

SALAZAR: THE DICTATOR WHO REFUSED TO DIE (TOM GALLAGHER)

February 15, 2021

What will be the political system of the future, in the lands that are still optimistically, or naively, viewed as containing one American nation? Certainly, the current system is doomed, which necessarily means that an alternative will rise. Some replacements are flashy, full of promise mixed with danger, such as an American Augustus, Michael Anton's Red Caesar. But other replacements have lower amplitude, and the quiet authoritarian corporatism exemplified by the Portugal of António de Oliveira Salazar is one such. As it happens, I think it would be a bad alternative for America. Nonetheless, Salazar's creation, which was undoubtedly good for Portugal, deserves to be better known than it is, and to be understood, for the lessons it teaches us.

For post-liberals in particular, Salazar is necessarily interesting, since he is one of the few twentieth-century examples of a long-lived Right regime that successfully opposed the corrosion of Enlightenment liberalism. But English-language information on him is scarcer than hen's teeth. For some years, in fact, I have looked for a recent Salazar biography. And then a few months ago popped up this outstanding volume, Tom Gallagher's *Salazar*, which I immediately bought.

As has become my practice when trying to grasp crucial historical periods, I have consulted a variety of other works, notably Stanley Payne's two-volume *A History of Spain and Portugal* (1973); John Kay's *Salazar and Modern Portugal* (1970); and *The Portugal of Salazar*, by Michael Derrick (1938). Although none of these cover Portugal after the system that Salazar built ended in 1974, that is not a defect, since nothing notable or worthwhile has happened in Portugal since Salazar died in 1970. True, the total amount of information is not huge, but at least these works are neutral (Derrick's is overtly pro-Salazar), so unlike with works on the Spain of Francisco Franco, one does not have to sort propaganda from actual history.

Salazar's rule, from 1932 to 1968, is best described as enlightened authoritarianism, through the vehicle of a corporatist system. Thus, although the (odd) subtitle of this book refers to Salazar as a dictator, that is really a misnomer, because a dictator implies the suspension of

the rule of law. Authoritarian rule combined with the rule of law is not only possible, but historically much more common than without, and such rule characterized Salazar's Portugal. Salazar rejected the appellation of dictator, claiming "Scrupulously abiding by the law and applying myself to its spirit is a permanent preoccupation." (He also objected to the term because Western media never applied it to Communists and anti-colonial thugs like Abdel Nasser.) Every so often during Salazar's rule there were extrajudicial killings by Salazar's subordinates, so the rule of law was not absolute, but as Carl Schmitt taught, sovereign is he who decides the exception.

On a side note (skip ahead if you want to get to Salazar), there is actually one other book available, from 2009, Filipe de Meneses's *Salazar: A Political Biography*. But like most books even a few years old, it is out of print, and thus only available used. Until quite recently, Amazon (and a few other marketplaces) offered good liquidity and reasonable prices in the used book market. However, I have noticed, although I don't know the cause, that prices for most used history books have skyrocketed. Moreover, many are not even to be found on Amazon, the simplest location for buying books (though Jeff Bezos should be flogged with chains), and if they are, Amazon's price is much higher than available elsewhere. This means that on or off Amazon, books, including Meneses's, are often only available for a thousand dollars or more. I assume this is simply algorithmic, figuring that fewer sales at much higher prices will maximize revenue, because the internet allows the desperate to locate what they must have. But it's yet another example of how we were promised the internet would improve our lives by leading to easier, better transactions. Which, for books, it has, up to a point—but only for those with money. And by offering frictionless transactions, the internet has destroyed the serendipity of an unexpected find, and of an unexpected bargain. I'm not sure the tradeoff is worth it.

