

PORTUGAL—ONE OF THE LAST NEUTRALS

By K. H. ABSHAGEN

We all read so much about the belligerents that we are apt to forget that there are still some neutral countries left. In an earlier article we defined neutrality as being "the ability of a country to choose one of three possibilities—to stay out of the war, to join one side, or to join the other."

It may be mere chance or it may have a deeper significance that, among the small group of nations which can still claim to be in this position, three of the most important are of Iberian stock—Portugal, Argentina, and Chile.

The average person thinks of Portugal as a small country at the extreme southwestern end of Europe, forgetting that, in addition, Portugal possesses a colonial empire twenty-five times her size, the remnant of her glorious past and, for her citizens, very much a thing of the present.

It certainly requires extraordinary skill to steer the Portuguese ship of state through the many rocks of European and world politics and to preserve Portugal's neutrality in three years of world conflict. It was accomplished by one of the outstanding men of our time, Dr. Salazar. The author of the following article is well known to our readers by his articles "Society Dies Hard" (December 1941) and "The Road to the War of Greater East Asia" (January 1942). He spent several years as a correspondent in Portugal and is now in Tokyo.—K.M.

A MAN AT WORK

SOME time last year a foreign diplomat, who had only recently arrived in Lisbon, had some urgent business to discuss with the Portuguese Foreign Office. The time of day was ten in the morning, so he got on to the Ministry by telephone. However, when he asked for the officials of the department concerned, one after the other, the young lady at the telephone invariably answered that the man in question was not at the office or not in his room. At last, after a lengthy conversation, she told him that, with the exception of herself, some doormen, charwomen, and other underlings, there was practically no one—certainly no one of authority—in the Ministry at such an unearthly hour. Work would not begin in earnest until later in the day. No, there was no one present in the mornings, "except, of course, His Excellency the Foreign Minister," who would normally be in at nine o'clock sharp, "but he does not want to be disturbed by being called on the phone. You see, he is working."

The lonely Foreign Minister who works every morning all by himself in the stately Ministry near the Tagus is no less a person than Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, at the same time Prime Minister, Minister of War, and—till not so very long ago—also Minister of Finance. It was in the latter capacity that he first became known and laid the foundation for his international reputation as a statesman of energy and resource. One can easily understand that a man of so many responsibilities cannot afford the leisurely methods of work which tradition and climate have made the normal thing in the Iberian peninsula.

But there is a much deeper significance in the vision of Dr. Salazar, all alone, day after day, reading reports, drafting notes, and making decisions on the foreign policy of his little country and its far-flung colonial empire. As a matter of fact, well-informed people in Lisbon say that the reports of Portugal's ambassadors and envoys abroad are opened personally and perused exclusively by Dr. Salazar, and that only excerpts written by the Foreign Minister in his own hand-

writing go to the Undersecretary of State and the departments, while the originals are kept in the Minister's safe. That story may be true, or it may be just a story, but the significant thing is that in serious quarters in Lisbon it is credited or, at least, not thought at all unlikely. So it is clear that the foreign policy of Portugal is directed by one man and one man only.

WHAT IS THE "ESTADO NOVO"?

This foreign policy can only be understood and appreciated when seen against the political background and the personality of the man who governs Portugal today. The present regime in Portugal is usually rather hazily described as some kind of Fascism, but there are very few people outside the country who have a clear picture of the actual state of affairs prevailing there. Undoubtedly there are very definite affinities between the "*Estado Novo*" in Portugal, as the Carmona-Salazar rule calls itself, and Italian Fascism, whose "Corporate State" ideas have to a certain degree served as a model for the Portuguese constitutional changes.

However, there are probably as many differences as there are affinities. To begin with, when General Carmona, fifteen years ago, overthrew the old liberalistic order in Portugal, his regime, though full of the best intentions, was not fundamentally different from previous military governments which, through the revolt of either army or navy, had overthrown their predecessors, only to be forced out in turn by some hostile faction of politicians and generals or admirals.

