

# The Economic and Social Crisis in Portugal: The Hypocritical Policy Discourse of Prime Minister Pedro Passos

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*Portugal is bombarded daily with the prime minister's discourse. It is an unmistakable discourse, unlike any known speech. I cannot find adequate words to describe it.*

Hypocritical? Irrational? These are insufficient to express the style, purpose and content of his pompous harangues. It is a mad, neo-fascist discourse, which turns reality on its head and offends people's intelligence.

In the last few days, tirelessly, Prime Minister Pedro Passos has traveled the country to glorify his administration. The central theme of these harangues is a justification of what his government has been doing.

He calls attention to the people's gratitude. He has no doubts about the approval of the Portuguese for his policy (a word he uses and abuses to the point of perversion) that imposes "sacrifices" on them. He knows that he demanded much of them, but what comforts him is the certainty that they accept the harsh laws and decrees designed to satisfy the "greater interests of the nation."

He feels proud of the wise measures taken by his ministerial team that convey an unprecedented but humanistic concept of solidarity, misinterpreted by people who refuse to understand that reducing wages will in the end bring about an indirect sort of solidarity.

He thinks of himself now as a revolutionary reformer and that history will judge his strategy as one that brought justice.

What pains him is the total lack of understanding among the opposition parties, those incapable of realizing that his government is ensuring the welfare state, combating unemployment, demanding much from the powerful, protecting the poorest - this opposition is so blind they fail to see the growth of the economy and the admiration the major powers of the European Community and the IMF for the results of his diligence in fulfilling the demands of the "memorandum" signed with the troika.

The judgment of the Constitutional Court, which ruled that three measures enforced in the state budget were unconstitutional, aroused the indignation of the prime minister, his government and its parliamentary majority.

Passos and his people did not limit themselves this time to expressing disagreement with the decisions of that sovereign body. They unleashed an unprecedented campaign against

the court, with an insulting tone.

The Prime Minister set the tone by questioning the competence of the constitutional judges, suggesting basic changes in the appointment process.

The arrogant letter to the president of the Constitutional Court demanding a clarification of the judgment is a shameful document that accurately reflects the level of political degradation to which the scum ensconced in power has sunk.

The remarks pronounced in Parliament by the representatives of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the CDS in an attempt to justify the submission of this defiant letter illuminate the incompatibility of the menagerie of Passos & Portas\* with the universal principles of constitutional law.

The gesture should have raised widespread repudiation by the media. But it did not.

Authoritative TV channels and newspapers promoted debates and roundtables in which many commentators – spokespeople for the ideology of the ruling class — took the opportunity to criticize the Constitutional Court.

Some did not even hesitate to express understanding for the insane speech of the prime minister, who is the defender of the interests of big business, ally of imperialism and enemy of the workers.

The response of the victims of the brutal tax policy, of the unemployed, of the retired workers whose pensions were stolen, will be given in factories, schools, in the service industries and in all workplaces.

The people, as the subject of history, will intensify the fight against a government whose policy, in a different context, reminds us increasingly of Salazar. It falls to the CGTP union confederation and the Communists to give leadership to this patriotic struggle.

\* President Paulo Portas (Passos & Portas means steps & doors)

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