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THE TRANSITION IN PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT

The Transition in Portugal

This paper deals with the origins, process, and aftermath of the military coup of 1974 in Portugal which ended the oldest and most resilient authoritarian regime in Europe. The paper is divided into five parts. Part I sets the broader context within which Portuguese events should be seen, and outlines the international and domestic factors which made the Portuguese revolution so significant an event within the international system as a whole. Part II deals with the process of change in Portugal between 1974 and 1976--the struggle between the Communists and the moderates, the rapid decolonization in Africa, the role of the military--and delineates the social and economic dimensions of the transition. Part III deals with causes of the failure of the revolution. Part IV deals with the establishment of the democratic regime and the problems the new regime faces due to its dual heritage of a half-century of right-wing dictatorship and the traumatic experiences of an aborted revolution in which a strong leadership role had been assumed by the authoritarian left. The paper concludes with a discussion of the political and social underpinnings of the constitutional regime established in 1976 and its prospects.

THE TRANSITION IN PORTUGAL

Kenneth Maxwell
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I. The Context

> "Emperors must be mad fools to decide on declaring wars which substitute an armed nation for their Praetorian Guards. That idiocy accomplished, despotism of course produces revolution until terrorism leads to the inevitable reaction."
>
> Andre Maurois, Colonel Bramble

International dimensions of change in Portugal. The turbulent years which saw the establishment of a democratic regime in Portugal and the end of Portugal's empire in Africa are the subject of this paper. They were years of bewildering developments with momentous international repercussions. For almost half a century, Portugal had been held in the grip of a right-wing dictatorship, isolated from the mainstream of Europe both by the desire of its rulers and by international ostracism. Intransigent in the defense of imperial interests in Africa, the regime was, in the end, destroyed by the bloated, disaffected, and demoralized military establishment it had created to protect its imperial pretensions. Portugal during the 1970s was faced with the problem of liquidating a regime which had become irrelevant to the interests of its people, ending a colonial presence in Africa which dated from the fifteenth century, and constructing a system of government more atuned to the popular will, within an international political and economic environment in which options were severely limited.

The military coup of 1974 was also important for reasons beyond the event itself. In the international system, unexpected changes in small and forgotten places can sometimes shake and transform the system itself. The Portuguese revolution was just such an event. A peculiar conjuncture of geopolitical, ideological, and historical factors made this so. First, the Portuguese revolution served to wrap up many of the themes of the period since the end of World War II: post-fascism, post-colonialism, post-European world domination. In the final analysis, the furtive scuttling away of the Portuguese from Luanda in November 1975 was of more than passing significance. An epoch was drawing to a close, ending a relationship between Europe and Africa which, for better or worse, had profoundly influenced each continent for half a millenium.[1]

Secondly, the timing of Portugal's political and social upheaval also brought it to the fulcrum of the leading contemporary debates on political and social change--the coup in Portugal, for example, occurred within seven months of the bloody overthrow of the Popular Unity government in Chile, and inevitably the Communists and Socialists in Lisbon

looked nervously to the "lessons" of Chile so that they might avoid a similar fate. European communism was itself changing. The era saw the flowering of the ideas of Eurocommunism, especially in southern Europe. Eurocommunists put forward two ideas, each of which held wide potential significance for European politics. Looking towards participation in ruling coalitions, they embraced the idea of a parliamentary and peaceful road to socialism. And seeking to defuse the East-West tensions which might overwhelm any power-sharing role for communists in West European governments, they began to question (and criticize) the relationship between European communism and the Soviet Union. The revolutionary situation which emerged in Portugal in the mid-1970s was something the Eurocommunists had not anticipated, and they were soon obliged to put their theory to an uncomfortable test when Portugal's Communists were faced with the choice of a parliamentary or a revolutionary route to socialism and opted for the latter. Of all European communists, the Portuguese Communists were not only the most pro-Soviet, but they were the first communists to participate in a West European government coalition since the 1940s. Events in Portugal, therefore, had a very direct impact on the whole course of changes with European communism.[2]

Thirdly, the Portuguese crisis served to adumbrate themes which may well dominate international affairs during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Henry Kissinger has called the Angolan war one of the "decisive watersheds" of Soviet expansionism in the Third World.[3] Certainly, the outcome of the Angolan war had a profoundly damaging impact on detente between East and West and encouraged a widening and dangerous escalation of super-power interventionism in Third World troublespots from Ethiopia to Afghanistan. Portugal's old regime was also one of the first victims of the use of oil as a political weapon by the Arab oil-exporting states. Marcello Caetano, Portugal's ruler, had allowed the United States to refuel supply flights for Israel in the Azores during the 1973 Middle East war. Portugal was directly punished for this action by an oil boycott and suffered indirectly from the worldwide economic impact of rapidly rising oil prices and the consequent world economic recession. In southern Africa, the end of Portugal's rule in Mozambique and Angola made it very soon apparent that the position of the white minority government in Rhodesia was no longer tenable; and within five years of the independence of Angola, Rhodesia emerged as the independent black-ruled nation of Zimbabwe, something Ian Smith, the former Rhodesian prime minister, vowed would not happen within a century. The fiasco of South Africa's intervention in the Angolan war shook Pretoria's confidence, awakened the African townships, and dramatized the isolation of the apartheid regime.

The role of the West in the decolonization of Portuguese Africa was also fundamentally influenced by its timing. The Portuguese empire ended within an international environment quite different from that which saw the end of the French, British, or Belgian colonial empires. By the 1970s, the West was weakened and divided in comparison with the preeminence of Western power and influence during the earlier postwar decades. The United States, in particular, was preoccupied with defeat in Vietnam and self-inflicted governmental chaos at home resulting from Watergate.

The Portuguese revolution, in fact, came at an inopportune moment for the super-powers. The height of the crisis in Portugal was sandwiched between the summits at Vladivostok (November 24, 1974) and Helsinki (August 1, 1975), and became inextricably bound up with the process of U.S.-Soviet detente. Both East and West meddled in the internal affairs of Portugal, and this meddling had an impact on more important bilateral arrangements.

The collapse of the dictatorship in 1974 and Portugal's inability to hold on to its African territories meant that there were advantages to be gained, especially by the Soviet Union. The West was challenged in regions where its hegemony had been unquestioned for decades. The response of Western governments throughout the crisis tended to be defensive, and the Soviets proved more aggressive than the Western governments had anticipated.

Europe's role in the decolonization of Portugal's African territories was vastly reduced from the preeminent place Europe held during the earlier period of the transfer of power from Europeans to Africans. In Portugal, the new influence of the European Economic Community was felt. West German intervention was especially important, and the Portuguese crisis had the very significant effect of confirming the reemergence of Germany as a major actor on the European and world stage, a process begun with Germany's entrance into NATO in the 1950s. The crisis' impact for West Germany was especially fortuitous since the Germans became the champions of social democracy and parliamentary rule, taking a position on Portugal which for a time differed significantly from that of the United States. The West Germans also possessed, because of the long-term relationship between the German Social Democratic Party and the Portuguese Socialists, a privileged access to Portuguese politics which the Americans did not possess.[4]

In Africa, however, Europe could do little but complain, offer advice, and, in the case of the French in Angola, meddle maliciously but embrace their enemies with alacrity when the meddling failed. Within Portuguese Africa, equivocation of the West's relationship with Portugal--influenced more by NATO's desire to protect strategic assets in the North Atlantic, in the Azores especially, than by the smooth transfer of power in Portugal's African territories--limited the West's options. Time and again, the Azores issue, going back as far as the 1940s, had preempted American and West European pressure for change in Portugal's colonial policy; and in the end, especially during the year when Portuguese Africa moved swiftly towards independence, the West and Portugal paid a heavy price for the Azores connection.[5]

The delay of decolonization and the long wars in the Portuguese colonies also helped produce a very different type of nationalist movement in Portuguese Africa--one that was more explicitly Marxist in ideology, more militant in action, and, in the case of Angola, more dependent on external support from the Soviets, Cubans, and East Europeans. And no less important had been another change: the ability and capacity of the Soviets and their friends to influence events in their own favor in Africa.

These new elements present in the Portuguese and Portuguese African crises--the failure of Pax Americana to restrain outside intervention, for example, the importance of German intervention in southern Europe, the use of proxies, especially the role of Cubans--set important precedents. The new interdependence between oil supplies, recession, and political and social turmoil in vulnerable countries was also delineated. The ineffectiveness of old formulas for containing social movements was revealed. The sheer number of outsiders whose interference in these crises compounded the problems complicated the role of the super-powers, who discovered that although the world remained bipolar, clients were no longer susceptible to easy manipulation from Moscow or Washington. There was a changing of long-established "rules" for international behavior and the blurring of spheres of influence. All of these fluid and dangerous currents, which the revolution in Portugal and the decolonization of the Portuguese empire in Africa revealed, are likely to be the stuff of late-twentieth-century statecraft.

Another reason why the events in Portugal took on significance beyond themselves lies in the fact that Portugal's internal crisis raised perennial issues concerning revolutionary change. Was revolution possible in Europe in the late twentieth century? Was the Portuguese revolution a revolution at all? If it was not a revolution, why for a time did it look like one? To those involved--the participants--these were the preeminent questions, and how they were answered often determined how individuals acted.

Most of those who made the coup d'etat of April 25, 1974, had modest aims--their intention being more to bring Portugal into line with the democratic mainstream of western Europe than to make a revolution. Yet a revolution of sorts was nevertheless what Portugal experienced. A major restructuring of government and society occurred, a set of values for distributive justice was established, and a former elite was replaced by a new group. The economic power of the old oligarchy was destroyed; massive nationalizations put Portugal's banks, insurance companies, and much of industry into the hands of the state; the great landed estates of southern Portugal were expropriated; workers' power increased dramatically; citizens were organized in neighborhood commissions, unions, and political parties, and could no longer be ignored either by the government or by private capitalists. The coup d'etat thus brought about real changes, created real victims, challenged real assets. The problems that faced the new political leaders were not merely theoretical.[6]

Foreign political, economic, and strategic assets were also threatened when Premier Marcello Caetano was packed off to a comfortable exile in Brazil. The threat to Western interests seemed worse precisely because these assets had been taken for granted for so long. The military uprising of April 25, 1974, was, therefore, no ordinary coup d'etat. It brought down Europe's oldest dictatorship, ended Europe's oldest empire, released the social tensions long pent up within Portuguese society, and thrust to the forefront a group of young European military officers who came to see themselves as a revolutionary vanguard on the model of national liberation movements outside Europe. Portugal's NATO allies were unprepared for what happened, and they became obsessed with the emergence in Portugal of a radicalized military and a powerful, orthodox, and volubly pro-Soviet Communist Party.[7]

As the forces of revolutionary change emerged, so did those of counter-revolution. Violence and the threat of violence were integral to both processes. The conflict remained below the threshold of large-scale armed struggle and internal war, but it was the mobilization of radicalized workers and landless laborers which, in 1974, helped propel the country to the left, and it was the popular uprising by conservative peasants and small property owners in the northern and central provinces which blocked the momentum of revolution during the long summer of 1975.