It was not until Dr. Salazar had been called in by President Carmona to take over the Ministry of Finance and with it the thorny task of putting the Portuguese public household in order after generations of waste and corruption, that the foundations of the *Estado Novo* were truly laid. And even then, when Dr. Salazar succeeded beyond expectations in balancing the budget and re-establishing Portuguese credit to an extent undreamt of for generations, it did not cause im-

mediate enthusiasm throughout the country. For, naturally, these results could not be obtained without imposing sacrifices and hardships on many, by enforcing retrenchment, by cutting down graft where many had been used to living on graft, by increasing work, and by impinging on the leisure of a people of leisurely habits and inclinations. All this was enforced from above by a strong though benevolent hand. It was not the result of a popular movement like National-Socialism in Germany or Fascism in Italy. The popular movement supporting the regime did not come till afterwards, when the constructive efforts and successes of the Government became clear to everybody both inside the country and outside.

A PARADOX OF A DICTATOR

But even now, after he has long been not only Prime Minister but the unquestioned leader of his state and people, Dr. Salazar does not enjoy a popularity comparable to the feelings with which Adolf Hitler or Benito Mussolini have inspired their followers and their nations as a whole. Dr. Salazar is not at all the type of man to inspire any people, let alone a temperamental Latin nation. He is a paradox of a dictator. The great majority of Portuguese have never seen the man who for more than ten years has been at the helm of their ship of state. He rarely speaks in public and, if he does, his speeches are devoid of inspiring oratory. They remind one much more of the lectures of the professor of economics of Coimbra University—that is what Salazar was up to the moment when he was called to take charge of the State's finance—than of a tribune's fiery rhetorics. If today Dr. Salazar's Government is firmly established in the whole country, this is certainly not due to demagoguery but to sound merit. For its activities have not only put the country's finance on a sound basis, but given internal peace and an efficient and orderly administration to a country that for decades had been undermined by continuous political unrest and warped by corruption.

Of course, this reform work could not be performed without interfering in many cases with old, established habits and vested interests. Therefore the esteem enjoyed by the Government and its chief in the overwhelming majority of the nation has not so much the character of overflowing enthusiasm as that of great respect. For the nation is keenly aware of the fact that Dr. Salazar, in spite of being sometimes a rather hard taskmaster, is simply indispensable, unless the country is to revert to the evil conditions of the past.

ONE - EYED OPPOSITION

Still, there are forces in the country which, for obvious reasons, do not feel too happy about the present regime. They are to be found mostly among what is usually known as the intelligentsia. To get a true perspective of the importance of these people, one must keep in mind the fact that Portugal is a nation with a very low percentage of literacy. When General Carmona became President of the Republic in 1926, the proportion of illiterate persons over seven years was estimated at seventy-five per cent. As late as 1940, a leading Lisbon newspaper gave two thirds of the population as a likely figure for those who can neither read nor write. In the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, and so in Portugal a man who could not only read and write but whose gifts enabled him even to write a newspaper article felt—until the present regime came into

power—entitled to take a leading part in the political life of the country.

However, in a regime that has done away with parliamentary squabbles and has concentrated on sober constructive work there cannot be many openings in leading positions for people whose intellectual abilities consist mainly in the art of writing critical essays. To this must be added the fact that for generations

many young Portuguese have spent at least part of their university years in Paris, where most of them were imbued with the tenets of the French leftists. This is another good reason why a large part of the Portuguese intelligentsia is not and never has been any too pleased with Dr. Salazar's Government.

A SAFETY VALVE

The method by which Dr. Salazar has limited the potential danger represented by a considerable number of disgruntled politico-intellectuals shows his keen insight into the character of his countrymen. Taking the substance of power out of their hands, he left them a good deal of freedom to air their views in the press by limiting censorship to the exclusion of news and views which can be regarded as immediately dangerous to the regime or to the peace and order of the country. By leaving latently hostile elements this opportunity to let off steam and by trusting in their natural disinclination to take action, violent or otherwise, Dr.



Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar

Salazar succeeded to a remarkable degree in checking the danger of internal unrest. He was able to do this with comparative safety, for the widespread illiteracy of the people prevented the tirades of the opposition from influencing the real opinion of the masses of peasant farmers, fishers, and laborers to any extent.

