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THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN PORTUGAL

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But the character of the party which was bound to dominate in Portugal after the revolution could very clearly be inferred by the sociologist from a consultation of the circumstances in which that revolution took place.

A government, like any other social element, can only live by adaptation to its environment. Revolutions — meaning successful insurrectionary movements — are the demonstration that a certain government or institution has fallen out of adaptation with its social environment. But the very fact that a revolution triumphs is of itself a proof that the forces that bring it about are adapted to their environment. So that every revolution must be understood by the sociologist as meaning that the evolution of the social environment has made it impossible for the existing order of things to persist and that a new order has to come into being.

The difference in the social environment, however, comparing it as it is in the several years before a revolution and the several years after, cannot, after all, be very great. For certain factors remain fatally unchanged. In ten years, say — taking five years before to five years after, a revolution — several social elements cannot have changed. The central temper and tone of the national mind cannot have changed; that cannot be done in so short a space of time. The most that can have happened to it is to be changing more rapidly.

We have to examine now what are those social elements which cannot be and are not changed in a few years, and which are those that can.

The whole problem presents itself to us in the following way: given a social state a , represented by an institution b ; suppose that institution to have become unadapted to its environment (a); a revolution c comes and institutes a new order which we will call d . The social institution B cannot have become unadapted to all the environment; it is only to a part of it. What part? Necessarily that part which is in direct connection with institutions (political). What part is that? Evidently the feeling connected with those institutions — the monarchical feeling if the institution be a monarchy, the republican sentiment if

the institution be a commonwealth. When a monarchy ceases to have a hold on popular feeling, when all monarchical respect has gone, the republic is ipso facto near. The process is very simple. No institution loses the general feeling attached to it unless it falls into a great number of errors and crimes. The way these crimes and erro[r]s follow is very simple; first scandals and erro[r]s of a financial and administrative kind appear, and these begin, on the one hand, to undermine respect in the in[s]titution that commits them, and, on the other hand, to raise protests unconnected with the institution, but merely against those errors. If the errors persist and cabinet changes and intra-institutional political solutions repeatedly fail, the anti-institutional current becomes strong, and all protests against the errors of the standing institution become gradually merged into protests against the very existence of the institution. Feeling itself attacked, that institution defends itself; It feels itself bound to repress those protests. But, as those protests are justified (in the main, for pseudo-scandals always crop up and pass muster as true) the repression of their discussion becomes a palpably criminal act, besides its contra-productive effect as a repression. The repressed protesting forces become totally anti-institutional and react against the repression. Revolutionary movements are formed, based on the general indignation and worked out by tile more turbulent spirits. The first movements are generally checked and strongly repressed, in part because, being the first attempts at revolt, they are as incapable as all first attempts, and in part because they have not as yet communicated to the general public the attitude from the passive part of the population which must accompany revolutionary movements (For revolutionary movements must, to succeed, be interpretative of a general state of public opinion; and this opinion must be not merely one of disagreement with existing thi[n]gs, but of an absolute hostility to them, a feeling of the impossibility of living, of spiritually breathing under that state of power.) This state of mind once created, a certain revolutionary state is reached which permits of an effective and competent revolutionary organisation Then the final movement comes and overthrows the hated institution.

But, all the while, what fundamental change has taken place in the public mind, in the general psychic attitude of the nation? (On a state of mind involving indignant protest against the errors and crimes of a certain institution, the revolutionary spirit becomes imposed. while the forces that constitute the revolutionary state have not yet triumphed, these forces exist *solely in relation to what they mean to overthrow* , that is to say, their positive existence is a negative one. Their life is what may be called a *critical* life, for their existence is involved

and explained by the fact that they stand up against something and have life and being by virtue of that opposition. So that the general state of mind of the revolutionary minds before the revolution is twofold: in so far as it is a criticism and an indignation at the errors and crimes of the existing institution, it is a moral attitude; in so far as it is an organisation of forces to overthrow a certain thing, it is a mere physical force.

Once the revolution has triumphed, the critical attitude ceases, since the thing criticised has gone under. But, since the revolution has triumphed, the revolutionary spirit survives.

So that the situation of a country after a revolutionary movement, in the years subsequent thereto — they may be few or many, and that depends on other factors —, becomes worse than the situation before. For the critical spirit, which was the one moral and corrective element in the revolutionary forces, ceases, as we have seen, by mere virtue of the institutional fall, and the revolutionary spirit survives. So that to all the defects and ills contracted by the nation under the decadent sway of the dethroned institution, all those ills are added which pertain to the revolutionary spirit.

So long as an active opposition exists to the new institutions on the part of surviving active elements of the older form of government, which the revolution has overthrown, there is some chance of a government not entirely immoral and corrupt, but only a small chance, by the reasons tending to make survive the critical spirit. But the corruption which characterised the former institution always survives.

Another consideration will easily convince us of the truth of this observation: the law which, as far as we can see, governs all social manifestations is the law of continuity — that is to say, those manifestations are subject to a slow change, and, like everything in Nature, non faciunt saltum. How could a people governed by a corrupt government conceivably pass from one day to another to a government freed from all corruption? This depends on a total change of environment, and a total change of environment is not a thing that can be effected in a few years, nor in many perhaps, according to circumstances.