These rural mobilizations and counter-mobilizations in Portugal between 1974 and 1976 gave the Portuguese crisis much of its special character. Agrarian reform had not been an issue in most of western Europe since the late nineteenth century. In southern Europe, agrarian problems had been important points of social and political contention later--in Italy until the 1920s and in Spain in the 1930s. It fell to Portugal in the mid-1970s, however, to re-infuse European agrarian-reform questions with the revolutionary connotations of fundamental social and political change.[8] Closely linked to these problems of land distribution and ownership were two other factors which made Portugal's situation special. The land seizures occurred against the background of the paralysis of the state apparatus and a collapse of the state's authority. In Portugal, the old systems of deference and the old mechanisms of social control were temporarily overthrown. In the vacuum, a whole array of self-management projects emerged in the industrial sector, workers and neighborhood commissions were set up in the urban centers, and fringe radical groups sought to articulate and harness the incoherent and spontaneous desires of a popular mass movement.[9] Even the military was affected (the army in particular), rapidly disintegrating into a series of would-be Soviets and debating societies.

<u>The ambiguity of Portugal's revolution and the problem of interpretation</u>. The outcome of these social, political, and ideological struggles in Portugal remains ambiguous--sufficiently ambiguous to defy easy analysis, which is perhaps why, despite the extraordinary attention focused on both Portugal and Portuguese Africa between 1974 and 1976, very little attention has been devoted to Portugal since. Part of the problem arose from the way the events were interpreted at the time. The contradiction between image and reality was especially salient in the Portuguese crisis. No revolution can fail to suggest parallels. Yet too much attention to theory and too little to specific circumstance can hinder understanding. In Portugal, this particular malaise affected participants as well as observers. On a number of occasions the highly ideological interpretations espoused by the leaders of the revolution proved wildly unrelated to Portuguese realities. In fact, it is one of the peculiarities of the situation in Portugal after April 1974 that the leaders of the three major groups which sought to give form to the new regime all worked from experience gained outside Portugal rather than within it, usually with models drawn from the countries in which they had spent long years of forced exile. The Social Democrats looked to the advanced industrial societies of western Europe, especially France and West Germany; the Communists to the experience of the imposed revolutions of eastern Europe, especially Czechoslovakia; and the military, with two decades of service in Africa, looked to the movements of national liberation that had opposed them on the elusive battlefield. None of these groups understood or appreciated

the commitment of the others, and all had difficulty relating to the social circumstances of Portugal.

The role of the mass media, and of interpretation, was thus an extremely important component in the Portuguese crisis. In two very widely publicized instances (the case of the newspaper República and the case of the Catholic radio station Radio Renasença, each seized during the course of revolution by radical workers tacitly backed by the Communists) the media itself became a central issue.[10]

In most of the Western world, the process of revolution and decolonization was presented as something of a morality play. Dour Moscow-oriented Communists entrenched in unions, the press, and the local administration--positions that they had seized in the confusion following the collapse of the Caetano regime--were portrayed as hell-bent on establishing a dictatorship of the left in alliance with radical military officers. There was something to this picture--more than middle-aged intellectuals elsewhere in Europe were at first prepared to admit, less than young radicals who saw Portugal as the beginning of a European revolution hoped. The threat was certainly sufficient to force middle-class Socialists into the streets of Lisbon and Oporto in defense of civil liberties, to mobilize the formidable influence of the Catholic Church and drive the peasantry of the northern provinces into violent protest. Yet, in truth, the situation was much more complicated, and the roles of the Portuguese Communist Party and the armed forces especially so.

The manner in which these events in Portugal were reported, however, will undoubtedly have an important side effect. Scholars looking back are sure to find support for any position they choose to argue, since whatever that position is, it understandably existed at the time somewhere in the Portuguese potpourri, and they will have no difficulty whatsoever in finding an impressive array of footnotes to box in their prejudices and give them scholarly respectability.[11] The problem of interpretation is significant, however, for what it says about the turmoil into which Portugal was thrown by the April 1974 coup. Andre Gide, returning from the Soviet Union in the 1920s, observed that when it came to analyzing the events of the Bolshevik revolution "the truth is usually told with hate, the lies with love." It is an indication of how revolutionary the Portuguese revolution became that Gide's admonition applies to Portugal too.

The root cause of the difficulty in coming to grips with what happened in Portugal is that the outcome of the conflict was not clear cut and remains in many ways unresolved. There were no martyrs such as Allende and no generals like Pinochet. Neither left nor right won outright. In fact, a most unlikely hybrid emerged which looked to all intents and purposes like a western liberal and representative democracy. But theory, on left or right, was not prepared for a liberal democracy in the mid-1970s. Western political scientists had spent the decade concocting theories to explain the inevitability of an authoritarian future for a country such as Portugal, which was neither a fully developed, modern industrial state nor an underdeveloped one.[12] Communist intellectuals were no less confused. The Western communist parties diverged in their reaction to the events in Portugal and the ideologues in Moscow disputed among themselves how to interpret Portugal's experience.[13] In the longer

term, therefore, Portugal has revived old concerns, many of which had fallen out of the agenda of scholars of social and political change, such as elections, political parties, administrative and bureaucratic reform--the problems, in essence, of political pluralism and democratization.

But if scholars are slow to react, politicians are not. In neighboring Spain, the struggle over democracy in Portugal had immediate impact. The old caudillo, Generalissimo Francisco Franco, was near death, and the Portuguese experience was a sobering one for both left and right. In Portuguese-speaking Brazil, the military regime was also seeking to manipulate a transition toward a less dictatorial system. Retroactively, therefore, Portugal has been wedged by social scientists into an evolving framework of "transitions to democracy"--even though, at the time, the Portuguese experience was more one of political and social rupture than of "transition," and Portugal's impact in countries such as Spain and Brazil was to stimulate a process of managed political change intended to avoid precisely the discontinuity which Portugal suffered.

The outside forces, whose intervention in Portugal was not inconsiderable, have also escaped serious attention. This is partly because the result of covert Western intervention in Portugal, unlike the result in Chile, was by and large applauded by the mainstream of journalists and commentators. Intervention was also more subtle and skillful than in the Latin American case. This was not fortuitous. It was caused by the peculiar constraints which would-be intervenors, Henry Kissinger in particular, were obliged to work under as a direct consequence of the disruptive and demoralizing impact on the U.S. government and its intelligence agencies of Watergate and the revelation of previous operations. Kissinger was also restrained by the skillful bureaucratic rear-guard action waged by the U.S. ambassador in Lisbon, Frank Carlucci, later to be appointed deputy director of the C.I.A. Carlucci, with very strong West German backing, proposed a policy of subtle support for the Socialists. He also remained at arms-length from the old right-wing hardliners who had previously had Washington's ear; he helped strengthen the moderate left within the military, and he worked mightily to provide substantial economic aid to the coalition of Socialists and moderate army officers who routed the Communists and radical soldiers in November 1975. The international context of the Portuguese crisis was, therefore, of considerable significance, and this international dimension of the Portuguese revolution also gives emphasis to an important fact which was not sufficiently appreciated at the time or given due weight in discussions since.

Developments in Portugal and southern Africa were intimately intertwined, at least until 1976, and any explanation of what happened in either Portugal or the former Portuguese colonies would be incomplete without some awareness of their interconnections. The process of decolonization was an important ingredient in the Portuguese crisis which for a long time helped propel Portugal to the left, but later helped reverse the tide and contributed powerfully to the reaction against the Communists and their military allies. The Bishop of Oporto, Dom Antonio Ferreira Gomes, who almost alone among the Portuguese Catholic hierarchy had spoken out against the excesses of the old regime, made a comment in April 1975 that emphasized the point succinctly. "What escapes most

observers," he said, "is that we are not living through a small mutation but a total rupture, a trauma that breaks with five hundred years of history." He compared the situation to that which faced Spain after the loss of Cuba and the Philippines.[14] The Bishop's analogy was apt. It underlined the relationship between revolution and decolonization, and indicated how difficult Portugal's postrevolutionary adjustment would be.

In the background of the Portuguese transition, therefore, is the process of delinking between Europe and Africa. In the end, by the end of 1975 and start of 1976, the futures of Portugal and its former territories, Angola especially, had become separated. Each thereafter existed preeminently within its own regional context. Yet, the process of delinking is itself a vital element to any understanding of the peculiarities of the Portuguese experience.

As to the outcome of the Angolan war, the interpretations are as rich as the data is scarce--hence reversing the Portuguese internal situation, about which there is a mountain of data but thus far very few attempts to systematize the 1974-1976 experience. About Angola, the participants have had very much to say, especially on the American side, and there exists a conflicting set of "lessons of Angola" which have themselves subsequently influenced policy decisions.[15] Yet it is important to any judgment about the consequences of Portuguese decolonization for great-power conflict in the Third World to understand what happened in Angola and why. In my view, both East and West misunderstood the causes for their respective victories and defeats, and Soviet gains in Angola rested as much on Western failures as they did on the scale of Soviet and Cuban intervention. The Soviets, the Cubans, and the Africans they supported nevertheless were, without question, the victors in that particular conflict, and part of the reason for the Soviets' and Cubans' success was that they showed a much surer grasp of the interaction between the crisis in Portugal and the process of decolonization than did the Americans, and in consequence exploited these connections to their advantage.

The most serious consequence of Portuguese decolonization, especially in Angola, was the role Africa assumed in the domestic politics of East and West, and the consequent interpenetration of domestic political factionalism, ideological stereotypes, and foreign-policy decisions. "Linkages," to use one of Henry Kissinger's favorite words, were never something that could be evoked only at the convenience of political leaders. Actions produce reactions in politics as in physics. Mr. Brezhnev played for high stakes in Angola, and in the short term the gains for the Soviet Union were considerable--but the Soviets misinterpreted the ease of their victory and this led them into costly later adventures in Ethiopia and Afghanistan. They also underestimated the consequences of their African adventures for bilateral relationships between Moscow and Washington. In contrast, the United States in the same period suffered military defeat in Vietnam, failed to come up with an effective response to Soviet and Cuban expansion, saw the collapse of its Iranian proxy and the consequent shattering of its strategic position in the Persian Gulf and northern Indian Ocean, and witnessed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Thus, the Soviets appeared decisive and successful, the United States indecisive and weak, and these perceptions aided those in the Soviet Union who urged expansion while weakening those in the United States who urged restraint.

Small as Portugal is, therefore, the chain of events set in motion by the April 1974 coup had great implications. The crisis and its ramifications dominated much of the brief presidency of Gerald Ford. Angola helped to wreck detente. The behavior of the Portuguese Communists derailed Eurocommunism. The loss of a white-ruled buffer in southern Africa sealed the fate of white Rhodesia. With Portugal as an object lesson of what to avoid, the transition from dictatorship in Spain was less difficult than it might have been because all parties behaved with great caution and good sense. The democratization of the Iberian peninsula presented the European community with new opportunities as well as new problems. For decades, Portugal stood at a critical crossroads, and in both Europe and Africa the results of April 1974 would be very profound. Soon after the coup d'etat, a graffito appeared at the Technical Institute of Lisbon. It read: "Revolution of roses: petals for the bourgeoisie, thorns for the people." It is surprising that anyone should have been so sanguine. There would be thorns enough for everybody.