Anyway, back to Salazar. Why is Salazar so little known today? Well, despite its glorious past, for several hundred years Portugal has been obscure. Its only neighbor is Spain, and what attention it does get from the English-speaking world is mostly the result of Portugal being closely tied to England for centuries. Despite a long coastline, it controls no important waters (though the Azores would matter in a new Atlantic war); it has no crucial role in global politics. Yes, as we will discuss, for

a good part of the twentieth century it maintained a significant colonial empire, but even that could not make it a relevant power—rather, it was mostly a millstone, one the Portuguese were loath to give up, feeling they had to keep up appearances, and that the colonies benefitted them economically.

It is also Salazar himself that makes him little known. For better or for worse, Salazar's life and career lack the high drama and excitement of other twentieth-century autocrats. Beyond this, he appears to have no important modern supporters or detractors, other than perhaps inside Portugal. Franco, with whom Salazar is often lumped, has detractors, because he heroically defeated the Left, in a conflict with global prominence and impact, something for which the Left will never forgive him. As a result, Franco's memory is maintained by the Left as a talisman of hate. (He also has supporters, such as me, but for a little while yet, I lack great power. Wait a year or five.) Salazar, though a man of the Right, did not defeat the Left in any spectacular way; he came to power through technocratic skill and because Portugal was tired of leftist-run instability, and gravitated to his quiet competence. Thus, even if the Left doesn't particularly care for Salazar, he is not an object of loathing. And so, because the Left writes all the modern histories of the West, they choose to forget him.

But he is not forgotten in Portugal. Gallagher makes much of a poll from 2007, tied to a television series on "Great Portuguese," where forty-one percent of respondents voted Salazar as "the greatest figure in Portuguese history," creating "huge surprise and consternation among opinion-formers." Gallagher should make much of such a poll—one can be sure that, just as in America, in Europe the non-elites maintain very different opinions from their supposed betters, despite the torrent of indoctrination they face from birth. Moreover, this poll was before the 2008 financial crisis, which hit Portugal hard, whose elites there as elsewhere in Europe doubled down with fresh tyrannies greatly empowering the globalist EU elite and transnational corporations. I'd bet the percentage who named Salazar would be higher today. Ironically, though, Salazar would have sneered at the poll that named him the winner. He had no truck with mass opinion. As Gallagher sums the situation up, "Paradoxically, Salazar's distrust of the ballot box, belief in rule by experts, and readiness to endorse censorship in order the

control the flow of ideas now enjoy more favour among globalists on the left than among nationalists on the right." Very true. We will see to what this leads, and that right soon.

Salazar was born in 1889, the fifth child and only son of a peasant family of modest means, in Vimieiro, a small and unimportant village in central Portugal. Unlike Spain, Portugal had been ruled, badly, by a series of liberal regimes for sixty years, the result of the Peninsular War and its aftermath (including ongoing British interference). It was still a monarchy, of sorts, and the Catholic Church was prominent, but neither Crown nor Church had anywhere near the power it did in Spain. The Church was fiercely attacked by the usual radicals and Freemasons, though it maintained a strong presence in the countryside. Portugal's economy was almost exclusively agricultural; its people were largely illiterate. In short, Portugal was poor, politically unstable, fragmented, and backward, by the standards of the day.

When he was ten, Salazar entered the seminary. This was not so much because he, or his parents, saw the priesthood as his career, but because the Church often educated the talented poor. Salazar stayed in the seminary until he was nineteen, in 1908, the same year King Carlos and his heir apparent were assassinated by French-influenced radical republicans. He became keenly interested in the thought of French rightist Charles Maurras (French influence was of all types in Portugal, apparently), and was also heavily influenced by Gustave Le Bon (from whom he got some of his dislike of popular acclaim). While he seriously considered becoming a priest, he concluded that was not the life for him. So, in 1910, the same year the monarchy ended permanently, overthrown in a violent revolt, creating the First Republic, Salazar entered the prestigious University of Coimbra, from whose graduates and professors the ruling class tended to be drawn.

