

ACTION FOR FREEDOM IN PORTUGAL AND COLONIES

Salazar's Dictatorship

Salazar has been dictator of Portugal for 37 years. He came to power as the result of a military coup d'état, overthrowing the existing democratic Republic. Since then, he has ruled the country through military and police forces. These are:

1. The Secret Political Police (P.I.D.E.).
2. The so-called National Republican Guard (G.N.R.)—the riot squad.
3. The Portuguese Legion—a direct imitation of Mussolini's Blackshirts.
4. The National Union—Salazar's political party and the only party which is legally allowed to exist.
5. The armed police forces.
6. The army.

Democratic Rights

There has never been a free election under the Salazar regime. Opposition parties of both Right and Left have been outlawed, their leaders imprisoned or driven into exile. The election of deputies to the National Assembly is a farce. Since General Delgado's campaign in 1958, the election for the Presidency has been taken out of the hands of the limited electorate, and given to the National Assembly.

Democratic trade unions are banned. Instead workers can join the 'sindicatos' which are run entirely by government nominees. Strikes are illegal, and have been suppressed with great brutality in the past.

The press is censored. The government controls the radio and T.V. Many intellectuals have suffered persecution at the hands of the government: for example, scientists like Abel Salazar, Valadavez and Gaspar Teixeira; artists like Nikias Shapinakis and Lopez Graça; writers such as Aquilino Ribeiro, Pereira Gomes.

Students have conducted a determined opposition to the government for many years. Consequently, many of them have been expelled from their courses, forcibly drafted into the army, or imprisoned; University professors such as Caração, Azevedo Gomez and Pulido Valentim were all dismissed for their opposition. Children of school age are compelled to join the Portuguese Youth Movement, an organisation similar to Hitler's Youth.

Anyone who shows his opposition to the régime runs the danger of imprisonment without trial, and torture by the P.I.D.E.

Social Conditions

Salazar has always attempted to justify dictatorship by claiming that he has brought peace and prosperity to Portugal. In fact, Portugal has the lowest per capita income of any European country.

The figures for illiteracy (40%) and infant mortality (88 per 1000) are the highest in Europe. In most areas, there is a desperate shortage of qualified doctors and hospital accommodation. Social insurance provisions are practically non-existent.

Wages are extremely low: unemployment, especially in rural areas, is widespread and chronic. Now the Angolan war has meant serious inflation. Economic collapse is postponed by substantial foreign aid and investment, from Britain, West Germany and the United States, among others.

Foreign Policy

Today Salazar is a faithful member of NATO. Yet he supported Franco's rebellion against the legally constituted Spanish Republic, and up to the end of World War 2, made no secret of his admiration for the Fascist Powers. On the death of Hitler, flags were flown at half mast on all public buildings. Since the

collapse of the Third Reich, he has based his policy on anti-communism, and has succeeded in gaining the material and moral support of the NATO powers. Yet he reviles the United Nations publicly, and is now conducting a bloody war against the Angolan people.

The Angolan War

In 1961, a revolt broke out in Angola, as a result of the inhuman treatment of the Africans there. They were subjected to a brutal system of forced labour. They had no civil or political rights. A torrent of paper reforms has not materially altered this situation. Economic and social conditions for the Africans were, and are appalling. There is a complete lack of educational facilities for Africans. In theory, Salazar has no colour bar in the colonies. In fact, the populations are treated worse than slaves. Now he is hanging on to the colonies by military force in the face of world opinion.

The British Interest

Portugal, our "Oldest Ally", has for centuries been dominated by foreign business interests, mainly British. Apart from the port wine industry, British firms control the mining industry and almost all the communications industry—telephones, buses and trams.

As a member of NATO, Britain supplies arms, especially naval equipment to Salazar—arms which are used to hold down the Portuguese people and the Africans in the colonies. Britain and South Africa alone support Portugal in the United Nations.

Action

Salazar badly needs foreign support to prop up his crumbling regime. He is very sensitive to pressure from abroad.

OUR IMMEDIATE DEMANDS are:

1. Free and democratic elections in Portugal.
2. Freedom of press and freedom of association.
An end to arbitrary arrest, imprisonment without trial and torture.
3. Amnesty for all political prisoners.
4. An end to the Angolan war.
5. Self-determination for all the Portuguese colonies.

As one means to achieve these demands, we call on the British Government to:

1. Stop all shipments of arms to Portugal
2. Use its influence to persuade other countries to stop arms shipments.
3. Cease giving moral and political support to Salazar in the United Nations and elsewhere.

But government action is not enough. Individuals and organisations can act effectively too.

- * Send letters of protest to the Portuguese Ambassador (11 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1).
- * Write letters to the press—we will gladly supply detailed information on particular issues.

**** SUPPORT THE PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD AT 3 p.m. AT THE MAHATMA GANDHI HALL (Fitzroy Square, London, W.1) ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17.

Speakers will include M.P.s, the President of N.U.S. and representatives of the Portuguese opposition in exile.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OFFERS OF HELP OR MONEY... write to The Secretary,
4 Sherwood Gardens, Barking, Essex.