S

ANTÓNIO DE OLIVEIRA SALAZAR (1889–1970) ruled Portugal from 1932 to 1968, and his ideas dominated the country's politics even longer—from soon after the demise of the short-lived democratic republic in 1926 through the peaceful "revolution of the carnations" in 1974. As finance minister, starting in 1928, he stabilized Portugal's inflationary economy and eased it through the Great Depression. Then as premier, after 1932, he turned the military dictatorship into a constitutional authoritarian regime based on a hybrid of new corporatist and residual democratic institutions characterized by a Catholic conception of organic national interest. His "New State" was thus meant to steer a course between totalitarian fascism, then on the rise in Europe, and what Salazar considered to be the decadent democracies then collapsing all around him. That his political innovations built on Portuguese traditions instead of imported models accounts for the authoritarian regime's remarkable longevity.

During World War II, Salazar's skillful diplomacy balanced Portugal between neutrality and a traditional alliance with Great Britain, a combination that proved lucrative in both the short and long run. The caution so appropriate during wartime, however, became something of a liability afterward, as economic growth remained comparatively slow and Portugal continued to lag behind the rest of Europe in wealth and social development. Salazar's vision was perhaps most limited when it came to Portugal's anachronistic colonial empire. His stubborn, open-ended commitment to the status quo, in the face of both UN pressure and the expense of colonial wars, proved to be the corporatist regime's Achilles' heel, sparking a bloodless coup in 1974. Overall, few leaders have shaped their country's economics, domestic politics and foreign policy so profoundly for so many decades.

Salazar was born on April 28, 1889, to poor but deeply religious parents in a hamlet in the wine valley of Dão. From age eleven to eighteen, he attended a Catholic seminary. He never was ordained, but personally continued to live the ascetic life of a Seminarian. He studied law and economics at Coimbra University beginning in 1910, the same year that Portugal's democratic republic

was proclaimed He stayed on to teach political economy at the university, where he led a movement of Catholic intellectuals called the Academic Center for Christian Democracy (known by its Portuguese initials, CADC). Salazar regularly criticized the Republic as politically unstable, inflationary, anticlerical, and especially following the huge financial scandal of 1925, hopelessly corrupt.

During this time, Salazar is said to have been turned down for marriage by an upper-class girl. Despite his strong belief that the family was the nation's basic moral, social and political unit, he never did marry or have children of his own. After becoming premier, he would eventually adopt two female cousins of his lifelong housekeeper, Doña Maria, who in turn practically became a surrogate first lady. Salazar was elected to the National Assembly as a non-party CADC deputy for one term in 1921, but the experience so repulsed him that he became convinced political parties themselves were part of the republic's problem and should be banned, an opinion he never altered.

In May 1926, when the military overthrew the republic in a bloodless putsch, Salazar served as the dictatorship's first finance minister, but only for five days. He resigned as soon as the generals rejected his strict financial policies. Salazar was invited back in 1928 and finally granted the authority to implement these same tight pre-Keynesian economic policies. He promptly balanced the budget, put the currency back onto the gold standard and made the country self-sufficient in wheat production. Regarded as the regime's savior, Salazar began to exercise decisive influence in other policy areas as well, evident especially in two 1930 speeches that outlined his corporatist vision of government. Then in July 1932, President Carmona designated him head of government, or premier, the post he would hold for the rest of his life. Within a year, Salazar instituted a civilian authoritarian regime. His corporatist constitution was approved by plebiscite in March 1933 and followed by elections without opposition in December. The next elections would not be held until 1945. The most serious sign of opposition until then was the bomb that exploded near Salazar on July 4, 1947.

Salazar's "New State" was based on a nationalist reaction against the internationalism of both communism and fascism. Although it has been criticized as fascism without a fascist movement. the New State was not controlled by a mass party, it lacked a fully developed ideology and it never tried to mobilize its population—all hallmarks of fascism. Nor was Salazar's regime committed to rapid socioeconomic modernization. Portugal had a fascist movement, the blue-shirted National Syndicalists led by Rolão Prieto, but Salazar banned them in June 1934 for having too many foreign connections. Although Salazar did create a youth movement (called the Mocidade), a civil guard (the Portuguese Legion) and a single party (National Union), these institutions bore only a superficial resemblance to the corresponding institutions of Italian fascism and German national socialism. In contrast to both Italy and Germany, where fascist movements had founded new states, in Portugal the New State founded a movement with no independent life of its own.

For political principles to govern Portugal, where Catholic faith had been

deepened by the Fátima vision in 1917, Salazar turned instead to the Catholic corporatism of the CDAL, drawing heavily on the encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius IX. These preached that the state should make itself responsible for social justice yet follow the principle of subsidiarity, that is, to undertake to do itself only that which neither market nor family could do alone. His Catholic political inspiration did not, however, extend to embracing Pius XI's commitment to the sanctity of individual human rights or the later liberalism of John XXIII's Second Vatican Council. Salazar believed that God, not the people, was the ultimate source of political power, that the common good, not majority will, was the source of political legitimacy, and that Christians had a duty to obey a government that respected the Church's spiritual sphere. In a 1940 concordat, Salazar restored the Vatican rights removed by the republic, but his relations with the Church were not entirely smooth. In 1958 the bishop of Porto was "encouraged" to leave the country for criticizing the government and he was not asked to return until 1969. Since Salazar vetted new appointments, the Vatican refused for eleven years to name a replacement.