Unlike today's American universities, Coimbra was dominated by conservatives, something causing the leftist Portuguese Republicans no end of heartburn. It was here that Salazar made many of the friends who would support him and work for his government in the coming decades—a diverse and lively group. Salazar was both talented and a workaholic, which helped him advance rapidly, even if he was prone to occasional depression (sometimes occasioned by romantic failures, though he had successes too). Already in 1916 he became a member

of the economics faculty, writing theses on wheat production and the gold standard, with a focus on how Portugal could live within its means. That is, he was an economic technocrat, and placed confidence in rule by bureaucratic experts. This is an old tradition in Europe, which predates the American imposition of rule by experts, begun by the Progressives early in the twentieth century. Maybe it made some sense in the past, when the ruling classes were more virtuous and governments much smaller.

Meanwhile, the Republicans were busy trying to suppress conservatives and the Church, including by the usual Left violence, though with less violence than would characterize the Spanish Republicans of the 1920s and 1930s. In 1919, Salazar was suspended from his academic post by the government, on the grounds he was spreading “monarchist propaganda,” but no evidence could be found for the charge, and he offered a vigorous defense, so he was not cancelled. In fact, Salazar showed little interest in electoral politics, monarchist or otherwise, but he did allow himself to be put forward as a candidate for the Catholic Center party in 1921. He won—but soon thereafter leftists murdered the prime minister and the government was overthrown; Salazar did not run again.

The First Republic was extremely unstable, and Portugal’s problems were exacerbated by entering the war in 1916, on the Allied side. A military coup in 1917, followed by assassination of the leader of the coup, led to on-and-off regional civil war among Republicans and monarchists, constantly shifting governments (nine different ones in 1920 alone), and finally the end of the First Republic, by military coup yet again, in 1926. That coup was chaotic and had no clear principle or leader (which seems to have been the pattern for Portuguese coups); after several shifts of power, a general, Oscar Carmona, became the effective head of state. This began the Second Republic. At its inception, it was not as chaotic as the First Republic, but it was hardly stable, and had no consistent policy or set of beliefs, combining everyone from monarchists to moderate liberals, bound together only by disgust with the Republicans.

Salazar was asked to, or put himself forward to, advise the new government on tax policy and such matters. Finance was a crucial matter for the regime—Portugal’s chaos and poor economic shape

made any government action difficult, and the new regime was fully aware Portugal desperately needed stability. Thus, in 1928 Salazar was appointed Minister of Finance, regarded as the most crucial position in government, given the challenges facing Portugal, including not losing its sovereignty as a result of accepting foreign loans. His appointment was the culmination of masterful bureaucratic infighting by him, and he demanded and was given great power—to veto any expenditure, and to individually control the budget of every ministry. And he did what he promised—balanced the books and brought stability, through ruthless control, centralization, and budget cutting.

Carmona came to rely on Salazar more and more, and funneled power in his direction. As a result, Salazar quickly became heavily involved in other critical matters such as Portugal's extensive colonies, mostly in Africa, but also including Goa, in India, and Macau, in China. Mozambique and Angola, ruled by Portugal since the sixteenth century, were important to Portugal; their exploitation was conducted by Portuguese businesses, often with British advice and financing, and they offered avenues for ambitious Portuguese to make their fortune. Salazar thus gradually came to dominate all governmental affairs, in part because he was super-competent, in part due to political acumen. In 1930, he created the National Union, an umbrella group designed to replace all other political parties. In 1932, he became prime minister, practically by acclamation, or perhaps by default. This began, and the new 1933 constitution (approved by sixty percent of voters in a plebiscite) officially inaugurated the *Estado Novo*, or New State, seen as an extension of Salazar himself. Carmona stayed as president, but any functions of his with power were absorbed by Salazar; the position became essentially ceremonial, and Carmona held it until 1951.