II. The Events

> "I would like to make this observation: That change in Portugal occurs very, very slowly and I don't think one can assume that anything, even this book, can bring about drastic change rapidly."
>
> Ellwood M. Rabenold Jr., Director, Office of Iberian Affairs, Department of State, March 14, 1976, commenting on General Antonio de Spinola's book Portugal and the Future six weeks before the coup d'etat of April 25, 1974

The coup d'etat and the collapse of the old regime. The collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship was sudden and paradoxical. After 46 years of authoritarian rule, aborted coups, and quixotic gestures of opposition, a putsch by junior officers deposed the old regime in less than 24 hours. In Lisbon and Oporto, thousands of people poured into the streets welcoming the army as liberators. To head the junta of national salvation, the captains called in a general of impeccable fascist credentials, Antonio de Spinola, who spoke the platitudes of liberalism as if they were revolutionary truths. Remarkably, once in power he did not hesitate to act on them. In its first decree, the Portuguese military junta established freedom of speech and assembly, allowed trade unions to organize, promised elections by universal suffrage, granted amnesty to political prisoners, and dissolved the political police (PIDE/DGS).

For more than four decades, Portuguese politics had been the exclusive preserve of dour paternalists upholding a social and political system that was virtually impenetrable to the world outside. Suddenly there were Socialists and Communists everywhere. Opposition leaders returned like prodigals, escorted into town by deferential soldiers in ill-fitting uniforms, carrying rifles that sprouted red carnations. On Wednesday, April 24, propaganda posters in Lisbon had depicted happy multiracial bathers on Mozambique's beaches on "sun and dreams"; by Friday, April 26, walls were adorned with the hammer and sickle. The leader of the Communist Party, Alvaro Cunhal, had spent much of his life since 1936 exiled in eastern Europe, in prison, or living clandestinely in Portugal.

Within two weeks, at General Spinola's invitation, he was a member of the Portuguese government. Mario Soares, leader of the Socialists, having returned triumphantly to Lisbon from Paris, was appointed foreign minister. Old Liberals were aghast. It was too much, too soon. And it was only the beginning.

Between 1974 and 1980, Portugal suffered through four coups and countercoups, six provisional governments, two provisional presidents and one constitutional president, three provisional and five constitutional prime ministers, six national elections, and came close, once, to civil war. In April 1974, Portugal had 160,000 men under arms in Africa; a year and a half later a mere handful remained, powerless to influence events.

After 13 years of costly opposition to the very idea of independence, within five months (late August 1974-early January 1975) Portugal and the Nationalist movement had negotiated settlements and set dates for the independence of Portuguese Guiné (10 September 1974), Mozambique (25 June 1974), and Angola (11 November 1975). By January 1976, along the explosive frontier between white- and black-ruled states in southern Africa, the flag of Portugal had been replaced with those of two of the continent's most radical nations--one of them, the Peoples Republic of Angola, ruled by a movement whose victory over its nationalist rivals had been guaranteed by the decisive intervention of a 10,000-man Cuban expeditionary force and extensive Soviet aid and material.

Yet none had expected the speed of Portugal's collapse, or predicted the extent of the changes in Europe and Africa that would follow. The publication of General Spinola's book Portugal and the Future in February 1974 had attracted international attention because of the book's open criticism of the government's intransigent policy in Africa, but Mr. Rabenold's comments about the book's likely impact were fairly typical, even a mere six weeks before the coup d'etat.[16] There was a certain condescension towards the country, which may explain this misperception. The bucolic image so carefully preserved by the dictatorship, the comfortable illusion of a world lost in time, certain of verities long gone elsewhere, had been appealing to influential foreign observers as well as to tourists. Little else in Europe could compare with Portugal except some sections of the Balkans. The landscape was and is strikingly beautiful. Traditional values were strong. Local potentates still ruled their bailiwicks as if the nineteenth century had never ended. But the social costs were very high, and Portugal's incidence of infectious disease, infant mortality, and illiteracy matched that of Turkey. In the working-class towns across the Tagus River from Lisbon, families on the thoughtfully named Sulphuric Acid Street were regularly forced to move from their homes to the other side of town when the poisonous clouds of pollution from the Barreiro chemical works drifted their way.

Portugal's authoritarian system was of a most particular type.[17] Corporative in ethos, military in origin, the regime fashioned by Dr. Antonio Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) was a curious amalgam. The Portuguese "New State," which after the early 1930s drew its leadership almost exclusively from among civilians, had been made possible by a military coup in 1926, and a military figurehead was always retained in the presidency (Salazar, and after him Caetano, held the post of president of

the Council of Ministers). At the core of the regime by the 1970s was a condominium of aging, conservative, and quasi-fascist intellectuals, a brutal political police, and a handful of large monopolistic family concerns. In the country at large, the regime traditionally had found support from the Church, the small rural peasantry of the north, the large landowners of the south, and the petty functionaries who dominated the bureaucracy and its numerous agencies. By providing order, balancing the budget, discouraging industrialization, and skillfully playing off the great powers, the Portuguese dictator had made his system virtually impregnable. He had rooted it sufficiently in Portuguese social realities to garner no small measure of popular support.

Until the early 1970s, Portugal remained an isolated society. Located at the far southwestern tip of Europe, the barriers created by the regime were fortified by the long land barrier with Franco's Spain. The oldest nation-state in Europe and consequently a nation of extraordinary homogeneity in cultural terms, Portugal is nevertheless internally differentiated in important ways. The northeast is predominantly mountainous. In the south, plains and plateaus reach from the Tagus valley to the amphitheater of seaward-facing hills which separate the Alentejo from the Algarve. Portugal is cut across with rivers, some forming part of the border with Spain, from the Minho in the north, to the Douro, Tagus, and Guadiana in the south. The rivers also outline the major regions of Portugal. The south is a land of Mediterranean climate where rain is scarce and the summers are long and hot. The north is less homogeneous. The northeastern mountains have a continental climate, but the northwest has abundant rain and a moderate Atlantic climatic pattern.

The relationship between geography, demography, soil cultivation, and land-tenure patterns is close. In the north, the land is highly fragmented, population sparsely settled, and crops are diverse. In the south (except for the Algarve), land was concentrated in large estates (76 out of 113 Portuguese farms with more than 2,500 hectares were in the districts of Evora, Beja, and Portalegre, as were 274 of the 375 holdings of between 1,000 and 2,500 hectares), the population is settled in large villages, and the crops are monocultural (cereals, olives). In the north, most farm workers are farm holders, whereas in the south the great majority of the rural population are hired laborers. In the north, religiosity is fervent. To the south, the presence of the Church is minimal, often nonexistent.[18]

Toward the last decade of Salazar's life, important changes had occurred, which together undermined one by one the props on which he had constructed his system. Portugal had always been a country of emigration, but beginning in the late 1950s and accelerating through the 1960s to a peak in 1970, there had been a dramatic shift away from traditional recipients such as Brazil and toward nations of the European Common Market. Nine-hundred-thousand Portuguese emigrated between 1960 and 1971, most of them between the ages of 18 and 35. This represented 180 people for every 1,000 in the north of Portugal, and 185 per 1,000 in the Algarve region on the southern coast. By 1975, some 1.5 million Portuguese nationals were resident abroad, including at least 700,000 in France and 115,000 in West Germany. Moreover, two out of every three people who left the countryside did so to go abroad. The proportion of the work

force engaged in agriculture declined dramatically from nearly 50 percent to under 30 percent during the 1960s.[19]

As early as 1960, in 44 percent of Portugal, the birth rate was not replacing the population. Only Lisbon and Oporto increased in size during the decade before the coup, and the population as a whole declined to about 8,200,000. The remittances of the overseas Portuguese had a significant economic impact, and represented by the early 1970s a sum equal to 70 percent of the country's merchandise exports.[20] As an important consequence of these developments, however, Portugal's fortunes were linked closely to the industrialized core of Western Europe, as a result making Portugal peculiarly vulnerable to Europe's economic woes.

The 1960s also saw substantial foreign investment in Portugal. The Export-Import Bank helped finance a new suspension bridge over the Tagus River. The bridge opened up the possibility of industrial development in the sandy pine-forested peninsula between the Tagus and Setúbal and eased access to the heavily industrialized working-class towns that sprawl along the south bank of the Tagus opposite Lisbon. Furthermore, the bridge provided a link to the site of the petrochemical port and refining complex planned for Sines, and to the tourist zones of the Algarve. Official West German investment went to a new airport at Faro and a very expensive irrigation scheme in the Alentejo. The Faro airport, in turn, encouraged the growth of a large expatriate community along Portugal's southern coastline. The World Bank invested in electrical power supply facilities. Private foreign investment, a mere two percent of total private-sector investment in 1970, climbed to 20 percent five years later. On the eve of the April 1974 coup, three-quarters of private foreign investment came from the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and Belgium.[21]

The type of industrial expansion favored by foreign investment during the 1960s was extremely vulnerable both to political change in Portugal and to changes in the world economic situation. The profitability of industries that had attracted the most foreign capital during the ten years preceding the revolution was closely tied to the character of the political system. The absence of free trade unions and collective bargaining was one of the reasons these industries were established in the first place, and the government of Marcello Caetano, who succeeded Salazar in 1968 following the old dictator's incapacitation, advertised these attractions in its search for foreign businessmen. Wages in Portugal were seven times less than those in Sweden, five times less than those in Britain--and even these figures are deceptive, for the majority of employees in the factories were women, whose wages were often less than half those of men, and averaged about two dollars a day in the early 1970s. The European Free Trade Association agreement made Portugal especially attractive to enterprises that imported most of their raw materials and reexported their product.[22]

The most dramatic development during the 1960s, however, was a change in direction within the oligarchy. CUF (Companhia União Fabril), the greatest of the Portuguese enterprises, controlled by the Melo family, had grown into a huge conglomerate of over 100 companies, and was the largest enterprise in the Iberian peninsula, controlling one-tenth of the

corporate capital of Portugal. CUF, like several of the other groups, entered into joint enterprises with foreign corporations, shifting or at least complementing its colonial and metropolitan ventures with more profitable investments in Brazil, the United States, and Europe. The most successful and visible joint enterprise was the Lisnave shipbuilding and repair complex, where CUF was associated with two Dutch and two Swedish companies. Strategically placed on the main tanker route to Europe, Lisnave specialized in the construction of bow sections for giant tankers which were completed in Sweden. By early 1974, the yards had dry-dock bookings for ten years. The conglomerates got a large share of state aid for investment, preferential tax incentives, and subsidies.[23]

The internationalization of the great conglomerates, however, represented a disintegration of the old alliance between landowners and the financial and industrial interests which had been one of the major props of the dictatorship. Government economists were beginning to criticize not only the small fragmented plots of peasant proprietors but also the great estates which, with the exception of meat producers, stubbornly refused to improve production techniques. Industrialists were impatient with the inadequate banking and financial institutions of the country and the lack of reliable information for economic decision-making. Although they did not say much about it in public, the industrialists were strongly critical of the colonial war in Africa, which was causing serious labor shortages and driving away money needed for expansion, and which, by poisoning Portuguese international relations, threatened Portugal's chances of entering the European Common Market (EEC).[24]

During 1973, as much as 48 percent of Portuguese exports were sent to the EEC, 15 percent to the overseas territories. About 45 percent of Portugal's imports came from the EEC, 10 percent from the overseas territories.[25] To the great economic interests, therefore, the institutions and ideology of the corporate state which Salazar had created and Marcello Caetano had inherited were by 1974 a hindrance to their plans for the future. By April 1974, the old social bases and the coalition of interests which had sustained the dictatorship for so many decades had withered.

