The Portuguese Republic at One Hundred

Richard Herr & Antonio Costa Pinto, Editors
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EDITED BY
Richard Herr and
António Costa Pinto
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On April 25, 1974, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA—Movimento das Forças Armadas) rose against the dictatorial regime that had ruled Portugal for forty-eight years. Nevertheless, the downfall of the dictatorship did not provide for the immediate advent of democracy, and the coup d'état led Portugal into a long revolutionary process of almost two years.

According to Kenneth Maxwell, one of the most important features to emphasize when studying the Portuguese revolution is its international impact, because “the events of the mid 1970s in Portugal also played a significant and precocious part in the great ideological conflict of the twentieth century.”¹ This thesis has been developed by other authors, such as António Telo, Bernardino Gomes, Moreira de Sá, and Nuno Simas, whose studies have disclosed not only the significance of the international context for the course of events in Portugal but also the powerful effect of the revolution in the global balance.²

In fact, it is extremely important to notice that the downfall of the Portuguese dictatorship took place at a turning point in the Cold War after a period during which the decrease of the two superpowers’ capacity to exercise their worldwide hegemony became obvious due to several factors: the particular weakness of the United States under the impact of the Vietnam War and Watergate crisis, the strengthening of the European Economic Community, and, finally, the shift in Soviet Union strategy in Europe determined by the Détente. In short, the uprising on April 25