The *Estado Novo* offered, as Payne says, a type of authoritarian corporatism. Corporatism is a protean concept, but we are not talking here about the mealy-mouthed communitarianism of modern pseudo-conservatives such as David Brooks, but a much more ancient concept, of political society as the different parts of the body. In essence, corporatism revolves around the idea that society should be organized on the basis of naturally-arising groups that work in harmony to collectively benefit society, and that individual rights are of subordinate importance. (The *Estado Novo* was not in any way "fascist," whatever

that means—if someone claims that, you can tell you are dealing with someone not serious.) Salazar's corporatism was heavily influenced by Catholic social teaching, notably the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, which were themselves merely updates for modernity of medieval concepts. Gallagher says that Salazar "saw the interests of various social classes as essentially complementary," and that is a good short summary—although getting them to actually act in a complementary fashion was always the challenge.

The corporate groups recognized by the state were, basically, functional groups, and included a wide range of trade, professional, religious, and class-based groups. They were represented in the government by their selection of representatives to a second house of the legislature, the Corporate Chamber. The main body of the legislature, the National Assembly, was elected with a fairly broad franchise, but had limited power, especially to spend money, and "had little influence on the formation or composition of the government." Salazar appointed not only provincial governors, but the heads of municipal councils. Thus, government policy nationwide was ultimately set by Salazar, but in practice was decided with extensive consultation with many interests, and with wide diffusion when addressing matters not of crucial importance to Salazar.

Within this frame, the *Estado Novo* allowed a variety of traditional individual freedoms, such as freedom of speech, but permitted the government to "safeguard the moral integrity of citizens," through censorship and direct guidance of lawmaking. In economic relations, the *Estado Novo* was syndicalist, envisioning cooperation between workers and owners, and therefore banning both strikes and lockouts. Extremes of Left and Right, communism, anarcho-syndicalism, and national socialism, were suppressed, along with secret societies, including the Freemasons.

At its root, the *Estado Novo* was a pragmatist state informed by a Christian moral vision. The degree to which the corporate ideal of harmony was achieved was never complete, though. The nature of such systems is that they are prone to corruption, and they tend to over-empower the state in economic matters, due to its role as arbitrator. Gallagher says that corporatism allowed Salazar "to supervise and influence the pattern of industrial activity and limit developments that

he disliked or feared," but that it, to some extent, "perpetuated class antagonisms and favored employers." We will return to the pluses and minuses of corporatism.

Salazar was a master politician, and his talents were continuously required during his decades in power. But his political talents were largely directed at depoliticizing the country, a key goal of his. To us, indoctrinated by the Left at every turn that every aspect of life must be politicized, this seems strange. But of course it's the only sensible way to run a society. The average person should have nothing to do with politics above the local level—not only no involvement, but no interest, because higher levels of government should have very little impact on his day-to-day life. This was true in Salazar's Portugal.

Gallagher says that Salazar's overriding trait was pessimism. What he means is not precisely pessimism, the feeling that the future will be bad. Rather, it is a deep aversion to unnecessary change, to change that is not absolutely proven to be necessary, on the very sound ground that modern history shows that most political and social change is bad. He was, perhaps, an extreme believer in the principle of Chesterton's Fence. What Gallagher reads as pessimism is more like anti-utopianism and pragmatism, and depoliticization fits very well into this frame.

Salazar had no interest in creating what was then called a "totalitarian state," which although the term did not have the negative connotations it does now, meant to Salazar an all-powerful state that "would be essentially pagan, incompatible with the character of our Christian civilization." He looked down on Mussolini, and more so on Hitler, as lacking in morals and character, exemplifying "pagan Caesarism," and imposing an ideology on the people, although he admired some of the successes of both. Still, Salazar adopted some modern political practices, particularly in the realm of propaganda, where António Ferro for many years ran his propaganda bureau to good effect. Ferro was a homosexual; Salazar, ever the pragmatist, was quite tolerant of vice in those on whom he relied, as long as it was neither too gross nor flaunted. But Salazar himself was, both Gallagher and Payne say, "austere and puritanical." He was a motivator, as well, instructing subordinates, "Follow my indications and bring me always work that is well done." (This reminds me of one of my law firm mentors, who always instructed associates that he wanted "your best work product." You'd think that'd

be obvious, but you'd be wrong.) Salazar was also an excellent judge of men, and what is more, able to corral diverse, highly-competent men into working smoothly together.