The Portuguese revolution, therefore, had causes rooted in Portugal's chronic structural problems. The crisis in agriculture, the dependence on the export of labor and on remittances, the reliance on tourism and colonial balances to cover metropolitan deficits, the basing of plans for economic development on the continuing availability of cheap oil, the action of the state to repress collective bargaining and hold down wage rates, the disintegration of the old alliance between state and economic interests--all of these problems pre-dated the coup d'etat of 1974.

The impact of the colonial war, failed liberalization, and economic difficulties. The immediate origins of the coup, however, lay as much in Africa as in Europe. Portugal had been struggling for over a decade to contain a spreading guerrilla war in its overseas colonies. Violence had erupted first in Angola in 1961, and rapidly spread to Portuguese Guiné in West Africa and then to Mozambique in East Africa. Portugal had possessed the first and oldest of Europe's colonial empires. In 1974 it possessed the last. As other European powers had been obliged to divest

themselves of overseas territories during the 1950s and 1960s, Portugal had with embarrassing tenacity remained, surviving even the preeminence of Europe itself in world affairs. To other European nations, finished with colonialism and building supermarkets and superhighways, Portugal was an uncomfortable anachronism. It even became fashionable to say that Iberia, with its archaic regimes and obscurantist philosophies, was somehow not European at all, despite the fact that for more than two centuries Europe itself was little more than Iberia in the eyes of the rest of the world.[26]

Propagandists and some scholars devised a whole corpus of sociological theory to prove that the Portuguese, unlike other Europeans, had a natural affinity for colonial peoples which made their rule more acceptable and more just. This idea was a myth. The white settlers in Portugal's southern African territories behaved much as white settlers elsewhere in Africa. If anything, they more closely resembled the *pied noir* of French Algeria than the farmers of Rhodesia or Kenya. The wars in Portuguese Africa were like most wars fought by colonial powers against indigenous insurgents--tedious, expensive, savage, and, in the end, self-defeating.[27]

The burdens of the African campaigns on a small, poor nation with limited natural resources and severely retarded economic and social infrastructures proved unsustainable. The burden was especially onerous on those called to fight the battle: the Portuguese army. The single most important fact about the Portuguese revolution is so obvious that its significance is often overlooked. It is that no mass movement brought the old regime down, and that the participation of the clandestine political parties of the left was negligible. The dictatorship was toppled by the army, not by communists or anyone else.

The coup d'etat of April 25, 1974, was carried out by a small group of junior and middle-rank officers, all of them influenced by their extensive experience in the colonial wars, most of them believing that the military should play a major role in the political process. The action of the Portuguese military and its many factions was a central and unique element in the Portuguese situation. The multitudes that assembled in the streets of Lisbon and Oporto in the hours and weeks that followed the coup made the army's action irreversible. Popular mobilization followed the coup; it did not cause it.

The Armed Forces Movement (MFA) originated in response to professional grievances and concerns with status and privilege.[28] The dissension within the officer corps, however, was a reflection of a much deeper malaise which grew out of the scale, composition, and organization of the Portuguese armed forces, all of which in turn was a consequence of the seemingly endless military commitment in Africa.

In 1974, out of a population of a little over eight million, one in four men of military age was in the armed forces. The army alone contained at least 170,000 men, of which 135,000 were in Africa. The air force had 16,000, the navy 18,000, the units of the Republican Guard (GNR) 10,000, and the paramilitary security police (PSP) 15,000. The armed forces represented (at a low estimate) a proportion per thousand of the

population (30.83) exceeded only by Israel (40.09) and North and South Vietnam (31.66) (55.36); five times that of the United Kingdom, three times that of the United States or Spain. The military budget represented at least 7 percent of the GNP, more than that of the United States. With a per capita income of just over $1,000, Portugal spent a minimum per capita on military expenditure of $63.27, and this despite abysmal pay for officers and troops. It was an army with almost no totally professional units.

The officer corps was composed of: an aged group of generals ("the geriatric brigade," they were called unlovingly by soldiers in the field); a segregated elite of staff officers, recruited from the upper classes of Portuguese society, exclusively devoted to administration, and relieved of combat duty; and a diminished cohort of junior and middle-rank officers, men in their thirties and forties, who had spent most of their professional lives overseas.

The resentment of the combat officers was well summed up by Captain Sousa e Castro, one of the original members of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). "For 13 years the soldiers--I am speaking of the cadres--were belittled and exploited in the war," he complained. "Personally I can say that as a sub-lieutenant in the combat corps I earned 4,500 escudos, less than a porter at the Imperial Cinema in Luanda. As a captain commanding a company in Mozambique I earned less than a barber in Nampula, 10,000 escudos a month. And I went for months on end without seeing my family or my friends."

After the fighting began in Angola, there had been a rapid fall-off in the number of applicants to the Military Academy and, as a result, a chronic manpower shortage in the middle ranks. This aggravated a problem which had begun in the 1950s when the government shifted its recruiting policies, providing free tuition at the Military Academy in 1958, and offering a monthly stipend to cadets in 1969. By the mid-1970s, this had produced a marked social cleavage within the professional officer corps at the rank of lieutenant colonel, and an extraordinary tangle of jealousy and dissension. Standards for admission to the service academies also fell after 1958, except in the engineering courses. The number of applicants continued to decline nevertheless. By 1969 they were down 80 percent from 1961.

Those most effected by these shifts were the middle-rank combat officers, caught between an archaic and slow-moving system of promotions based exclusively on seniority on the one hand, and a cohort of less than reliable subordinates on the other. The government, in order to cope with the expansion of armed forces, had been forced to rely more and more on conscripted officers at company command levels. These _milicianos_ as they were called dominated the lower levels of the officer corps by 1974, though in status they were clearly differentiated from the regulars. Many of the _milicianos_ were former university students, who since the early 1960s had suffered more than most from the repressive policies of the regime. These civilian soldiers, their careers, marriages, and professional prospects severely compromised by lengthy military service, showed even less enthusiasm for combat than the draftees they commanded.

Yet, although they became unreliable in military action, the army, with 135,000 men in the field in Africa, could hardly function without them.

The burden of combat thus fell mainly on a relatively small and diminishing generation of regulars, some facing their fifth two-year tour of duty overseas. A program to allow milicianos to take up permanent commissions was a particular affront to these men.

The government's motivation was to entice milicianos "who had proved themselves in combat" to abandon their amateur status and turn professional. Very few milicianos, however, relished the idea of entering the Military Academy with a group of green freshmen, so Decree-Law 353-73 created an accelerated two-semester course for conscript captains. By placating the conscripts, the government enraged the regulars. Because the archaic system of promotion within the Portuguese armed forces recognized only seniority and not merit, Military Academy graduates were listed by class rank and moved forward to higher positions in this order. What so upset the regulars was that newly converted milicianos were now allowed to count all their service toward seniority, thus jumping forward in a seniority line which moved much too slowly anyway in the minds of most regular officers. It was out of the protest movement organized in response to these government measures that the Armed Forces Movement emerged.

Initially, the MFA was composed exclusively of regular captains and majors. Later, some trusted senior officers were incorporated or, more often, kept informed of developments. It was a small, compact group, with strong personal interrelationships, numbering less than 200 out of a middle-rank corps of some 1,600. Members were spread throughout most units, and the MFA was especially strong in Guiné and Mozambique. After December 1, 1973, the organization was held together at the center by a 15-man coordinating committee, subdivided into a military committee charged with the detailed planning of the uprising and a political committee which formulated the program for the post-coup situation.

For a determined minority within the army, a protest that originated in professional concerns provided a cover for political objectives. Major Melo Antunes, an artillery officer with a long record of opposition to the regime, who had at first dismissed the captains' protest movement as being "a reactionary cooperative in defense of privilege," played a key role in drawing up the MFA program. Colonel Vasco Gonçalves, another member of the political committee, had been involved in a putschist attempt a decade previously, and his actions on that occasion had closely paralleled those of the Communist Party. The leader of the military planning group, Mozambique-born Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, was much influenced by the theories of guerrilla struggle in Guiné where he had worked on psychological warfare. The movement as a whole, however, consisted of men with divergent political views. Their coalescence was the result less of any uniform conspiratorial objective than of a convergence of resentments, loss of a sense of purpose, and emotional and intellectual estrangement from the long colonial wars. Despite conventional wisdom, the work of the young officers had to be liberalizing and liberating. The intransigence of the Portuguese regime and its commitment to the wars made that inevitable. "The Revolution had come from the left," one officer commented in April 1974; "after 50 years of right-wing dictatorship, where else could it come from."

Yet if it was the army which pushed, it pushed a structure so fragile that it fell like a pack of cards. Part of the government's problem was the prime minister himself. Professor Marcello das Neves Caetano was an unconvincing dictator. He embodied to an astonishing degree the limitations as well as some of the qualities which had sustained the Salazarist system in Portugal for almost half a century. Caetano was a fine scholar and historian, in addition to being a successful lawyer and administrator. In these attributes, he was not unlike many of the professors, lawyers, and right-wing intellectuals the old dictator, Salazar, had chosen to surround himself. Often, Salazar's proteges were men of humble origins who had risen by merit or patronage within the universities or public administration. The Portuguese dictatorship was preeminently civilian and legalistic, despite the retention of military figureheads in the presidency, and despite the fact that Salazar's authoritarian and corporatist "New State" had its origins in a military coup.

As a result of the civilians' dominance and their ignorance of the military mind, almost every plot against the dictatorship since the early 1930s had begun in, or had involved, the military. The longevity of the colonial wars of course aggravated these long-standing tensions. General Costa Gomes observed in 1974 that "only politicians without imagination would think that military methods would solve the problems of subversive wars. Every educated soldier knows enough military history to be in no doubt of the truth proclaimed by Sun-Tzu in 500 B.C., which is that subversive wars are political phenomena in which the military phenomenon is a necessary factor but not enough alone."

Caetano's relationship with the military was difficult from the beginning of his prime ministership.[29] After his downfall, he would bitterly complain that the most vocal opposition to his appointment to succeed Salazar had come from those within the military hierarchy who were aware of his suggestion in the early 1960s that Portugal pursue a policy in Africa which would lead to a federation of states not unlike that proposed over a decade later by General Spinola in his controversial book. The president, Admiral Tomas, had made it clear to Caetano in 1968 that it was a condition of Caetano's appointment that the defense of the overseas territories was non-negotiable. Without such assurance, the Admiral claimed, "the armed forces will intervene." Caetano's sensitivity to the threat from the extreme right within the military hierarchy, and his lack of sensitivity to the threat from the left among the middle-rank officers in 1974, are partly explained by this history.

The prime minister's problems were compounded by his personality and background. Caetano was a follower, not a leader. His caution, legalism, and indecisiveness proved fatal to the regime he headed. He had stood too long in the shadow of a mentor who rewarded diligence but distrusted initiative. Caetano was also an urban-based ideologue, something Salazar, with his profound roots in rural Portugal, had never been. Although Caetano had been closely associated with Salazar for more than three decades, he had begun his career considerably to the right of the conservative Catholic wellsprings of Salazar's philosophy. Caetano had been a leading mover behind the Portuguese youth movement, the _Moçidade_, during the 1930s, one of the more overtly fascist institutions of the Portuguese "New State." Much of the legislation of the Salazar regime

was his handiwork, and he became--through his definitive textbook on administrative law, a work in its tenth edition in 1973--the most authoritative voice in interpreting the regime's legislation. His view of his role as prime minister was thus circumscribed by a highly legalistic and mechanistic view of a system which in reality had worked under Salazar not so much because of its legal niceties as because of Salazar's skillful playing-off of factions, personal control of key decisions, and draconian control of the purse strings.