The party which, once a revolution triumphs, obtains power and dominion within a nation is that which is fullest touch, in touch at most points, with the social environment. New what is the social environment after a revolution? It is composed of the two elements we have seen: the corrupt elements of the dethroned institution, whose soul survives, and the positive element, the purely revolutionary one, brought in by the triumph of the revolution. So that the party

which will first dominate after the victory of a revolution will be that which will be at the same time most corrupt and most revolutionary. The two things will fatally go together, for the very simple reasons which we have been setting forth.

A corrupt anarchy is what follows a revolution.

Two things may follow: one is a revival of the forces constituting the old system which may gather strength and restore it. The process is simple.

Another thing may happen. The forces constituting the old system may be totally or vitally wrecked. In that case the first years of the pós-revolutionary period will be characterised by a great corruption and a terrible anarchy. Nothing — or very little — will have changed in the governmental habits, except in so far as the surviving critical public spirit acts upon them.

Now, once the new power is established, the critical spirit revives and menaces the new institutions. If the remnants of the forces upholding the old regime are strong, this critical spirit turns in part to them. This only happens when the revolution has taken place by the practical work of a section on the community, and not in the direction of the general tendency. But when the forces which uphold the old system are weak — and they are weak when the corruption of that system had gone so far that it had wrecked the *sentiment* it lived by — the critical forces, those that work for morality become organised into a party which seeks to overthrow the pós-revolutionary state of things, the state of things which is both corrupt and anarchical. At first this is difficult, for two reasons: the circumstance that those corrupt anarchical forces are in momentary best adaptation to their environment, and the circumstance that, being those forces that are essentially revolutionary, they are best adapted for all violent action needed in self-defence. The revolutionary organisation persists and they can easily triumph of the first attempts at undermining them.

A pós-revolutionary society is both disorganised and corrupt. That party which, being corrupt, shall best be able to organise disorganisation, shall best organise anarchy, will prevail.

After several failures, at last the contra-revolutionary party is created. Its nature is a different one from that of the revolutionary party, though it may have to employ violent means. It is based on that section of opinion which has a critical attitude towards the corrupt acts or government. When the triumph of the revolution has separated the revolutionary and the critical elements of the revolutionary spirit, and the revolutionary element becomes enthroned as queen

of king corruption, the critical spirit itself revolts, becomes *itself* revolutionary, save that its attitude becomes not only opposed to corruption but also to its new ally, anarchy. So that the counter-revolutionary party becomes based upon two elements — the necessity of honesty and the necessity of order. These things become its essential standpoints and its end becomes, not to overthrow a certain institution which has the characteristics of dishonesty and disorder, but, what is widely different, to *overthrow dishonesty and anarchy themselves wherever they may be*. So that this party cannot lose sight of its object when it achieves power, because it exists constantly in view of this object.

The counter-revolutionary party can only come to power when an environment has been created for it. This environment means a sufficient transformation in social circumstances, so that a large body of public opinion has been created which ardently wishes order and honesty in government; this is obtained when several years of revolutionary anarchy and maladministration have followed on all the long years of pre-revolutionary corruption.

Another element, however, has to come into existence before a counter-revolutionary movement can triumph. That element is the constructive element. The case is very simple. When the necessity of honesty assumes a revolutionary aspect, this revolutionary aspect may be coherent or incoherent. But when the love of order assumes a revolutionary character, one thing must happen — that revolutionary attitude must be widely different from the normal one, the usual one. It takes on a disciplinary aspect and a repressive one. Qua revolutionary movement, the counter-revolutionary movement does not [react] against dishonest people, but against *anarchical* people. So that what is revolutionary in the counter-movement is not based on a critical attitude towards dishonesty, directly, but on a critical attitude towards disorder. As the party is based on the elements that directly seek honesty, it is of itself an honest party.

Suppose the counter-revolution triumphs. Will the same thing happen to its critical attitude towards order as happened to the critical attitude of the first revolutionaries towards honesty? It cannot happen, for the very simple reason that, while the idea of honesty is not bound up with the idea of violent action, the idea of order *is*. You may make a revolution to bring about honesty in government, and, if you triumph, you may continue being as dishonest as the former government, for the simple reason that the creation of a revolutionary spirit does not create a spirit of honesty, which is neither like or unlike the revolutionary spirit, but a totally different thing. But if you make a revolution to bring about order and you triumph, it is not likely you will not realise at

least partly, the order you have struggled to bring about, for the equally simple reason that, if the idea of order was the one that led you, it will have been your constant care in the very organisation of the counter-revolution, and besides, *the maintaining of order is the very basis of the maintenance of any institution*, so that, when you arrive at power, you have to keep order and discipline by the very reason that you wield power, which will reinforce your theoretic desire to do so. Seeing besides that your work is to overthrow anarchical elements and that you will be festering them by not disciplining them, you will have to keep to your program to be able to keep to your very existence.

s. d.

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