Throughout his rule, he faced more challenges from the Right than the Left; the latter had discredited itself with most Portuguese during its decades in power, and Communism never had any significant following (and was whacked when it showed its head), nor did anarchism (though they almost got Salazar with a car bomb in 1937). Many elements of the new constitution disappointed and displeased conservatives, who viewed it as too liberal a document, for example allowing widespread male and female suffrage for elections to local bodies and to the National Assembly. The Church was offended that Salazar was not interested in obeying the Church, and in fact insisted that the Church stay in its place (a childhood friend was the archbishop of Lisbon, which helped smooth matters over). He signed a Concordat, not to the particular liking of the Church, maintaining, for example, civil marriage, and not returning to the Church properties stolen by the Left in the previous hundred years. He also refused to designate Portugal as officially a Catholic nation. This approach was nearly the opposite of Franco's. Likewise, Salazar said he was a monarchist, but not only made no attempt to restore the monarchy during his life, but made no provision for doing so after his death, again unlike Franco. He kept the army in check, never giving them as much money as they wanted and ensuring that no powerful military figure rose to challenge him.

When Franco and the Nationalists rebelled against the illegitimate Republican government of Spain in 1936, Salazar supported him from the beginning, though more covertly than overtly. In fact, Salazar had to put down naval mutinies in Portugal's navy (it's always the sailors), when they tried to rebel and join the Spanish Republicans, by shelling his own ships as they tried to sail to the open ocean. Portuguese volunteers also fought for Franco in significant numbers. The relationship between Salazar and Franco was never close, however; Franco looked down his nose at Salazar as an uncharismatic bean-counter; Salazar disliked Franco's cynicism and military emphasis. But they had many common interests, so they worked together when necessary.

World War II was challenging for Portugal, given that Portugal wanted to maintain neutrality, but had long and deep ties to the British (who

admired Salazar for bringing order after a hundred years). Portugal was overtly threatened by the Germans, who were actively supported by Franco, and who were keen to drive the British out of the western Mediterranean. The Allies wanted to use the Azores as a base; to forestall this possibility, the Germans also threatened to occupy the Azores. These dangers faded as Germany turned to the East in 1941 (and by the end of the war the Allies had gotten what they wanted in the Azores, in part by threatening to cut off oil supplies), but internal unrest, due to economic difficulties and the perceived failure of corporatism to adequately deal with scarcity, increased, ultimately leading to strikes, demonstrations, and the need for mass arrests.

Salazar, no surprise given his personality and that Portuguese corporatism had not only been a success, but been globally praised for fifteen years, thought these problems said nothing about the failures of corporatism. While some postwar relaxation occurred, particularly in press freedom, a firmer enforcement hand came down on organized dissent, especially on the universities. But Portugal now ran contrary to what the victorious Western powers viewed as the wind of history, resulting in some isolation for Portugal (though nothing like what Franco faced), and continued modest dissatisfaction at home. Nonetheless, Salazar saw himself, and was mostly seen as, firmly Western-oriented, and Portugal was invited to join NATO in 1949. Salazar accepted, although he was of mixed mind, being skeptical of the project in his nature.

On one matter Salazar would not bend, and that was Portugal's colonies. The nation was wholly behind him on this. In fact, in the 1950s emigration to the colonies from Portugal, of men eager to find opportunity, increased dramatically. The Portuguese, who had held their colonies for hundreds of years, longer than other colonial powers, saw themselves as benevolent rulers, improving the life of the natives, and mixing with them to create a blended ruling class. There was much truth in this, but not complete truth, and anyway the spirit of the times was against colonialism—or, more accurately, the United States under Eisenhower was against colonialism, and it created the spirit of the times.