Caetano thus saw his task as being that of perfecting rather than fundamentally altering the authoritarian and corporatist dictatorship he had inherited. Caetano's ideological commitment to the system was somewhat obscured during the early months of his rule when he had moved to liberalize some aspects of the dictatorship's image. Two prominent exiles, the Bishop of Oporto, Dom Antonio Ferreira Gomes, who had been prevented from reentering Portugal after a visit to Rome in 1958, and Dr. Mario Soares, a Lisbon lawyer and oppositionist who had been deported to the island of Sâo Tomé in 1967, were both allowed back into Portugal. The regime's political movement in 1969 was permitted to incorporate a handful of liberal-minded candidates, such as Francisco Sá Carneiro, Francisco Balsemão, and Miller Guerra, in its list of candidates for the National Assembly elections in 1969. The notorious secret police (PIDE) was renamed the DGS (Directorate General of Security). Censorship was renamed "previous examinations."

But the "Lisbon Spring" of 1968, such as it was, proved as short-lived as the spring in Prague. As time went by, Caetano rapidly retreated from his experiment with what one Portuguese Socialist called "fascism with a human face." In retrospect, it is clear that too many misjudged Caetano's intention to carry off a successful transition to a more open and flexible system of government. He lost the opportunity to form a solid base of support for himself, which the small band of liberals in the National Assembly had been willing to provide if he had collaborated with them in a process of gradual democratization. Disillusioned, they soon resigned their seats in protest. And as a result, Caetano was constantly forced further to the right, and further into the power of those who least trusted him.

Other factors contributed to Caetano's failure to act decisively during the final months of his rule. The regime appeared to be solidly entrenched. Few inside or outside the government believed that it could be overthrown as easily as it was. The government also believed that the problem within the middle ranks had been resolved, and was preoccupied about the threat from the extreme right, by labor unrest, and by the economic situation.

By December 1973, Caetano had reluctantly rescinded the decree which had caused so much uproar within the army. Pressure from the army hierarchy first led him to exempt career officers of the rank of major and above. Then, under intensive pressure from General Costa Gomes, he agreed to reconsider the whole package, and eventually the government withdrew the decree totally. Each grudging retreat of course had the opposite result from that intended. The first retreat, which took place in August 1973, had stimulated the formation of the captain's movement, and by the

time the decree was withdrawn in December, the Armed Forces Movement had already committed itself to overthrowing the regime.

In December, to placate the irate officer corps, the government had also raised salaries. This pay raise was long overdue, but the timing was treated with contempt by the officers, as a bribe to buy them out of political action. Nevertheless, from the government's point of view, and in the light of past experience, Caetano cannot be blamed for believing that he had in some measure defused one potential source of danger. It was also public knowledge that an attempt in December by General Kaulza de Arriaga, a leading right-wing air force officer, to persuade the MFA to join him in an attempt to seize power from Caetano had failed.

Again the government misread the consequences of these events which in fact had served to strengthen the links between the MFA, Spinola, and Costa Gomes at a critical time, and helped reinforce the democratic component of the MFA, the political complexion of which until then had been extremely hazy. Yet, the government had every reason to take comfort from these developments. Given past history, the machinations of General Kaulza de Arriaga were not to be taken lightly, and the failure of the MFA to respond to his overtures was a positive sign from the government's point of view. Moreover, in March, an uprising by the Fifth Infantry Battalion at Caldas da Rainha was easily suppressed by loyalist army units, including General Spinola's old regiment, the Seventh Cavalry, and the Republican Guard. Two hundred men and officers were arrested by the DGS.

The security services were preoccupied with widespread labor unrest. This, at any rate, had been their traditional area of concern, and the military had always enjoyed a certain degree of immunity from attention by the regime's secret police. Inflation by early 1974 was running at over 30 percent, the highest rate in Europe, and labor unrest was spreading not only among industrial workers but also, for the first time, among office workers and civil servants. Caetano had been warned to expect major disruptions and possibly a strike by government employees in May, a traditional month of labor militancy and anti-regime demonstrations. He was also warned that the traditional methods of breaking labor unrest--the riot police, preventative detention, and censorship--might not work, and that it would be better to anticipate trouble by granting substantial salary increases before the storm broke. Caetano's response to this advice was to reshuffle his economic ministers. As to salary increases, this was a decision the government intended to take on the very day it was overthrown.

If Caetano fiddled, it was because this was his method. If he had failed to act decisively, it was because the whole nature of his experience and the system he headed precluded decisive action. If he underestimated the threats, it was because few believed the regime to be in mortal danger. He was trapped both by his own personality and by the very instituions he had so diligently helped to create.

The Portuguese revolution, therefore, occurred as much because of the collapse of the old political system as because of the strength of the forces of change. By the spring of 1974, the regime lacked viable

choices and had failed to adapt internally to new circumstances. Nor had it confronted the realities of its position internationally or in Africa. It is worth remembering that when the Portuguese army rebels took to the streets of Lisbon, Marcello Caetano could find no one but a handful of secret policemen holed up in their headquarters to defend him.

III. The Rise of the Left

> "You must maintain control. I am frightened by the idea of power loose in the street."
>
> Marcello Caetano to General Spinola, upon the former's surrender, April 25, 1974

Political and social mobilization. During the weeks prior to the coup, the MFA had deliberately kept away from the civilian opposition for reasons of security. The clandestine political parties were well known to be thoroughly infiltrated by the secret police.

Although no one under seventy had ever voted in anything resembling a free election under the dictatorship, local political organizations called "democratic election commissions" (CDE) did exist throughout Portugal. They were used principally (most recently in 1973) as an opportunity for criticism and debate during the regime's periodic contests for seats in the National Assembly. The electoral system itself was stacked in the regime's favor, and opposition groups regarded the whole affair as a fraud. Nevertheless, the opportunities were used to articulate a forceful critique of the dictatorship's positions. The CDE was comprised of coalitions of "anti-fascist forces," mainly middle-class liberals, Social Democrats, Catholic radicals, independent Marxists, and the Communists (PCP).

There had always been opposition to the dictatorship among civilian groups of course, although the fact was strenuously hidden by the regime's propaganda. The old republicans never accepted the corporate state and its fascist overtones, and they had formed countless platforms of dissent, none of which, however, came close to shaking the formidable apparatus of censorship, repression, and cultural uniformity that Salazar imposed. The Communist Party had been the most serious thorn, and had in consequence suffered the most severe repression.

The Portuguese Communist Party was founded in 1921.[30] Originally, the Communists had little representation among the working class, which, until the 1930s, was strongly influenced by anarcho-syndicalism. But after 1941, under the leadership of Alvaro Cunhal, the party began to develop a political base. Forced underground since the first days of the Salazar dictatorship, the long decades of clandestine existence profoundly affected the Portuguese Communists' psyche and behavior. Party organization adhered to strict Leninist lines--with small cells, tight discipline, members kept unaware of each others' identities, and decisions handed down from above. Cunhal himself spent 13 years behind bars in Portugal and another 14 years in exile in eastern Europe and Moscow. The party was particularly sensitive to developments in Prague, because its activities had been directed from Czechoslovakia since the 1940s.

After Fidel Castro, Cunhal was the first Communist leader to approve the 1968 Soviet intervention in Prague, strongly diverging thereafter from his Iberian counterpart Santiago Carrillo in Spain. Cunhal was a man of middle-class origins, who studied law in Lisbon. He joined the Party in 1931 at age 17. In 1934, he organized the federation of young Communists in the Lisbon area and in the same year attended the VI Congress of Communist Youth in Moscow. He went into clandestinity on his return to Portugal and became a member of the central committee of the Party in 1936.

In Portugal the PCP possessed a strong base in the Alentejo, the grain-producing lands south of the Tagus River--a region of great landed estates. Here the party was strongly implanted among the anticlerical, landless rural laborers. The Alentejo is a region with a long history of Communist militancy, and Cunhal knew it well. He is the author of one of the few detailed analyses of the social and economic structures of the Portuguese countryside, A questão agrária em Portugal--"The Agrarian Question in Portugal" (published in Brazil in 1968). In the constituent election after the coup, the PCP received its largest shares of the vote in the Alentejan districts of Beja, Evora, and Setúbal: 39.0 percent, 37.1 percent, and 37.8 percent respectively.

The PCP was also strong within the labor movement. After the incapacitation of Salazar in 1968 and during the early years of Marcello Caetano, liberalization of the rules governing election to positions within the corporative syndicate structure allowed Communists to take a leading role in union committees. In 1970 the Communist-influenced unions joined in a coordinating organization called Intersyndical. Prior to the coup, the Communists were strongly entrenched in the metallurgical unions and increasingly influential among lower-middle-class white-collar workers, especially the bank-workers' unions in Lisbon and Oporto.

There was a tradition of opposition, however, that coexisted uncomfortably with the Communists and gave rise in the 1960s to the Portuguese Socialist Association (ASP), and in 1973 to the Portuguese Socialist Party. This current of opinion was inspired by the leading intellectual opponents of the Salazar regime, such as the Lisbon evening daily República, the monthly journal Seara Nova, and its prominent contributors, the historian Jaime Cortesão and the philosopher António Sérgio. In the 1960s, a younger generation took up the mantle as the old guard of dissident intellectuals passed from the scene. Three men were especially prominent, Lisbon lawyers Mario Soares and Salgado Zenha, and República's editor, Raul Rego. Soares and Zenha founded the Portuguese Socialist Action in Geneva in 1964, and the organization was subsequently renamed the Portuguese Socialist Party at a congress held in Bad Munstereiffel, West Germany, in April 1973. The Portuguese Socialists affiliated with the Socialist International and developed strong ties with Social Democrats in western Europe, especially with Willy Brandt and the West German Social Democratic Party. Soares and his colleagues were also in contact with Swedish and British Socialists.[31]

Soares was the son of a politician prominent during the democratic republic that was overthrown in 1926 by the military; and thus Soares had been involved in opposition politics since childhood. He had been a

student of Alvaro Cunhal, who taught at the private school owned and directed by Soares' father. Soares at that time regarded Cunhal as one of his political mentors, and the latter in turn aided Soares' rapid rise in the Communist youth movement, of which he became a leader in the 1940s. Soares' break with the Communists came after bitter infighting within the PCP over the issue of Marshal Tito's expulsion from the international communist movement in 1948.

Soares gained international stature as legal representative for the family of General Humberto Delgado. Delgado had been the opposition candidate for the presidency in 1958 and had come very close to success. Forced to take asylum in the Brazilian Embassy after the election, he had later gone into exile in Algeria, where he organized an opposition movement. Lured to a meeting near the Portuguese-Spanish border in 1965 he was murdered under mysterious circumstances. Soares' activity in investigating this case led to his deportation to the island of São Tomé, and to his later exile. At the time of the April coup, he held a teaching post at the University of Paris, Vincennes.

