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SALAZAR SAYS

PORTUGUESE PROBLEMS IN AFRICA

*COMPLETE VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW GRANTED
BY THE PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER TO «LIFE»:
THE ONLY VERSION APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION*

SECRETARIADO NACIONAL DA INFORMAÇÃO

L I S B O N

• 1962

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PORTUGUESE PROBLEMS
IN AFRICA

ADMINISTRACION DE LOS INTERIORES, GOBIERNO
DE PORTUGAL, MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS
EXTERIORES, INFORME SOBRE AFRICA

SECRETARIADO NACIONAL DA INFORMACAO
LISBOA 1962

Is autonomy for either Angola or Mozambique a viable or practical proposition now or ever?

Your question seems to imply that neither Angola nor Mozambique enjoys autonomy. If that is the implication, it does not correspond to the reality, for both Angola and Mozambique enjoy ample autonomy and in some sectors this autonomy is even enjoyed in full measure. As an example, I may mention the budgetary competence, which, I believe, is universally accepted as providing basic evidence of a statute of autonomy. In fact, the Governments of Angola and Mozambique are exclusively responsible for the administration of public funds, whether these are derived from the revenues of the territory itself or from the grants and loans made by the Central Government. I could cite other examples to prove not merely the viability of the autonomy to which you refer but the reality of a situation which exists *de facto* and *de jure*. Of course, certain powers are attributed or reserved by law to the Central Government. The reason is that, since there is no single canon of autonomy, it has been found prudent, on the one hand, to let that autonomy go on adapting itself to the capacity of the provinces for self-administration and, on the other, to respect the unity of the Portuguese Nation, which the provinces themselves will not want to be broken. As the territories make progress and instruction reaches wider sectors, the local élites become more numerous and more capable and the tasks allotted to them can be amplified without risk and even with advantage to the national community. This is the guiding line of our efforts.

If it is a practical proposition, can you foresee a span of years in which either Angola or Mozambique can be prepared to take its place, on its own, within the community of nations?

If by the expression «on its own» you mean «as sovereign states», I must say that I do not know the answer. The fact of a territory proclaiming its independence is a natural phenomenon in human societies and, therefore, it is a hypothesis that is always admissible, but indeed no one can or ought to set a time-limit for it. What is being subjected to time-tables is the inconceivable politics of our time, which claims that States should set a time-limit to destroy their unity and break up. This is absurd. But, even if absurd, such politics ought at least to have shown concern, for the benefit of the peoples in question, with the problem of knowing whether or not conditions of demographic, economic, cultural, technical and political development are fulfilled so that an independent State and a responsible sovereignty can be based on them. Now these conditions are not realized in the territories in question and, if Angola and Mozambique feel and live the unity of the Portuguese Nation and not the fervour of independence, then the mission to accomplish can never tend towards preparing their dismemberment in a longer or shorter period of time but towards ensuring their harmonious development within the Nation. But perhaps you did not have in mind to go so far in your question. Therefore, I shall examine it from another angle — that of a large measure of autonomy for Angola and Mozambique. The trend observed in the evolution of the international community is increasingly towards the creation of large economic spaces. These may aim at a bigger or smaller measure of political integration, but they always make for closer political ties which one way or another restrict the respective sovereignties. On the other hand, I think it is undeniable that Angola and Mozambique already have a place of their own in the community of nations. Were it not so, how could one understand that their economic

and cultural activities project themselves beyond their frontiers, that their ports and railways hold key positions in the utilisation of the resources of the African continent, that their products are taken into account in the interplay of the organizations which regulate international trade, that, in short, their populations benefit by the economic, cultural and scientific intercourse which characterizes our century and make their own contributions to it? In the context of the foregoing considerations and without any pretension to unravel a distant future, I do not hesitate to answer the question by saying that, if we are left in peace, the place which belongs to Angola and Mozambique in the international community and particularly in the African continent will not but gain importance progressively in the next few years.

If it is not a practical proposition or a desirable proposition, can you suggest why?