The economy began to grow rapidly, though many Portuguese did not fully participate in economic improvement, creating another locus for dissent. Education for the masses became the norm. A somewhat wider variety of political thought became tolerated, even encouraged,

including within the government, where former Salazar opponents who had seen the error of their ways often became powerful. Still, the average Portuguese probably did not feel he was well looked after by the corporatist regime and had forgotten the instability prior to Salazar's rule; no doubt Salazar's political talent with the ruling classes simply did not extend to talent with respect to, or even really understanding, the common man, despite his own background.

In the early 1960s, Portugal began to have to fight open rebellions in the colonies, which took up an increasing portion of government spending. These problems were exacerbated by punitive action by Portugal's supposed allies. John Kennedy led aggression against Portugal, and in those days of foolish so-called idealism, Western opinion about Salazar turned somewhat sour. Subordinate powers such as Britain followed suit, pressuring the Portuguese to abandon their colonies and refusing to support Portugal, for example, when India seized Goa in 1961, despite a treaty obligation to do so. Still, Salazar continued to be perceived generally favorably by leaders in the West; Dean Acheson described him as "the nearest approach in our time to Plato's philosopher-king."

Communist influence grew in Portugal itself, and the aging Salazar proved unable to repress it with the tools he had, primarily a small and sclerotic secret police, the PIDE. Communism spread its tentacles in the universities, which Salazar had simply assumed would always support the *Estado Novo*, failing to appreciate the undying termite nature of the Left. (The Portuguese Left apparently still dominates culture and higher education, and continuously tarnishes the memory of Salazar within the country, with, as we have seen, limited success.) Similarly, and as in Spain, the Church grew serpents in her bosom, many of whom would become prominent after the 1974 revolution that overthrew the *Estado Novo*, the Carnation Revolution.

But Salazar was dead by then. Gallagher describes the mid- to late-1960s as a period of "torpor," and that seems about right. In 1968, Salazar suffered a stroke, and effectively departed from power, though he only died in 1970, and only then was formal rule transferred to a successor. He had not prepared well; there was no strong ruling class, no bench from which could be drawn a new leader with legitimacy. Succession of autocrats is rarely clean or simple, and even the simplest solution, though probably a bad solution, hereditary succession, was unavailable,

since Salazar had no children (he never married). The Estado Novo was therefore doomed when Salazar became incapacitated, both for these reasons, and because the Zeitgeist then imagined that liberal democracy was the future of the West, and would have been unlikely to tolerate its continuation.

The 1974 revolution, led by left-wing military men, was almost completely bloodless, due presumably to the torpor of the country. A combination of Communists and socialists took power. All remaining colonies were abandoned to their fate (which was, as always with post-colonialism, far worse than Portuguese rule). Much of the economy was nationalized. Gallagher says, and supports, that what Portugal in effect got was a switch to left-wing corporatism. It definitely returned to instability; the country seemed to be moving toward civil war, but moderate-left military men suppressed the far-left military men, and Portugal got a new constitution in 1976. It was explicitly socialist, still, so no surprise, Portugal's economy went straight into the toilet, where it has largely stayed ever since, and without tourism and foreign land investment, the country would probably be in a truly dreadful state.

Gallagher seems to think the Portuguese were better off with modern European liberal democracy than with the end stages of Salazar's regime. Maybe so, but Portugal today is going nowhere, and has gone downhill since 1970. All the books describe how clean and orderly Lisbon was during Salazar's time. No more; I visited there in 2018, and it was dirty and a little sad, though with much natural and old architectural beauty. Portugal is now a dependent satrapy of the EU, the fate Salazar prevented when he first became Minister of Finance. And ironically, Portugal internally is still largely corporatist, even if informally, through political and economic horse-trading, and sadly dominated by leftist elites—though Gallagher a few weeks ago had an interesting article in *First Things*, about the rise of André Ventura, a politician with some resemblance to Viktor Orbán, so perhaps in Portugal, as everywhere, things are changing.