The Socialists, unlike the Communists, had very little organizational base within Portugal prior to 1974. But whereas the Communist leadership in general consisted of men of the 1930s and 1940s, mostly in their sixties at the time of the Caetano regime's overthrow, the Socialists were of a younger generation, much more closely attuned to more recent developments in western Europe. Soares in particular had seen the unrest of the late 1960s in France at close hand. The Socialists had rarely suffered the privations that many of the Communist Party leadership had endured. But men like Raul Rego, Soares, and Zenha had nonetheless taken considerable risks and suffered several imprisonments for their beliefs. The strength of their dedication was something the Communists tended to disparage, and in consequence tended to underestimate.

The umbrella organization from which most of the postwar opposition political groups trace their origins was the Movement of Democratic Unity (MUD), formed in the mid-1940s. Communists and others had participated in the tightly controlled electoral campaigns that the Salazar regime had periodically permitted until opposition candidate General Delgado came so close to success in 1958, when the system was modified to protect against such near upsets in the future. After 1958, the opposition forces split, and the Socialists and Social Democrats competed in the 1969 election under their own umbrella organization, the Electoral Commission for Democratic Unity (CUED), while the Communists established an electoral front (CDE) with independents and radical Catholics led by the well-known economist Pereira de Maura. It had been for this later group that Major Melo Antunes had sought to be a candidate. In 1973, however, the Socialists and Communists came together again in the semi-legal Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP/CDE) and were so united at the time of the coup.

The personalities and views of the opposition were thus well known in 1974--especially to Major Melo Antunes, who had been largely responsible for drafting the MFA's program. Hence there was much less cause for clandestine or conspiratorial contacts between the military plotters and the opposition civilians than might appear at first sight. Once the coup succeeded, there was a ready-made group of clearly identified

individuals to whom the military could turn if it wished to form a government composed of men whose hands were clean of any involvement with the fallen regime. Even General Spinola was aware of this--he had sent a signed copy of Portugal and the Future to Mario Soares in Paris.

The program of the Armed Forces Movement which was incorporated into the institutional provisions, providing a framework and timetable for the transition, called for a long period in which a new political system was to be defined. During this time, the new political parties had to find their public, and face preelectoral struggles.[32] Constituent Assembly elections were to take place within one year after April 25, 1974. In another year a parliament and president were to be elected under terms to be drawn up by the Constituent Assembly.

Apart from the Communists, no party possessed a strong organization. In the weeks immediately after the coup, the PCP took full advantage of this organizational advantage to take over key positions, especially in the trade unions and the municipalities. The Communist-dominated union coordinating organization, Intersindical, became the basis of Portugal's new trade-union federation. In trade unions which had formerly been controlled by supporters of the old regime, Communist leaders were quickly elected to replace the old leaders. Also on the initiative of the Communists, new unions were organized for groups whose unionization had been prohibited by the old regime--most particularly public employees and farmworkers. In most of the country's municipalities, new councils were elected by public assemblies, the Communists often taking key positions or securing places for reliable allies.[33]

The coup broke the dam of pent-up labor militancy which had so concerned the Caetano regime during its last days in office. Hundreds of labor conflicts broke out throughout the country. Owners unaccustomed to worker militancy and used to calling on the security forces to prevent it, at first refused concessions, which led to a wave of strikes. The scale of popular response to the coup, the mobilization of workers, and the chanting crowds in the streets took the military by surprise.

Although the scale of popular mobilization in offices, factories, neighborhoods, universities and schools, and the countryside should not be underestimated, the extreme visibility and volubility of the left was deceptive. After April 1974, a large part of the population, intensely traditionalist and conservative, found themselves without spokesmen. Temporarily muted by the speed with which the power of the state had evaporated, the conservative rural peasantry and the Catholic community constituted a political constituency of some importance. The principal new political organizations of 1974, therefore, were not those of the left, most of which existed before the coup and had long-standing relations with one another, but the fledgling parties of the center and the right. The lack of organizational capacity by conservative groups following the authoritarian regime's sudden demise and in the face of the left's long-standing (if clandestine) organizational capacity is a phenomenon not exclusively confined to the Portuguese case. After the coup, two major parties emerged representing centrist and conservative forces, although each was constrained for many months to maintain a "left" orientation. These were the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the Center Democratic Party (CDS).

General Spinola, the provisional president, wanted to consolidate a centrist and reformist coalition that would strengthen his own authority, legitimize that authority by popular acclaim, and through the political process circumvent the residual power of the MFA. He hoped to achieve this in collaboration with the new Popular Democratic Party, which had been founded in May 1974 by the leading reformers of the early Caetano period, Francisco Sá Carneiro, Francisco Pinto Balsemão, and Magalhães Mota.[34]

In a move that surprised even the MFA at the time, however, General Spinola invited the PCP into the provisional government. He hoped that placing a Communist in the ministry of labor and bringing Cunhal into the cabinet as a minister without portfolio would moderate and restrain labor military. As it turned out, however, Spinola badly miscalculated the consequences of his invitation to the Communists. He offered what the PCP was only too willing to concede, and he gained very little from the respite in labor agitation that he hoped would follow. The PCP's strategy was to act with moderation, whatever its position in or outside the new government. The recent Chilean experience of 1973 had made the Communists wary of the military and anxious to coopt the middle class. Both factors tended to confirm the Communists' long-standing intention to direct their main attack against what they saw as the two pillars of the old regime, the great landowners and the oligarchic cartels, and to do so by forming an alliance with parts of the urban and rural middle classes. The PCP's most recent gains had been among lower-middle-class workers, especially the bank clerks, a leader of which, Avelino Gonçalves, became labor minister in the first provisional government. During the early months following the coup, the Communists urged restraint in labor disputes, often acted to end strikes, and sought to cement an alliance with the urban middle class.

The "centrist" position of the Communists, of course, had a totally different content from that of General Spinola and the PPD. The groups they supported and sought to encourage were diametrically opposed. Spinola hoped, as did many of the leading industrialists, that the change of regime might promote a rapid modernization of Portugal's economy and increase investments in new plants and methods, thereby raising Portugal's living standards to a level closer to the European norm. But "rationalization" of the economy along the lines proposed by Spinola's allies required the support of the very groups the Communists aimed to curtail: the banks, which were the linchpin of the Melo, Champalimaud, and Espírito Santo empires, and the network of industries, insurance companies, and financial holdings the oligarchy controlled.

This contradiction would not be easily unraveled without the victory of one position over the other, for they were wholly incompatible. Moreover, it was a conflict which, rather than pitting a view of the past against one of the future, pitted two views of the future against one another. Spinola's view of a modernized country, developing the kind of large-scale corporate technology and trade that had made other West European countries prosper, was as revolutionary for Portugal as was the objective of the Communists. But as opposition between Spinola and the PCP became more apparent, it produced one result that was to be crucial for subsequent events. It created the conditions for closer collaboration

between the MFA and the PCP, because it coincided with deep divergences within the armed forces between the MFA and Spinola over decolonization.

Alliances in Europe and Africa. The nature of the coup disguised for a long time the seriousness of the divergences within the new regime over African policy. But the conflict, staked out at the beginning and embodied in the MFA program on one hand and Spinola's book Portugal and the Future on the other, was at its heart a conflict between revolutionary and evolutionary change in Europe and between immediate decolonization and gradual disengagement in Africa.

The coup, after all, had been made preeminently to end the war in Africa, and the political solution for Africa that the MFA talked about signified much more than the type of autonomy within a Lusitanian federation foreseen by Spinola. As the MFA bulletin explained bluntly: "Those who benefited from the war were the same financial groups that exploited the people in the metropolis and, comfortably installed in Lisbon and Oporto or abroad, by means of a venal government obliged the Portuguese people to fight in Africa in defense of their immense profits."[35]

The conditions for collaboration and tactical alliances between the young officers of the MFA and the Communists over colonial and domestic policy was given impetus by another important circumstance. In Guiné, Mozambique, and Angola, the liberation movements had always made a careful distinction between the Portuguese people, on whom they counted for support, and the dictatorial government that was trying to crush them. PAIGC, MPLA, and FRELIMO had all feared from the first that a political revolution in Portuguese Africa could still leave them in a condition of neocolonial dependence on Lisbon and on the European economic interests to which Lisbon was tied and for which it sometimes acted as agent. The emergence of "third world" notions within the military establishment of their enemy, as well as the growing de facto alliance between the radical wing of the MFA and the Communists, were therefore watched with considerable interest by the Marxist movements in Africa, providing them with a wedge to speed up the process of decolonization and guarantee that where competing nationalist groups existed, those (such as the MPLA) which enjoyed long-time connections with the old Portuguese clandestine opposition would receive special consideration.

There existed, therefore, the basis for convergence between the PAIGC, MPLA, and FRELIMO on the one hand and the MFA on the other. This unique, if temporary, alliance between the colonial officer corps and its opponents was made possible both by the timing and special circumstances of the liberation movements' struggles and by the backwardness of Portugal so resented by the MFA officers. The alliance was bound to be temporary since, while the liberation movements had clear objectives, the MFA did not. Moreover, the liberation movements were committed of necessity to a permanent condition, national independence, while the MFA's commitment, important as it was, remained a commitment to a process which would terminate once the colonies were free. Nevertheless, temporary though it might be, the momentum which the convergence of views between former enemies brought to the internal politics of Portugal and to the timetable of decolonization in Portuguese Africa proved irresistible.

In the first year of the revolution, three crises moved Portugal decisively to the left and Portuguese Africa equally decisively toward independence: the resignation of Premier Palma Carlos on July 9, 1974 and the appointment of Colonel Vasco Gonçalves in his place; the resignation of General Spinola from the presidency on September 30, 1974 and his replacement by General Costa Gomes, who had always been a more acceptable figure to the MFA; and the crushing of the supposed counter-coup by Spinola of March 11, 1975, followed by the institutionalization in power of the MFA. During each of these crises, the shape and content of the political future in Portugal and the achievement of independence in the African colonies were intimately linked. The outcome of the struggle in one sphere would help to consolidate victory or bring defeat in the other.

In Portuguese Guiné, local peace came long before its recognition in formal settlement. The circumstances of that settlement are extremely revealing. In May 1974, Spinola's friend and Council of State member, Colonel Almeida Bruno, went to London with Foreign Minister Mario Soares to negotiate with the PAICC. When they failed to make a deal in June, a decisive shift took place. The negotiations moved out of the European orbit and shifted to the secret diplomacy carried out in Algiers by Major Melo Antunes of the MFA. (Melo Antunes replaced Soares as foreign minister in March 1975.) A settlement was finally arranged at the end of July, but only after a new cabinet had been installed with an idealistic Communist sympathizer, Brigadier General Vasco Gonçalves, as premier and after the MFA consolidated its military power in Portugal by setting up a security force, COPCON (the Operational Command for the Continent, organized July 8, 1974), which while technically responsible to the provisional president of the republic, was under the effective command of Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvaeho, who also became commander of the Lisbon military garrison.

The settlement over Guiné was a crucial blow to Spinola's power. The MFA and its leftist allies in Lisbon could make an African settlement that he could not, sustaining a momentum toward African independence that he opposed. Similar crises erupted over Mozambique in August-September 1974 and over Angola from January to March 1975. Both were complex, but in each case the settlements shored up the power of the MFA and allowed it to drive from power the moderate and conservative forces in Lisbon that wanted to hold on to Portuguese Africa or slow the pace of decolonization.