What I have said in answer to the previous questions is by itself an answer to this question, except if autonomy is made a synonym for independence. I will repeat that autonomy exists *de facto* and *de jure*: it just happens that it is an autonomy which is directed exclusively to serve the interests of Angola and Mozambique and not the interests of outside parties. Perhaps this is the reason why the latter show such reluctance to understand and admit the reality of the situation existing in those two territories.

Are there factors which make the problem of Portuguese territories in Africa different from those of other areas which desire or have received autonomy and or independence?

We have been much criticised for persistently adhering to the ideal of a multi-racial society developing itself in the tropics, as if such an ideal were opposed to human nature, to the moral order of the universe or to the interests of peoples,

when the truth is exactly otherwise. Without going into this problem, I shall say that we, the Portuguese, do not know how to live in the world in a different style, even because it was in a multi-racial type of society that we constituted ourselves as a Nation eight centuries ago, at the end of various invasions proceeding from the East, North and South, that is, from Africa itself. Hence perhaps it is that we have been left with a natural inclination — which we cite with all the greater ease inasmuch as it is certain that it has been recognized by noteworthy foreign sociologists — for contacts with other peoples. These contacts have never involved the slightest idea of superiority or racial discrimination. It is not for us to judge others for their acts or omissions, but we cannot help noting that colonialism — I think that it is in this context that your question is to be considered — came into being as a result of the industrial revolution witnessed in Europe since the closing years of the 18th century. Centuries before that time, we had already established human contacts with the peoples who were later subordinated to the imperatives of the policies of the other European countries which, unlike Portugal, aimed at essentially economic objectives. Though nowadays the merits of their policies of economic exploitation are sought to be belittled in Africa and in other continents, those policies brought undeniable benefits to the African continent and its populations. We do not, therefore, undervalue the work done, but I think I can say that the distinguishing feature of Portuguese Africa — notwithstanding the congregated efforts made in many quarters to attack it by word as well as by action — is the primacy which we have always attached and will continue to attach to the enhancement of the value and the dignity of man without distinction of colour or creed, in the light of the principles of civilization we carried to the populations who were in every way distant from ourselves. Thus we came to the conviction that economic, social and political progress, even if slower, becomes secure and enduring only by that process. Otherwise — and the phenomenon is

evident — such autonomies and, above all, independences as have not matured but have been fabricated in series, are purely artificial and represent only a process of transforming the old colonialism into a new colonialism of a worse type.

Is there an administrative cadre of native African Angolans now in being which is capable of doing necessary things to maintain society e.g. keep order, sell postage stamps? If not, is it possible to create such a cadre? And how long would it take? Ten years? Twenty years?

I think I can sum up your three questions in two: is there an Angolan administrative *cadre*? And, if it exists, is it sufficient? My answer to the first question is an unhesitating affirmative. And I may add that the *cadre* goes far beyond police force or postal employees. Thus, in all sectors of administration and in keeping with the criterion, which to us is fundamental, of selecting according to qualifications and, therefore without considerations of race, there are Africans holding posts by the side of Europeans, whether born in the territory or not. It also happens — and it is a commonplace fact — that there are Africans occupying positions of command with Europeans serving under their orders. Thus there are Africans as district governors, presidents of municipalities, directors of departments, etc. I must also observe that this situation is not a hasty eleventh hour arrangement of political expediency but is the result of a progressive development in accordance with our traditional policy of joint social promotion. For many centuries before the rights of men and racial equality were talked about, we had already coloured people holding posts of high dignity both in the provinces and in the Portuguese royal court. What is today called Africanization of *cadres* shows clear evidence of black racism which, according to our ideas and our overseas policy, is as unacceptable as white racism. Further, it is impossible to build up Africa on the basis of racism, as the future will tell.

