadily to improve yet further the things which have been considered good, and to reform what has been recognized to be out-dated, to make up for gaps, shortcomings and shorta-

ges. We are working tirelessly, enthusiastically, animated by the desire to serve.

We are working so that our land in Europe shall not become a busy coastline backed by a depressed, deserted interior. The invigoration of the rural areas must be effected and for this purpose we have sought to give a new impulse to municipal activity and to strengthen it by the federating of municipalities, to increase the comfort of country-dwellers, facilitating legal services through the institution of new courts-of-law, instead of adopting the technocratic principle of concentrating circuits, to facilitate education through new primary, preparatory and secondary schools and higher institutions, which also serve to enrich local cadres, to solve the greatest possible number of problems affecting electrification, water supplies, drainage, transports and communications, social equipment, to study the grant of concessions for the economic development of the provinces, to improve preventive and curative medical services, and, above all, to aid rural workers so that they may not be left behind by other classes of worker in wage, family allowance and social welfare benefits.

While this generalized but dispersed activity is going on, by a joint effort of the government, local authorities, town councils, parish committees and citizens themselves, thought is being given to the planning and effectivation of the major undertakings you have been told about, and of which the Nation has been informed. These major undertakings, from north to south in Portugal, and also in Angola, in Mozambique and in the other overseas provinces, reveal a remarkable capacity of attainment and will, within

a few years, give a new face to the economy and the social life of our country.

As co-ordinator of the efforts of the admirable group of men who have done me the honour of accepting governmental office, I myself, gentlemen, accompany and experience day by day what is being planned and done. In pausing to consider the facts and our future prospects I myself am amazed that so much has been possible amidst so many difficulties, so many obstacles.

As, here, we have been able to put forward figures to prove that we have once more rounded the Cape of Storms, which we may legitimately now call the Cape of Good Hope, I do not consider it unwise to face the future with confident optimism.

But optimism does not entail any ignorance of difficulties. It is not tantamount to closing our eyes to avoid seeing resistance, deceptions, opposition, reverses, the struggles that must be waged to reach our target.

Nothing great can be achieved without difficulties, without sacrifice, without pain. But my optimism is based on the certainty that, if the Portuguese people refuse to be envenomed by those factors which would destroy their energy and sap their will, if they remain faithful to their traditions, to their temper, to their soul, if they maintain the spirit of unity and the vigorous alliance in the common purpose with their leaders, based on mutual confidence, reciprocal understanding and constant dialogue, if all these conditions can be met, then, ladies and gentlemen, Portugal will win through.

Portugal will then overcome its enemies, defeat internal crises, ignore any temptation to lose its faith, to give up the struggle, to fall into apathy or carelessness, to be incited to revolt; but at the same time it will conquer poverty, ignorance, routine, so that the Portuguese people may love their country more and go on loving it as a dearly beloved Homeland and as the lovable Mother of her sons and daughters.

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