The showdown that pushed Spinola out of the presidency at the end of September highlighted the power that the PCP and MFA could exercise when acting together. On September 28, 1974, when the crisis broke, the Communist Party had moved efficiently and effectively to organize a blockade of Lisbon, thus preventing the thousands expected for a pro-Spinola demonstration from assembling. The civilian pickets and barricades had been established with the connivance and support of COPCON, which functioned as the MFA's own command structure under Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho and circumvented the traditional military hierarchy and the politically "unreliable" elements still ensconced within it. In March 1975, COPCON once again coordinated the defense of the revolution. Again, civilian vigilantes mobilized. Both occasions were used to weed out and incarcerate purported enemies, including, to be sure, major figures of the old regime and the

financial and industrial oligarchy, but also (in March 1975) several military officers who from the beginning had been leading members of the MFA.

In the face of the disparate but formidable coalition of interests favoring rapid decolonization and radical change in Portugal, Spinola's potential support was divided and increasingly demoralized. Although the informal power groups of oligarchical and financial interests which had underpinned the old regime remained intact throughout this whole period, they were divided among themselves. The General could never count on the whole-hearted support of the conservative forces in Portugal, since he was distrusted by the leading arch-conservatives for his role in the coup, and many were so shaken by the speed of change that they lacked the capacity to mobilize effective opposition to the leftward movement of politics. The urban middle class, the civil servants, and white-collar employees, who might have joined the oligarchy against the left, were themselves in this period among the most vociferous "leftists."

The "forces of order" of the old regime, apart from the secret police and the legion, still existed throughout this period. But both the Public Security Police and the National Republican Guard were severely shaken by the collapse of clear lines of authority. More important, their self-confidence had been undermined and they were worried about their future. The army, in consequence, was forced increasingly to take a hand in controlling demonstrations and intervening in the settlement of labor disputes. This process of involvement in domestic social turmoil soon radicalized the increasingly undisciplined rank-and-file, as well as the officers forced into the role of labor mediators.

But if alliances were being forged on one front during the winter of 1974-1975, alliances were disintegrating on another. Communist actions were alienating powerful elements of the Portuguese left which had previously collaborated with the Communists in the anti-fascist struggle. Most especially and dramatically, the Communists were alienating the rapidly expanding Socialists led by Mario Soares.

In January, the Communists took to the streets in massive demonstrations to support union legislation which would recognize a single union central organization and thereby effectively perpetuate Communist control over the organized working class. The MFA's Committee of Twenty endorsed the Communists' position. But the Catholic Church, breaking a long political silence, condemned the proposal for a centralized union structure and called for pluralism. The Socialists and Popular Democrats in the cabinet succeeded in amending the details of the legislation in such a manner as to guarantee free elections for local union officials and committees.

The split pointed up fundamental differences of approach and reflected divergences on the left long antedating the events in Portugal, raising again the classic debate between those in favor of a broad-based participatory and democratic route to socialism on the one hand, and those who espoused the role of a revolutionary vanguard on the other. The dispute forced both the Communists and the Socialists to re-think their tactics and restate their principles.

The public dispute between the Communists and the Socialists that broke in January was a conflict which reached beyond mere party factionalism because it paralleled, and to some extent intersected with, major divergences within the military. With the right and center effectively neutralized after March 1975, the struggle for power began in earnest within the left and inside the MFA. It was almost inevitable that this should happen.

After the March 11 putsch attempt, the MFA established a Revolutionary Council and Assembly, which acquired a confused amalgam of executive and legislative functions that paralleled and usurped those yet to be defined by the Constituent Assembly. In an ominous phrase, the MFA bulletin spoke of seeking the collaboration of the "authentically democratic political parties." The central political role in Portugal from now on was to be played by the MFA. "The Armed Forces will be the guarantor and motor of the revolutionary process," as the bulletin put it, "leading to the building of true political, economic, and social democracy." The fourth provisional government, also sworn in during March, included representatives of various political parties (PSP, PCP, MDP/CDE, PPD). But it was now the soldiers, not the politicians, who took the initiative.

On March 11-12, 1975, the MFA Assembly imposed a series of drastic measures which the previous provisional governments had shied away from. The most critical of these actions was the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies. Because of the close interlocking of the Portuguese oligarchy and its control over major sectors of the economy, the nationalization of the banks took into the hands of the state the major part of the privately owned Portuguese industry. Since the banks also owned or held mortgages on virtually every Portuguese newspaper, one additional result of the nationalization was that the state assumed financial control of much of the communications media--Lisbon's morning dailies and a group of weekly magazines and newspapers. A rare exception was the Lisbon evening daily, República, one of the few voices of criticism during the long years of the dictatorship, owned by 3,500 small shareholders and edited by Raul Rego, a leading Socialist.

At the time of the bank nationalization, the Revolutionary Council also made plain that it would soon promulgate a major expropriation, probably of estates over 500 hectares, a measure that would destroy the base of the great latifundiarios of the south. The nationalizations and the expropriation of latifundios struck at the two principal bases of the old regime and placed Portugal immediately among the most radical of European states, few of which dared touch the banks or engage in large-scale land expropriation without a clear commitment to compensation.

On April 11, 1975, the Revolutionary Council obliged the political parties to sign a pact with the MFA that guaranteed military supremacy for at least three years, relegated the provisional government to a subordinate position in the new hierarchy of power, and gave to the MFA Assembly a coequal voice with any future National Assembly in the election of a president. The political parties, if they were not to jeopardize the Constituent Assembly elections scheduled for April 25, 1975, felt they had no choice but to acquiesce.

IV. The Failure of the Revolution

"The march of the Revolution has gained a pace which the people have not the capacity to absorb."

General Costa Gomes
to the MFA Assembly, July 25, 1975

Conflicts over legitimacy: vanguards, voters, and power at the grass roots. Despite the left's apparently formidable assets in March 1975--control of the administration, unions, army, the media, and the political initiative--by the end of November 1975 the left was disunited, weakened, and on the defensive, with its power broken. Why?

The answer lies in five aspects of those turbulent months. First, the all-important alliance with the military radicals failed. The MFA leadership split into various factions, all ostensibly "on the left," but each with a different view of tactics and objectives. Simultaneously, discipline collapsed, and it did so more quickly among the "leftist" units than among the centrist or rightist units. Second, the decolonization process, which had helped cement the MFA's internal solidarity, became, after March 1975, a major irritant and divider as the situation in Angola proved increasingly intractible and as outsiders intervened there at will. Third, the economic situation in Portugal became increasingly precarious, allowing outsiders leverage which they had lacked before, and during the summer of 1975 the Western governments made it very clear to Lisbon that economic assistance would be dependent on political good behavior. Fourth, the Communists made several major blunders: they misread the balance of forces within Portugal and hence the power of their enemies; they also misunderstood the psychological impact of some of their actions, throwing potential allies into the embrace of their opponents. Fifth, the election returns of April 1975 were a startling setback for the Communists and the military radicals, demonstrating graphically that although the Portuguese desired change, they wished that change to be brought about by democratic means.

It was the elections which came first. Ironically, much of the foreign press, obsessed with the power of the Communists, dismissed the elections of 1975 as being of minor significance. They were wrong. In reality, the elections were of enormous significance, and this was well recognized once the results were in. In one of the highest turnouts ever recorded in a national election (91.7 percent), Soares' Portuguese Socialist Party took 37.9 percent of the vote; the Popular Democrats, 26.4 percent; Cunhal's Communists a mere 12.5 percent nationwide, and the PCP's sister party, the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP/CDS), a mere 4.1 percent; the conservative CDS got 7.6 percent.[36]

The election returns revealed a marked regional polarization. Communist support was almost exclusively concentrated in the south of the country, especially in the industrial towns along the south bank of the Tagus estuary opposite Lisbon, and in the Alentejo. In the north, the Popular Democrats (PPD) and the Social Democratic Center (CDS) dominated the returns. The unintended consequence of the elections was to point up the profound differences in social and economic organization between northern and southern Portugal.

The Socialists (PS) emerged as a national party, with respectable percentages in both north and south. Although they tended to be the "rightist" alternative to the Communists in the south, and the "leftist" alternative to the PPD and CDS in the north, it was in the central regions of the country and the major urban centers that the Socialists did best of all. In Lisbon, they won 46.1 percent of the vote; in Oporto, 42.15 percent; in Coimbra, 43.3 percent; and in Santarém, 42.9 percent. This reflected an important social phenomenon. The Socialists were the first choice in the more modern, open area of Portugal. In the coastal plain between the two major cities of Oporto and Lisbon, and up the river valleys to Coimbra and Santarém, their support was concentrated in regions with good communications that tended to be at least partly industrialized.

There were important similarities between the regions of PPD and PCP strength. The districts of Bragança and Vila Real in the north, like those of Beja and Evora in the south, suffered the highest rates of infant mortality. All had the highest percentage of the work force engaged in agriculture (over 70 percent). Each had a high illiteracy rate (over 40 percent). All were backward and in many respects isolated rural communities, each in its own way a highly traditional society. But in two critical respects they diverged: in religion and land ownership. These were the two fundamental issues in the struggle that was about to begin.

Thus, the coincidence between the seizure of power by the radical military and their Communist backers in March and the holding of the elections in April, with their victory for moderation, was of very great importance. The election returns demonstrated that the base of support for the revolution was narrow indeed. The returns inadvertently provided a geography for counterrevolution, a geography that the Communists' enemies inside and outside Portugal were soon to take advantage of. Newly arrived U.S. ambassador in Portugal Carlucci put the point bluntly one year later: "I think it was the election that turned the situation around."[37]

The election returns for the Constituent Assembly, and the Socialists' strong showing, provided the connection that allowed western Europe and the United States to reenter the Portuguese political scene, which they had been watching with some dismay more or less from the sidelines. The West European Social Democrats, and most especially the powerful West German party, had for some time criticized Washington's fatalistic view of the course of events in Lisbon. With the triumph of Soares and the Portuguese Socialists, their optimism was borne out. Communist leader Cunhal described the situation in his own language:

> In the Portuguese Revolution two processes have intervened, two dynamics, with completely different characteristics. On one side, the revolutionary dynamic, created by the intervention of material force--popular and military--directly transforming situations, conquering and exercising liberties, defeating and throwing out the fascists, opposing the counterrevolutionary attempts, bringing about profound social and economic transformations, attempting to create a state in service of the Revolution, and the creation of organs of power (including military organs) which will guarantee the democratic process and correspond to the revolutionary transformation.

> On the other side, the electoral process, understood as the choice by universal suffrage of the organs of power, tending to subordinate any social transformation to a previous constitutional legality, and not recognizing the intervention of the military in political life, or the creative, predominant intervention of the masses in the revolutionary process.[38]

Against the background of this divided legitimacy--that of the ballot box exemplified by the political parties, and that of the revolutionary act exemplified by the MFA--the immediate reality of the situation in the spring and summer of 1975 found central authority paralyzed, with the result that a type of popular power emerged at a local level. This in turn overly accentuated regional polarization and hardened political positions. Since popular power and the rule of local vigilantes could as easily be of the right as of the left, the resulting volatile situation had a much more immediate impact on the development of Portugal than the protracted debates in the Constituent Assembly over the new constitution or within the armed forces over which of the many roads to socialism to follow. The far left and the far right were the first to realize this, and their activities over the summer and fall of 1975 took on an importance out of all proportion to their numbers or their real support in the country.

