

# LIBERDADE

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Portugal - long the poorest and most repressive state in Europe - shook the whole continent with its April revolution in 1974.

After 50 years of stultifying fascist rule under the draconian dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano, the people and army of Portugal at the same time that the liberation struggle in Portugal's African colonies were sweeping to victory managed to overthrow the old regime in Portugal itself. For the first time in generations, class struggle raged in the open and the aspirations of the people blossomed in the clear light of day.

Trade unions were declared legal, political prisoners released, the torture chambers closed, the secret police - the PIDE - abolished, and the torturers themselves incarcerated. The rights of freedom of speech and assembly were proclaimed. The colonial wars in Africa were halted and the right of the colonies to independence was advanced. These were the welcome fruits of that bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1974.

For a year or more, the fascists scurried into their rat-holes, into exile or sank into anonymity. But now, they are re-emerging to contest all these recent developments. The landowners, the Catholic Church, the large industrialists, all are now trying to turn back the clock, to reconstruct the edifices of repression, to instigate divisions within the ranks of the Portuguese people and facilitate the hoped-



for fascist resurgence.

Their propaganda, aimed to confuse, elevates the Soviet threat into the central question for the Portuguese people. (As if anyone nowadays believed Russia to have any connection with revolution, bar selling Lenin's books and the promotion of tourism.) The Portuguese people have not done what they have for Russia, America or anyone else; but because at long last, they tired of subjection.

The media are portraying the attacks on the revisionist communist party as progressive. They are nothing of the kind. They are

utterly reactionary, a cover for attacks on the democratic rights won so far. The question for the people of Portugal is how to consolidate the gains of the democratic revolution in the face of the new fascist challenge, keep their ranks united, and not be diverted into confused participation in reactionary pogroms instigated by the representatives of the Vatican in northern Portugal.

As usual, the British establishment is intent on stirring up trouble in the country it calls, proudly, its oldest ally. During the period of fascist rule, there

was no real complaint raised by the British bourgeois press against the iniquities perpetrated in Portugal. Now they are truly disturbed by the events in that land. Perhaps they prefer the former period? Similarly our political parties openly interfere in Portuguese affairs, Harold Wilson hectors the Portuguese and tells them what type of system he wants to see established while the Tory party assiduously develops contacts and influence with Portuguese counterparts. The British working class must dissociate itself from all these actions of our establishment.