On the other hand, the leniency with which censorship is handled in Portugal explains the discrepancy often to be observed between the Portuguese press and the policy of the Portuguese Government. In fact, Dr. Salazar's press policy has on some occasions even jeopardized Portugal's foreign relations.

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

One other factor in Portugal's internal situation should at least be touched upon before trying to draw a picture of Dr. Salazar's foreign policy during the present world conflict. The great majority of the Portuguese people are devout Roman Catholics, and Dr. Salazar himself is a loyal son of the Church of Rome. He graduated from a Jesuit College, and it was there that he made friends with a classmate who is today Cardinal Patriarch, that is to say, the highest dignitary of the Catholic Church in Portugal. The relations between the Portuguese Republic and the Holy See had been impaired by the anti-Catholic measures of a number of Portuguese governments under freemasonic influence, in particular by the prohibition of religious orders and the secularization of Church property. After lengthy negotiations held in complete secrecy, Dr. Salazar succeeded in concluding a new Concordat with the Holy See in 1940, by which he did away with most of the grievances of the Church against the Portuguese State.

He refrained, however, from revoking the separation of Church and State enacted under the revolutionary regime after the overthrow of the monarchy. Though he regards the Church as one of the cornerstones of a sound Portugal, he does not seem to be willing to allow an overwhelming clerical influence in the affairs of state. This attitude may not

be wholly satisfactory from the point of view of some Catholic zealots, but in general Dr. Salazar can count on the support of the Church, which, in Portugal as well as in Spain, is acutely aware of the dangers of communism and the spread of Marxist doctrines.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, however, one must remember that among Catholic intellectuals there are influential circles which, under the influence of Great War reminiscences, have very definite pro-Allied sympathies and make full use of the lenient press censorship to express these so blatantly as sometimes to overstep the line of strict neutrality proclaimed by the Government.

ON THE FENCE

Such is, roughly, the background against which must be judged the foreign policy of Dr. Salazar's Government since the European war broke out in 1939. This foreign policy has so far been carried out with sober realism and restraint. Portugal's situation was, from the very beginning of this war, extremely difficult; and the more the war spread the more difficult did Portugal's situation become. Long before the Allies violated Portuguese sovereignty in Timor, Lisbon was aware of the fact that Great Britain and the United States were casting covetous glances on the island possessions of Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean. The latest events in Madagascar and elsewhere, as well as the propaganda for a "second front" against Germany, are scarcely designed to allay such fears.

The preservation of the integrity of the Portuguese colonial empire is the main aim of Dr. Salazar's foreign policy in these troubled times, and this aim best explains the cautious procedure chosen by Portugal in her dealings with the countries at war. Since the beginning of the war, Portugal has been sitting on the fence, and it has certainly not always been a very comfortable seat. There were strong forces trying to draw Portugal into the Allied camp, and in 1939 there were many people in and outside of Portugal who believed that, within a very

few weeks of the outbreak of the war, Portugal would be in it. There was, of course, the "Auld Alliance" with Great Britain dating back to 1372; there was the more recent memory of Portugal's participation in the last war—though to many the experience did not invite repetition; there was, above all, the recognition of the fact that, as long as Britain and her Allies dominated the high seas, Portugal, with her weak military and naval forces, would not be able to defend for any length of time her far-flung colonial possessions, should she be drawn into the conflict by the opposite side. Besides this, there were also strong leanings towards the Western democracies among the leftist intelligentsia mentioned before as well as among wide Catholic circles.