What of corporatism as a model for America? Although the term corporatism can cover a pretty broad range of practice (one can argue that the *au courant* Left dogma of intersectionality is a form of corporatism), it strikes me that corporatism is a dubious vehicle for actual governance for most nations. Certainly, it is not a problem that it deprioritizes

individual rights relative to the Enlightenment norm, or that it has zero interest in formal democracy. Those are both excellent features of corporatism, and necessary features of any decent political system of the future. Rather, its overarching problem is that corporatism doesn't seem to work well on any scale larger than, say, a Hansa city-state.

Probably this is for two reasons. First, successful corporatism requires that the degree of divergence among the population not exceed a certain threshold. If it does, there will be too many groups to effectively coordinate, and those groups are too likely to see each other as enemies, or at best as zero-sum competitors, their gain as only possible through someone else's loss. Second, corporatism tends to result in rampant corruption, both of the simple pay-to-play sort, and that created by a complex web of favors, especially employment favors, traded for political support, which calcify over time, preventing change when necessary. Moreover, the government itself has an incentive to exercise control by thumbing the scale in favor of certain groups, exacerbating the flavor of corruption, especially when some of those in government are themselves involved in the grosser forms of corruption to boot, as they usually are. Thus, only in a homogenous society with a high degree of trust and common interest, probably including an overriding societal goal, can corporatism maintain itself over the long term. Singapore is basically a corporatist system and meets that definition, but you do not see many Singapores.

Could corporatism work for America, as it is remade? No, and not only for the reasons above (even an America expunged of leftist poison would be an extremely diverse place). Note that Singapore is literally dying now, and that shows the other problem with corporatism. It does not inspire; it tends to create a caretaker society, as each group tries to hold onto its slice of the pie, not hurl the whole society forward to achievement. Corporatism dampens the quest for glory; it is a system that strongly encourages risk aversion. Better than liberal democracy, yes, but not a recipe for civilizational triumph, if that's what you're going for, which I am.

Corporatism worked for Portugal, up to a point; it fixed the problems caused by leftism. But Salazar was no Augustus. It is no coincidence that Salazar returned every summer to Vimieiro, to tend grape vines, far from the centers of power; that exemplifies something essential to the

nature of corporatism. Moreover, ironically given Salazar's obsession with depoliticizing Portugal, corporatism often encourages involvement in politics, by seeking to lend legitimacy through making everyone heard, even if indirectly. This also hampers civilizational achievement; we should not forget that modern corporatism is meant to coopt democracy, but accepts the premise that the masses should have a say, even if indirect, in government, which tends to lead to stagnation. True, informal corporatism is necessary to some degree for a harmonious society. That's just another way of saying a strong society has strong intermediary institutions. But such informal corporatism should not be done through the vehicle of, or rely on influence on, the central government, but be an organic web of interlocking bodies and institutions.

The bottom line is that in order to achieve great things, a large nation needs a form of government with authoritarian, but not dictatorial, rule enmeshed in a fairly flexible aristocracy, along with indirect protections for the masses (as I often say, similar to the Roman system, either Republic or Empire), but no actual say by the masses. The bedrock principle is that for civilizational success, elites must dictate national policy (but only if they are virtuous elites). Such a government of limited ends but unlimited means, which is what is necessary for high achievement, will inevitably be stymied by corporatism.

I don't want remade, Foundationalist, America to just be a mediocre state; I want it to be the engine of mankind's future, preferably with the overriding civilizational goal of conquering Space. What is needed is for the central authority to dissolve heterogeneity, not just in the relatively weak solvent of a propositional nation (which anyway to be successful requires more homogeneity than many admit), but in a collective heroic narrative. Corporatism isn't going to do that. Yes, we should honor Salazar for his character and works, but he is not an exemplar for future America.