

## **A new emergence in the political landscape on the Portuguese left – another effect of the Greek crisis.**

(e-solidarity.net)

By publishing an “Open-letter to the citizens of Portugal and all European Union”, criticizing “*the undignified position taken by the Portuguese government about Greece, without proper democratic mandate and therefore abusively taken on behalf of Portugal*” (press release, 21 July 2015, <http://solidarity.world>), former leaders in the student movement - a movement that played an important role in the overturn of the fascist dictatorship in the “Carnation Revolution” – entered the political landscape, together with young civic activists, in the aftermath of the “deal” imposed on Greece.

The novelty is that the signatories of this “open-letter” were not, until now, notoriously engaged in the political scene, and are not members of any political party. This emphasizes how the recent Greek crisis debacle is seen by many as a turning point in the escalation of neo-conservative “assault on democracy”, led by Germany and finance capital sectors.

Among the signatories of the “open letter”, we can find names of well known former student leaders and activists that were expelled or suspended from Universities or even High schools, several that the dictatorship tried to arrest, leading to jail terms or forced underground, and still refused to be intimidated and to back down. For instance, Pedro Ferraz de Abreu, Gloria Ramalho, Vasco Costa, Orlando Gonçalves and Maria do Rosário Azevedo (Faculdade de Ciências de Lisboa, Carlos Miranda (Instituto Superior Técnico de Lisboa), Pedro Paulo Mendes (Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa), José Carlos Cima Gomes (High Schools), among others signing the letter. These were respected names, for their fierce resistance to a regime that curtailed freedom and denied democratic elections. For instance, Gloria Ramalho, the first woman elected as Student Union President, was expelled from University, jailed and tortured; Carlos Miranda was jailed and tortured; Pedro Ferraz de Abreu, expelled from all Universities, eluded arrest and spent near 2 years in the underground, to be re-admitted in his University by acclamation, together with his colleagues, after the overturn of the dictatorship.

They were not the only ones, but a few among many, many others. But they are a sample of those that after the victory of the Revolution did not pursue a political carrier, and remained in the shadow as simple citizens, pursuing a life outside political party politics. This is what gives some special meaning, no matter how small and modest, to their re-emergence at this moment.

We can also find in this group civic activists from different generations joining this cry of revolt who are engaged in social movements. For instance, Filomena Viegas, who was among the leaders fighting for slum dweller’s rights, Melissa Shinn and Deolinda Revez, leading activists in the environmental movements, Anabela Neves, battling for a quality education system, and so on.

The arrogant show of force by the current “euro” leaders, imposing humiliation after humiliation on countries with democratic elected governments, using open blackmail over an entire people just to ensure all citizens realize their vote is meaningless against them, is bound to generate more reactions like this. Many people will now arise in anger and rebellion, as it becomes clear that democracy is directly at risk, and that we face, again, authoritarian “dicktats”, both from political elites inside each country and from Germany inside European Union.

A good reason therefore to read this “open letter” and remember the maxim it starts with, quoting Marx: “**A nation that oppresses another cannot be free**” (PMBFDA, MDGTMR)