SYMPATHIES FOR FRANCE

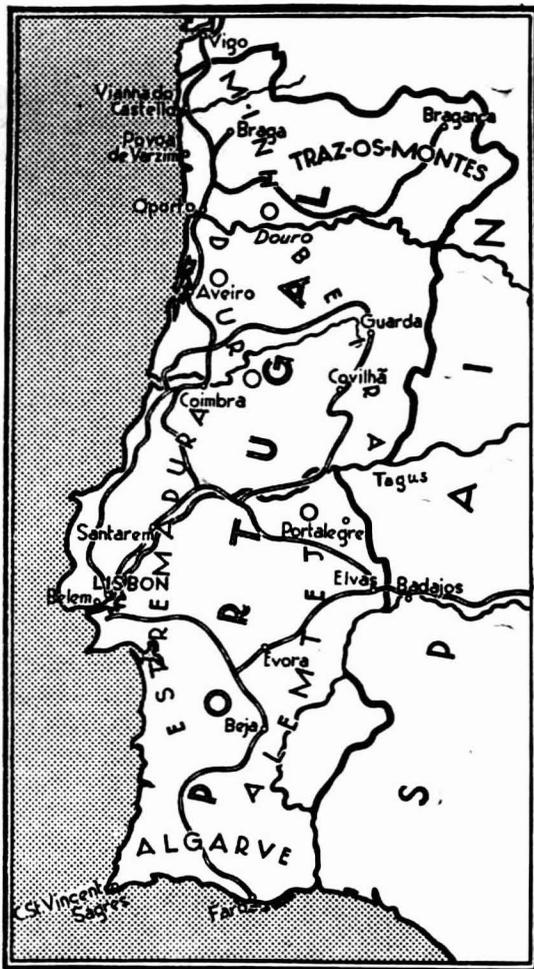
These active pro-Allied sympathies, which sometimes found strong expression in the Portuguese press, were centered primarily on France. Great Britain is the old ally, she is a good customer for Portugal's exports of wine and cork and canned fish, but British aloofness and superiority have made it impossible for the normal Portuguese to feel comfortable in British company. Official politeness on the British side cannot overcome the deep-rooted suspicion that basically the Portuguese remains to the Englishman just a "dago."

How different with France! To many thousands of educated Portuguese, Paris has always represented, not only the peak of human culture, but also the playground of their student days, the source of education and enlightenment, and the scene of their youthful—and sometimes not so youthful—escapades and indiscretions. The alliance with Britain was mainly a matter of £.s.d., the friendship for France a strong sentimental bond. Hence the collapse of France in the summer of 1940 violently shook the pro-Allied section in Portugal, although a considerable part of the intellectuals and confessed or secret leftists remained negative, hostile, and lacking in understanding towards Germany.

On the other side there were, from the beginning of the war, those who saw the common interest between Portugal and the powers who are fighting for a new order in Europe. Not that the idea itself of this new Europe caught on very quickly. Portugal does not really turn her face towards the European continent but looks across the seas towards her colonies. But there are very definite common interests between the present regime in Portugal and the totalitarian regimes in Germany and Italy. This became patent for the first time during the Spanish civil war.

THE CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

It has not been without influence on the attitude taken by Portugal



since the outbreak of the present war that in Spain the British and French Governments supported that side whose victory could not have been without far-reaching consequences on the domestic situation in Portugal. A Red Spain would in all likelihood, either by propaganda and infiltration or by main force, have overthrown the present regime of peace and created a Bolshevik center of unrest at the southwestern extremity of Europe. Even many otherwise liberalistic people in Portugal, who were not particularly enthusiastic about the Carmona-Salazar regime, were bitterly opposed to this policy of the Western powers in Spain.

The Portuguese Government officially maintained neutrality towards the struggle in Spain, but its sympathies were clearly on the side of the forces of the Caudillo. Moreover, considerable numbers of Portuguese volunteers fought against the Reds in Spain, side by side with Germans and Italians, thus giving practical expression to the common interests existing between the present regime in Portugal and National-Socialism and Fascism. These common interests persist to this day. Dr. Salazar knows full well that a destruction of the totalitarian regimes of Germany and Italy by the forces of the democratic powers and their Bolshevik ally would sound the death knell of his own lifework in Portugal.

IBERIAN SOLIDARITY

Amid these crosscurrents of opinion in the country and through the backwash of the changing tides of the European conflict, Dr. Salazar has consistently tried to steer a neutral course with the ultimate aim of preserving the integrity of his country and its colonial possessions until the day when peace should be restored. It is worth noting that the recent internal conflict in Spain offered him the cue which made it possible to avoid the most immediate danger to Portugal's neutrality, that is, her alliance with Great Britain.