Salazar's corporatist constitution preserved direct representation both in a popularly-elected president (until 1959) and in a popularly elected National Assembly, which was limited mostly to advising a premier who could rule by decree-law. But its great innovation was to set up an alternative advisory body, the Corporative Chamber, in which social groups rather than individuals were represented. This body reflected Salazar's conviction that the nation was not a pluralistic collection of atomized individual wills but rather an organic being composed of functionally specialized parts. Industrial and professional associations, merchants, financiers, workers, intellectuals, farmers and the Church were all represented in the advisory Corporative Chamber. Yet, with the power to increase spending vested solely in the executive, and most corporate representatives also appointed by the executive rather than elected by their corporations, Salazar's regime ended up less the viable alternative to traditional conceptions of democracy it claimed to be than a constitutional dictatorship of the premier himself.

Paternalism characterized the extensive practical limits on formal freedoms of speech, press and assembly, which Salazar felt were necessary to protect the nation's public opinion from dangerous ideas, both internal and external ideas. Since the family was considered the basic social unit, the right to vote was restricted largely to heads of families, although some women with college education and sufficient property could also vote. There was no right to strike; there were no independent unions. Instead, by 1956 the state was supervising all collective bargaining between corporations of businessmen and workers in all major industries. Membership was always voluntary in these corporations but the terms of the contracts they negotiated were binding on nonmembers as well.

In foreign policy, Salazar's greatest achievement was to keep Portugal neutral in World War II while reaping the benefits of allying with the winning side. This he achieved by preserving Portugal's traditional alliance with Great Britain,

which dates back several centuries, even as he sold goods to both the Allies and the Axis until 1944. Only in 1943, after an Allied victory was in sight, did Salazar grant Britain base rights in the strategic Azores Islands. Portugal's economy thrived under this diplomatic balancing act, especially from the sale of wolfram, a crucial weapons-making material. After the war, Portugal received Marshall Fund aid (1947–1948), joined the NATO defense alliance (1949), and overcame a Soviet veto to join the United Nations (1955). Salazar could thus claim credit for recovering the international respect Portugal had lost under the republic.

Another achievement of Salazar's diplomacy was to help convince Spain to stay neutral in the war, even as it was signing the Comintern Pact with the Axis. Putting aside centuries of peninsular rivalry, in 1939 Salazar signed the Iberian Pact for mutual neutrality with Franco. Partly his calculation was that Portugal's sovereignty would be threatened by a communist regime in Spain, partly that Franco's authoritarian ideas closely resembled his own. So in 1938, Portugal became the first country to recognize the Franco government as the Spanish Civil War wound down.

In spite of the international postwar trend to decolonize, Salazar clung to a colonial empire that became more and more of a burden to a country of only 9.5 million people. From Macao in the Far East to Goa in the Indian Ocean to the African colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, Salazar and his young foreign minister, Franco Nogueira, rebuffed UN demands—eventually included in a Security Council resolution of 1965—that Portugal grant its colonies independence. Insisting that each territory was an equal overseas province of Portugal rather than a subordinate colony—at least after colonial law revisions in 1951—Salazar tapped proud traditions dating back to Prince Henry the Navigator by insisting that Portugal was not just a small country in Europe. But in fact, less than 1 percent of the native colonial population could vote, and forced labor continued until another colonial law reform in 1961–1962.

The guerrilla wars of independence that began in Angola in 1961 (the same year in which India seized Goa) and spread to Guinea-Bissau in 1962 and Mozambique in 1964 soon forced Portugal to bear the heaviest defense burden in Europe—averaging 40 percent of the entire budget—in order to station 100,000 troops abroad. There was some irony in Salazar's commitment to such an unsustainable burden after having launched his career as finance minister in 1928 not just on a general financial conservatism but also on the specific demand that expenditures on the colonies be cut. After suffering a stroke in September 1968, Salazar was succeeded by former overseas minister Marcello Caetano, who doggedly pursued the colonial wars until the military's own frustrations with bleak prospects for eventual victory inspired junior officers to mount the "captains' movement" coup of April 25, 1974, which brought down Salazar's corporatist regime.

Perhaps ironically, Salazar's hybrid regime never fully displaced democratic institutions, a fact that may help explain how the antidemocratic revolutionary

movement of 1974 could end up producing a democratic transition a year later—the first in what has become a wave of democratizations sweeping across southern Europe, Latin America and Eastern Europe in the past two decades. The National Assembly did not influence policy significantly during Salazar's lifetime, but under Caetano it began to provide a forum for liberal critics. Elections to the Assembly were never free, and direct presidential elections were suspended after a Salazar rival polled at least 25 percent of the vote amid fraud charges in 1958. But despite the proportionally small electorate and consistent voter registration irregularities, a unique window of pluralism opened for thirty days before every election. During that short time, political parties were permitted to organize and freedoms of speech, press and assembly were better respected. It is one of the many paradoxes surrounding Salazar that, by preserving these vestiges of the republic he claimed so thoroughly to reject, he may have contributed indirectly to modern Portugal's successful democratic transition.

On the whole, Salazar's influence on Portugal was unmatched during this century. A strong leader with a clear vision of where he wanted to take the country, he transformed Portugal from a country on the brink of political and economic chaos back into a productive economic and international actor. A single-minded vision of Portuguese national interest enabled Salazar to largely insulate his country from both the Great Depression and World War II. At the same time, however, this rigid vision and the caution it prescribed shut Portugal out of such benefits of the postwar world as rapid economic modernization, decolonization and democratization (and, therefore, European Community membership).

Salazar's legacy is therefore mixed. Portugal's social structure has changed the least, and its illiteracy has remained the highest (15 percent in 1970), of any Western European country, but its strategic international position has been recovered. The Portuguese colonial empire survived longer than any other Western power's, but in the end it dragged Salazar's corporatist regime down in mutiny and insurrection. Salazar's corporatist institutions successfully blocked both communism and fascism in Portugal for more than thirty years, but they also blocked individual human rights and a democracy that the Portuguese were far more prepared for than Salazar's paternal view of them could conceive.

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