As for the second question, it seems evident that we cannot regard the existing *cadres* as sufficient, the more so as Angola and Mozambique are going through a period of extraordinary progress and we are busily engaged there in vast development plans of all types. On the other hand, the insufficiency of *cadres*, which afflicts particularly certain independent African countries and with visible consequences, clearly illustrates a point that is frequently forgotten by many who study the problems of Africa: this point is that money by itself, even when accompanied by a hasty political independence, does not solve the problems of a society which is still in the process of development. In fact, the construction of schools only has a meaning when it is preceded by the preparation of teachers; to direct economy it is necessary to have managers, technicians and economists; economic development requires financial administration; political responsibility demands politicians trained in the lower echelons of administration. It serves no purpose to have a small élite to form a «government», if the social and cultural level of the mass of the population is not raised: in this case the «government» will not raise the masses but will fall to their level and will be subject to all the influences which, if they are of foreign origin, will restrict its independence. The truth is that a school, an enterprise or a political institution can be raised or created within a short time, but the human element, which must direct them and make them live, does not depend only on the funds which may be placed at its disposal. If we further consider that the present spurt of progress in Africa dates back only a few years, we will then perhaps discover the explanation of many deficiencies and disillusionings of African international politics. As far as we are concerned, we are doing everything to see that, along with the general development, élites are formed as required by the progress made. Since we are working along with the overseas territories on the basis of an interlinked system, we try both here and there to promote instructions, particularly professional and technical instruction, in order to form the *cadres* which

are necessary. I shall, therefore, make a third observation; we are asked quite often about the situation in the overseas *cadres* and never about the positions held by overseas citizens in the public life and functions in European Portugal. As we do not keep statistics on a racial basis, we cannot answer questions of this type with precise data, but one can easily see that there are Cape-Verdeans and Goans as well as Angolans and Mozambicans holding posts in the public services in European Portugal and in the other provinces without exclusivism or discrimination. They may be seen here, for example, in the administration, in the teaching profession, in judicial functions, etc.

Does the apparently imminent end of the Algerian war create a further political problem for Portugal in Africa? That is, is it likely that armed and trained officers from the Front de Libération Nationale may move into Angola by way of the Congo or Guinea?

The international press has, in fact, reported that the foreign organizations responsible for the terrorism in the north of Angola — which it has been possible to overcome, because it did not find a suitable atmosphere there — are now recruiting reinforcements among the forces of the F.L.N. or have sent some of their followers to Algeria for training so that they may later infiltrate into Angola across the northern frontier. Some time back a big American newspaper even published a photograph showing those Algerian recruits in training. We do not know if such information is true or not, but, in addition to the precautions which become necessary, we find in it two points worth noting. The first is that certain sectors of opinion, which stubbornly refused and still refuse to believe us when we say that terrorism in Angola was prepared, directed and launched from outside, are now the first to confirm that the so-called Angolan «nationalist rebellion» depends exclusively on foreign initiative and is fed with funds, material and

men from outside. We should have thought that such a confession should be accompanied by a firm disapproval, in the name of the principles so candidly proclaimed by those sectors, of non-intervention in the internal affairs of each country and of peaceful co-existence. But this is not the case and it appears that Argelian officers or soldiers will be regarded in such sectors as «Angolan nationalists». Some days ago I read in a responsible British newspaper that Poland was looking for Portuguese-speaking Poles in order to send them to Angola. Must these too be regarded as «African nationalists»?

Secondly, confronting these reports with others now being published daily about the quarrels and rivalries among the leaders and members of the organizations just mentioned, it is seen that those responsible for the terrorism have lost the hope of leading the peaceful Angolan population to join the movement, notwithstanding the cruelties perpetrated on them with a view to swelling, by means of intimidation, the ranks of the terrorists so as to create the impression of a internal movement. Since this objective failed, the organizers of terrorism now seem to be drawn to the other method. Thus the news is not surprising, though it puts us on our guard. But there is a curious aspect to note: the world regards the foreigners enlisted in the Katangese forces as «mercenaries», whose activities are to be prohibited; but the foreigners who sow terror in the north of Angola are to be regarded as «Angolan nationalists»!

Does the presence of 250.000 (estimated) Portuguese nationals from the European mainland create a problem in any way analogous to the «settler problem» the British have encountered in Kenya and the French in Algeria?