It seems that in 1939 the British Government had to some extent become

the victim of its own propaganda, which throughout the Spanish civil war had alleged that German and Italian assistance to General Franco had had no other object than to gain military bases in the rear of France and Great Britain. Therefore, in 1939 the British Government agreed to Dr. Salazar's concluding a neutrality pact with Spain, because that seemed to reduce the imaginary danger of Spanish intervention on the side of Germany. When in June 1940 this pact was strengthened by an additional protocol which foresees mutual support against any threat to the integrity of either of the contracting parties, Great Britain, having favored the initial stages of this policy, could not very well object to its logical continuation, although for all practical purposes it invalidated the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.

The policy of Iberian solidarity, which forms the backbone of Dr. Salazar's efforts to avoid being drawn into the war, has the additional value, from the Portuguese point of view, of allaying the fears that the Pan-Iberian tendencies existing in some quarters of nationalist Spain might at any moment threaten Portugal's independence.

As the war lengthened out and extended its range to the farthest corners of the world, Dr. Salazar not only continued but steadily intensified his co-operation with Spain. His visit to Seville last February, where he met General Franco and his Foreign Minister Serrano Suñer, was the first time he had left his own country since he became Prime Minister.

ALLIED THREATS AND INTERFERENCE

At the beginning of the war the German Government gave an assurance that Germany would respect the integrity of Portugal proper and her colonies as long as Portugal remained neutral. It has strictly adhered to this promise. In the Anglo-Saxon camp, on the other hand, voices were heard from a very early date onwards which in Lisbon were rightly understood to menace its overseas possessions, particularly the Azores and Cape

Verde Islands. The most outspoken threats came from the United States, where not only the press but senators and even President Roosevelt himself were responsible for utterances which Portugal could not but take very seriously. That she did so, and that she is determined not to yield to threats without more than formal resistance, was shown by the repeated dispatch of reinforcements to the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, and Mozambique. The Government was, however,

taken unawares by the invasion of Timor by Australian and Dutch troops in December 1941, an act by "friendly" powers which must have been very disappointing to those circles in Portugal which had so far sympathized with the democracies.

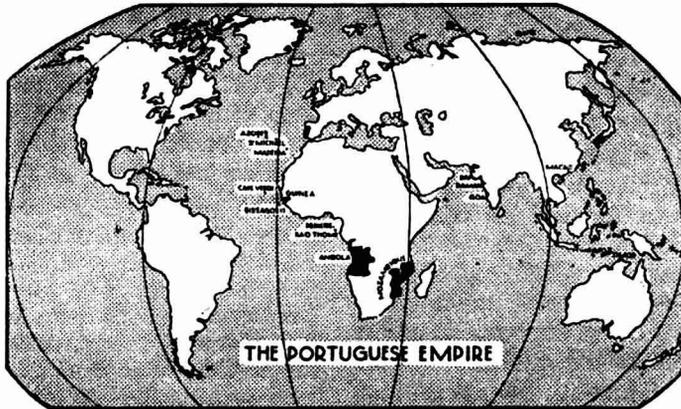
There are other reasons as well for Portugal to feel aggrieved against Great Britain. To an ever increasing extent, the British Government has interfered with Portugal's legitimate overseas trade with neutral powers and even with the internal communications of the Portuguese empire. Not even the mail between Portugal and her colonies is spared the indignity of being censored by Britain. By refusing navicerts for vital necessities, such as tin plate from the United States for the Portuguese canning industry, Britain tried to blackmail Portugal even to the extent of interfering with her trade

with the European continent. More than once the Portuguese Government has chosen to yield rather than to risk open conflict.

BIG ARMY FOR SMALL COUNTRY?

