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SEMINAR ON PORTUGUESE COLONIES

Address by the Chairman
Of The
RECEPTION COMMITTEE
Shri Y. B. CHAVAN

BOMBAY, OCTOBER 23, 1961

LUCIO LARA

SEMINAR ON PORTUGUESE COLONIES

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But taking advantage of our desire for peace and negotiated
settlement of all international problems, Dr. Salazar has
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and policy of racial superiority. It is possible
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which exists to maintain world peace and justice would
deal with this question of Portuguese colonies.

DELEGATES AND FRIENDS,

As Chairman of the Reception Committee, I have great
pleasure in welcoming you to this cosmopolitan city of
Bombay, the capital of Maharashtra State, on a very signi-
ficant occasion.

For the first time, freedom fighters and sympathisers
from many countries are meeting in the Final Session to
give shape and concrete form to their deliberations to solve
the problem of liberation of the Portuguese colonies. Little
did the freedom fighters in Goa, Diu and Daman know that
their continued detention in cells in Angola and Mozambi-
que would spread the fire of independence in African Por-
tuguese colonies, and create a situation where the represen-
tatives of Africa and India would meet and once for all
devise ways and means for a concerted plan of action to
liberate the suppressed and oppressed people of these
colonies.

Wedded as we were, and are, to the cult of non-
violence and civil disobedience, and brought up and trained
in it, also having accepted the Five Principles of Panch

LUDIA KARA

Shila as propounded by our revered leader, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, we were hoping that some day the heart of Dr. Salazar would melt and justice would be done. During the last 13 years, we have waited patiently for that day. But, taking advantage of our desire for peace and negotiated settlement of all international problems, Dr. Salazar has been merrily going on with his terrible weapons of repression, genocide and policy of racial superiority. It is possible that many have not agreed with us in the policy that we have adopted in respect of Diu, Daman and Goa. We were, in any case, confident that the United Nations Organisation which guarantees human rights, would have the courage and firmness to deal with this question of Portuguese colonial possessions according to the Charter of Human Rights. Little did we know that the United Nations Organisation and the Security Council would be thwarted in their attempts to do justice, on the pretext that these are internal questions of the Portuguese Government. It is unthinkable that a question which directly and indirectly amounts to a breach of the provisions of the United Nations Charter could be brushed aside in this manner, on the plea that it does not amount either to a breach of peace nor is it an international question.

Even then, the number of people of Goa, Angola and Mozambique could have made it absolutely impossible for Portugal to continue to rule them. The population of these colonies is larger than the population of Portugal. The economy of Portugal is unable to bear the strain of continued military occupation of these colonies. The terrain in Angola and Mozambique and other places is so difficult that it takes weeks and months before one can travel from one end of Angola to the other. Even jeeps have to be carried over wooden bridges which have been blown up.

It is only on account of the help that Portugal receives as a member of NATO, both military and economic, that

Portugal is able to stand the stress and strain, and carry on its policy of repression. It is surprising that the so-called civilised people who are members of the NATO are helping Portugal directly in its uncivilised attitude. It is not only NATO, but it is the combination of Dr. Verwoerd, Dr. Salazar and Sir Roy Welensky, all wedded to racial superiority, all wedded to the white man's rule, all exploiting the resources of undeveloped colonies, all bent upon denying human rights, which is responsible for the atrocities that are committed by Dr. Salazar. And all these three are not only members of NATO, but are actively supported by some of the important members of the United Nations.

Even civilised people who are devoted to peace, and who are prepared to pay any price for maintaining peace, are wondering whether the policy of negotiated settlement and peaceful solution of international problems could ever persuade these three diehards to respect humanity and to do justice. Many have been wondering whether Dr. Salazar would have been able to continue this unauthorised occupation of Diu, Daman and Goa if India had decided to march her army. I am prepared to assert that it would have been very easy for the Government of India to liberate these colonies by force, but we could not preach one thing and act differently. We cannot shake off the very sacred and proud heritage we have inherited from the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The only way we can justly act is to change world opinion in our favour.

I will not be presuming too much if I venture to say that so far as the world is concerned, most of the countries have been convinced that we have suffered because we have been just in our attitude. They now seem to agree that if Dr. Salazar is trying to exploit our adherence to the principles of Panch Shila, it is time that he is not permitted to look upon it as a weakness on our part. It is for this reason

that our Prime Minister was obliged to say that he did not rule out the use of force for the liberation of these colonies. Diu, Daman and Goa are part of India and the people of Diu, Daman and Goa have every right to look to the rest of India for help. If Dr. Salazar, Dr. Verwoerd and Sir Roy Welensky are looked upon as kith and kin by some of the western powers, and are, therefore, supported in their inhuman attitude, the people of Asia and Africa are bound to go to the rescue of their kith and kin when they are inhumanly suppressed. But this will be a bad day. We do not want the world to be divided either on a racial basis or on any other.

The Indian Council for Africa deserves the gratitude of the lovers of peace throughout the world for arranging the Seminar, and making it possible for the representatives of all Portuguese colonies to meet and consider the implications of the continued possession of these colonies by Portugal.

I will not be true to myself if I were to suppress my feelings because I am a Chief Minister. I have not yet forgotten the days when I was fighting for the independence of my motherland, and when I think of the sufferings of our own people and our friends in the Portuguese colonies in Africa, my heart goes out to them. I find it difficult to control my feelings. I am sure that the Government of India will give their most serious considerations to the deliberations of this conference, and will value the suggestions made by such prominent leaders.

Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, believe me, I have been greatly impressed by your reasoned and well-balanced arguments. Mr. A. W. Benn, in his inimitable way, has suggested a method which is worth our consideration. Their Excel-

lencies, Mr. A. K. Khatib of Morocco, Mr. N. Swai of Tanganyika, Mr. T. Kanza of Congo and leaders from Angola and other colonies are entitled to our grateful thanks for their efforts to appreciate our attitude. It is time the United Nations Organisation took up this question, and after passing a resolution, called upon the Portuguese Government to liberate these colonies. A time limit should be set for the implementation of the resolution failing which sanctions, economic, political and military, should be applied. If that does not become possible, and if we are left with no other alternative, I do not know how long even the Government of India will be able to resist the pressure of popular opinion and stand strictly by their principles.

Even at the cost of being considered passive by our friends in Africa, we have tried to observe the principles which we have adopted. But it is impossible to watch the tremendous sacrifices of our friends in the Portuguese colonies in Africa as mere spectators. We refuse to be mere spectators and we have to devise ways and means of preventing the extermination of a large number of people. I know that this is not a get-together of wishful thinkers. It is heartening that this gathering means business, and that they will not permit the policy of nonalignment to be looked upon either as a sign of weakness or mockery.

In welcoming you, I am welcoming forces of liberation, As Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, and as one who is closely watching the fight for independence in Diu, Daman and Goa, I know that the barbarities committed in those places are so brutal that even the most passive person cannot control himself. I know that we cannot permit our brothers in Goa to be victims of a policy of ruthless military

occupation, and I wish to tell them that ere long, the dawn of independence will greet the masses of Diu, Daman and Goa and the Portuguese colonies in Africa.

May Dr. Salazar, even at this belated hour, realise that he is pitting himself against a mighty movement, and the sooner he restores liberty to these colonies, the better for him and his race.

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