I think that both in Kenya and in Algeria there are settlers whose families have been there for many generations. From this point of view there are certainly similarities with the

situations existing in our provinces. But it seems that, at least as regards the first of those two territories, the general tendency of the European populations is towards abandonment: to this extent there is no similarity with Angola or Mozambique. Moreover — and this point is of capital importance — there does not seem to be any similarity between the relations existing among the various ethnical groups inhabiting those territories and those existing among the different ethnical groups of Angola, where these have been living together and mixing and working side by side for many centuries, protected by a sovereignty which has created in them the sentiment of being integrated in a Nation. Thus white and coloured people are living there as in their own land and consider themselves as Portuguese of Angola.

Is there, from the viewpoint of the West, a compromise possible or implicit in Portuguese policy to avoid the extremes of ultra-conservative «settlerism» and ultra-liberal «independence and damn the torpedoes» sentiment which can lead to near-anarchy — e.g., the Congo — or Castroism — e.g., Cuba?

I think that my replies to some of the previous questions clearly indicate the ideal for which we have always worked in Africa and which we are defending there: the development and consolidation of a multi-racial society, governed by law, with equal justice for all without distinction of race or creed and equal opportunities for all according to their merits and qualifications. The formation of such a society demands that no contribution of any one group should be excluded in the name of any racism, whether well or ill disguised; that social promotion should rest on a solid basis so that the responsibilities attributed may correspond to the capacity to carry them out; that economic development should be as fast as possible but on the basis of the material and human realities; that political power should be placed at the service of society

without exclusion of anybody and not the other way around. These are the ultimate objectives of our policy. We go ahead without halting for rest and without backsliding, towards our goal, but we admit that there is still much more to be done, particularly in regard to the infra-structures of progress, such as health and education. We have worked honestly and with a resolute purpose in these fields so that we do not fear comparison, in any of these sectors, with almost all the African countries and territories and with many others situated in other continents. The average public, to whom a demagogic propaganda has reached more easily than the truth, is ill informed in this respect. But some specialised agencies of the United Nations, namely WHO and ILO whose idoneity is admitted by all, have already proclaimed the truth for those wishing to know it. Could our aim be too ambitious or even impossible? Brazil and Goa, not to cite more examples, show that it is possible. Simply, even if the march of times is today more rapid than it was in the past centuries, it needs time, much time to mould a human society. When an attempt is made to precipitate matters in this domain, one finds oneself faced with the dilemma indicated in your question and no compromise seems to be possible to avoid it. That is why the Portuguese overseas policy is not to be viewed as a «compromise» but as a «solution», which should not be unpleasant to the West, so closely it is based on the principles of the civilization to which all of us are bound.

Would you care to state briefly your criticism of American policy vis-a-vis Africa and suggest how it might be firmed up and improved?

I have been asked similar questions before. I have replied that I would never dare to indicate the policy which the United States ought or ought not to follow. However, it seems legitimate to point out that the criticism mainly directed against

it at the moment, not only in Europe but also in the United States itself and even in the African continent, is that it seeks hasty political solutions before the solution of the innumerable and complex social, economic, technical and cultural problems of Africa is assured. In fact, many accuse the United States of viewing Africa as being primarily a part of the world where the one thing that matters is to defeat communism: once political independence is granted and regimes styled as democratic are set up, the battle will have been won; and the United States expects and endeavours to make those regimes enter its own orbit and escape that of the Soviet Union. To implement this doctrine, which seems to us an over-simplification and above all unsupported by facts, the American Government has persistently favoured precipitate independences which are already revealing themselves here and there not only as incapable of solving the real problems but as susceptible, after all, of throwing the gates open to the influence of communist ideas. In this process, the United States has abandoned allies and opposed their legitimate interests: but what seems still more serious — besides being opposed to the traditional generosity of the idealism of the American people — is that such a policy has not benefited the populations in question; rather the contrary. I do not know if this results or is expected to result in economic or commercial advantages for the United States: but, if it is a question of principles and if the aim is to defend the freedom of the peoples, then it does not seem that the results of that policy ought to be regarded as encouraging.

Do you consider it in the good interest of the Republic of Portugal and Western Europe to renew with the United States the base commitment in the Azores?

I would prefer not to answer this question and I would ask you not to put it.



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