This meek attitude in the face of continuous provocation is explained by responsible Portuguese quarters with the military weakness of the country. There are people in Portugal who believe that more energetic measures of rearmament

taken in time, i.e., before the outbreak of the war or even during its early stages, would have enabled the Government more successfully to stave off these threats to the neutrality and integrity of the Portuguese empire and the actual infringements of its neutral rights. In the summer of 1940, military quarters even expressed open dissatisfaction over the issue of Portugal's



Portugal represents only 4 per cent of the total empire, as can be seen from the following table:

	Size in sq. m.	Population
Portugal, (incl. Azores & Madeira)	35,490	7,360,000
Cape Verde Islands	1,557	163,000
Portuguese Guinea (incl. Bissagos Islands).....	13,944	416,000
São Tomé	331	53,000
Príncipe	46	6,900
Angola.....	487,788	3,545,000
Mozambique	297,654	4,995,000
Portuguese India.....	1,537	600,000
Portuguese Timor.....	7,330	463,796
Macao	6	200,000
Portuguese Empire.....	845,683	17,802,696

military weakness. Dr. Salazar, it is reported, persuaded his military advisers that a small country like Portugal could never be strong enough successfully to resist the threats or aggressive acts of major powers, but that on the other hand the possession of stronger armaments might make Portugal too desirable an ally for one or the other parties at war and thus render the preservation of her neutrality even more difficult than in the existing circumstances.

COLONIAL EMPIRE AND NEW ORDER

In the past, the ties connecting Portugal with the rest of the European continent—always excepting Spain—have not been very close. Since her establishment as a national entity in the twelfth century, Portugal has felt herself to be more of an Atlantic than a European nation. Whoever had an opportunity to see the National Exhibition held in Lisbon in 1940 to celebrate the eighth centenary of Portugal's birth must have been struck by the transoceanic trend of the Portuguese mind expressed in the many exhibits. The holding of the 1940 exhibition in spite of the European war seems to have had a double purpose. On the one hand, it was intended to show the countries at war that Portugal was determined to preserve her neutrality and felt confident of being able to do so. On the other, Dr. Salazar clearly wanted to enhance the Portuguese people's pride in the great past of its country and to use this pride as an incentive to future national efforts.

Where does Portugal stand regarding a new European order? In this, as in all other questions today, it is a matter of where Dr. Salazar stands. His attempt to revive the national spirit of Portugal through the memory of the great days of her history does not necessarily conflict with a policy of co-operation with those European nations whose growing unity of purpose finds its present expression in the fight against Bolshevist Russia, a fight which concerns Portugal as much as any other country. From the later phases of Portugal's colonial history, and more particularly from her plight in the present war, a man of Dr. Salazar's realism and clear-sightedness must necessarily have drawn the lesson that a small country with weak means of defense cannot, in a period of the growth of ever bigger economic and political units, enjoy the fruits of its colonial enterprise if left to its own resources.

It has been reported that Dr. Salazar has a very clear understanding of the necessity of Portugal's active co-operation in the new Europe which will emerge from the present war, and that the aim of his neutrality policy is to enable Portugal to enter the new Europe as a full partner with her colonial assets unimpaired. Meanwhile, the development of the world toward the formation of great political and economic units has made momentous progress.

THE SPEECH OF A EUROPEAN

In his latest speech, broadcast on June 25, 1942, Dr. Salazar gave strong indications of his positive attitude towards the new Europe. We quote some of his most striking passages:

"The world today is suffering from materialism, individualism, egoism, and moral disorders. Only the restoration of spiritual values will give peace back to Europe and save her from communism, the foremost enemy, not only of Europe, but of the whole world...."

"The worst mistake committed by Britain was her alliance with Soviet Russia, without worrying about the mortal danger which such an alliance spells for the world...."

"The inability of the democracies during the post-war period to settle the problem of peace is flagrant. Democracy belongs to the past and an era of new order has been born, an era where the synthesis of freedom and community is personified in all those who are waging Europe's war against the unnatural alliance between the reactionary attitude in the West and the nihilism in the East."

* * *

Out here in the East, where the memory of the great deeds of Portuguese explorers and pioneers is alive, there is much sympathy for Portugal in her present difficulties and the hope that she will overcome them in the end and take her due place in the European community of nations.