Both the political parties and the more traditional military officers sensed the threat in these developments, especially the Communist Party and its allies, which had based their strategy in classic Leninist style on the seizure or subversion of the existing institutional structures. These institutional structures, however, inherited from the corporate, quasi-fascist dictatorship, had ceased to function in the fluid situation that followed the April 1974 coup. Cunhal, along with many of the political leaders returning from exile, seriously underestimated the degree to which the authority of institutions had collapsed in the immediate aftermath of the coup. The Communists were uncomfortable in the face of spontaneous action by the workers, and acted more often than not to curb such action when it occurred. As it turned out, in fact, the Communists, by associating themselves with the institutional structures and by attempting in many cases to prop them up, were badly mauled in the process. Between March and November 1975, the PCP behaved and talked very much like the dictatorial regime overthrown in 1974, and to do so was a critical error with a people emerging from 50 years of dictatorship.

As a result, since the PCP had positioned itself disadvantageously, the initiative in political terms was often taken by the radical left, a complex and often bitterly divided collection of small groups that included several Marxist-Leninist parties, Maoists, revolutionary leftists in all but name, and advocates of popular power. These groups, marginal to the political process in most European situations, became highly significant in Portugal, often because they tended to reflect what was happening at local or neighborhood levels (especially in the larger urban centers) better than the more formal and traditional political parties.

The government used its influence to foster radical change, but the initiative more often than not came from various groups who acted unilaterally to impose solutions. The most significant conflicts occurred in the countryside. Agrarian problems became the dominant political issue.

In the rural areas, especially in the Alentejo, rural workers were taking the law into their own hands. By March 1975, many of the landowners in this region had already fled the country, and some were in jail. The landowners of the south had always lived in fear of social revolution, and well before land-reform measures had been enacted in Lisbon landless rural workers had moved onto several estates and claimed the land for themselves. Workers' committees also moved into place in the nationalized industries, and the exodus of the oligarchs was joined by many middle-management personnel seeking a more secure future abroad, especially in Brazil. In Beja, Evora, and Portalegre, the three principal Alentejan districts, 22,000 hectares were occupied prior to the April 1975 election. In May, another 7,000 hectares were occupied; in August and September, 281,000 hectares; in October and November, over 550,000 hectares. The government did not, could not, resist these occupations. The legal framework for expropriation and nationalization was not established by decree-law until 29-30 July 1975. A decree-law of September 27 permitted government funds to be used to pay salaries to workers who occupied lands until "New Units of Cultivation" were established which would in theory become self-financing once the crops were brought in.[39]

The impact of the land seizures provoked a strong reaction in northern and central Portugal, where land-ownership was widespread and many industrial workers themselves owned land or had access to small plots. The landless rural workers in the Alentejo were quickly organized by the Communists (and other leftist groups) into collective and cooperative farms throughout the region, thus preventing the breakup of old estates. But in northern and central Portugal the landowners, most of them proprietors of small and medium-sized farms, were also mobilizing into the Portuguese Confederation of Farmers (CAP). Small businessmen were likewise joining the Portuguese Confederation of Industrialists (CIP) in droves. The Church was becoming increasingly outspoken, and priests in countless villages throughout the interior were ending their sermons with the prayer: "God save us from the Communists," to which their anxious congregations responded with fervent "Amens."

One factor which became increasingly clear as these rural mobilizations and counter-mobilizations took place was that peasant radicalism in Portugal had geographical and social limits, and no less significant was the fact that the non-revolutionary peasantry was more numerous than the revolutionary. Rural radicalism was a vital ingredient in the move to the left, but it was limited to certain regions and it engendered counter-revolutionary pressures from the rest of the rural population. By the summer of 1975, therefore, solid social movements had come into existence which provided angry constituencies for the political divisions so graphically revealed by the April elections.

The economic and political crisis and the role of outsiders. The failure to perceive the split that was occurring between the attitudes of the radical political and military leaders in Lisbon and the mood of the country was aggravated by the peculiar way in which the African situation and the collapse of the economy affected the chronology of the revolution. The pressures emanating from Africa were undoubtedly the most important in the short run, but economic issues dominated the revolution's second stage, which began as disengagement from Africa was completed.

The fact that the economic crisis was postponed so long resulted from Salazar's last gift to Portugal: the large gold and foreign-currency reserves he had so avidly accumulated. These reserves, which stood at $2.8 billion at the end of 1973 ($1.2 billion in gold), provided a cushion that helped the revolution postpone the consequences of its actions. At least they allowed a series of far-reaching and radical transformations to be promulgated without much apparent pain to the population at large. In the first year after the coup, in fact, workers' real purchasing power increased dramatically, stimulating a sharp rise in sales of consumer goods.

The reserves helped to obscure the fact that changes were occurring that would in time have to be paid for, and paid for not merely by the revolution's immediate victims: conservative military officers, expropriated landowners, great industrialists, and banking magnates. High degrees of sacrifice, austerity, and disciplined collective action were unavoidable if a socialist revolution was to be made to work. Whether the Portuguese people, or a sufficiently large number of them, would be prepared for that route was a question that had been avoided. By the spring of 1975, it was apparent that the reserves could no longer provide the luxury of a revolution without tears, and that Portugal had a major economic crisis in the making. With huge and accumulating trade and balance-of-payments deficits, Portugal became vulnerable to foreign pressure and increasingly dependent on foreign aid, giving back to the Western powers--West Germany and the United States in particular--the initiative which they had lost in April 1974.[40]

The tactical problems facing the PCP leadership in the spring and summer of 1975 were considerable to be sure. They did confront a new situation after March, one which to every appearance had "revolutionary potential." Their policies had until that moment been based on defeating the great landowners and the monopolists. But by mid-1975 both of these "enemies" had been put to flight. In the Alentejo, some 1.2 million hectares had been expropriated, often at the initiative of the workers themselves, sometimes by default, as workers carried on in the place of absentee owners. In any event, land seizure occurred on a massive scale and with minimal resistance. The nationalizations of industry likewise took place with ease, and again the PCP followed as much as initiated these moves. Now, with the power of the monopolies and latifundiarios destroyed, the editors of Cunhal's 1974 book _For a Democratic and National Revolution_, in revising the work in July 1975 suggested that "the present historical stage of the revolution seems to be more correctly defined as a superior stage [than the title of Cunhal's book implied], that of socialist revolution."[41]

The difficulty with this "new stage" was that it inevitably showed up the ambivalent attitude of the Communists toward their would-be allies, the small and medium-sized farmers of the center and north of Portugal and the small shopkeepers and property owners in the towns. Indeed, Cunhal had already made it clear that "the allies of the proletariat for the socialist revolution are not the same as those for the democratic and national revolution. In the first the proletariat carried out the fundamental attack on the monopolies and latifundiarios allied with the part of the bourgeoisie (the _petit bourgeoisie_ and parts of the middle class)

interested in the antimonopolistic fight." "The socialist revolution," he continued, "is directed against the bourgeoisie in its totality and for this reason, some of the allies of the proletariat in the first stage (sectors of the urban middle class, sectors of the rural peasantry, and some elements of the petit bourgeoisie) cease to be allies during the socialist revolution."[42] Cunhal was nothing if not blunt.

The would-be victims, however, had a keen sense of their vulnerability. The land seizures in the south, and some highly publicized seizures elsewhere in the country, had thoroughly alarmed the peasantry and scared them into mutual collaboration. Indeed, the owners of small and medium property proved much more formidable opponents than had the great landowners and industrialists. Cunhal himself was to note a year later that there had been "without doubt deficiencies and errors" in the Party's activities over these months, preeminently in "underestimating the importance of these classes." He spoke by then from bitter experience, for it was precisely the small landowners who mobilized in August 1975 to burn and sack at least 49 of the Party's offices in central and northern Portugal, virtually expelling the Party from these regions and making it clear more than once that it was in their power to blockade and cut Lisbon off from the whole north and center of the country if they chose to do so.

The psychological errors committed by the Communists only hastened the polarization along fundamental social and economic lines. The attack on the newspaper República, which the Communists may not have initiated but which they supported, became an international cause celebre, and the attempt to monopolize the mass media proved to be entirely counterproductive for the Communists. The attack and takeover of the Catholic Church's radio station in Lisbon also had major negative repercussions, especially among the highly religious peasantry of the north. And as if to confirm the image of Stalinist high-handedness, Cunhal gave his famous interview to Oriana Falacci. "If you think the Socialist party with its 40 percent and the Popular Democrats with its 27 percent constitutes the majority," he said, "you're the victim of a misunderstanding. . . . I'm telling you the elections have nothing or very little to do with the dynamics of a revolution. . . . I promise you there will be no parliament in Portugal."[43]

The PCP also overestimated the tenacity of its friends and underestimated that of its enemies. In the civilian sphere, the Socialists showed a much greater capacity to mobilize, and even to take to the streets, than the Communists had anticipated, and Mario Soares was tougher than even his friends expected. On July 11, the Socialists withdrew from the government, followed by the PPD ministers on July 17. On July 13, over 10,000 Catholics had demonstrated in Aveiro against the takeover of Radio Renascença, and at Rio Maior, the same day, 200 angry farmers and Catholics destroyed the headquarters of the Communist Party. It was by now apparent that a formidable popular coalition was forming against the fragmented left.

The Communists' alliance with the military radicals was already badly strained. The Communists, as Cunhal recognized later, "badly evaluated the situation in the armed forces and were over-optimistic as to the outcome of the internal conflicts within the military." The group associated with the prime minister, Colonel Vasco Gonçalves, became increasingly

isolated as the summer wore on, and the initiative within the military passed to the faction with the MFA associated with Major Melo Antunes. Alarmed by the growing estrangement between the country as a whole and Lisbon, Melo Antunes' group increasingly objected to the vanguard role usurped by the Gonçalvists, and believed that a broader base of social support than that provided by the PCP was essential if the MFA was not to be placed in opposition to the majority of the population. Meanwhile, the influence of the extreme left was growing within the command structure of COPCON and in several of the key regiments in the Lisbon area, especially the light artillery and the military police. But the power of the populists was undermined by the indiscipline that populism brought with it. COPCON was no more than a coordinating agency, and the growth of political passions at unit level tended to undermine its effectiveness, so that the troops under its nominal command disaggregated into their component parts. The most radical units tended to become the most chaotic, and a Communist attempt to subvert the more disciplined units, especially the commandos, failed miserably when the tough and popular commando colonel won over his troops in the consequent showdown. In fact it was a fourth group in the army, little noticed at the time, which was most active behind the scenes as the summer drew to a close. Known at times as the "operationals," this fourth group was composed of officers who reflected the professional interests of the officer corps, a current of which, of course, had been a powerful element in the original captains' movement. A leading figure in this group was Colonel Ramalho Eanes, the future president of Portugal.[44]

There were several factors beyond the PCP's control which help explain the Communists' behavior in this critical period. From a rump clandestine organization with most of its leadership living abroad, the Party had expanded by the summer of 1975 to over 100,000 members. Few of these newcomers had received the ideological indoctrination or long experience within Party organizations which would have made them a reliable and disciplined force. Many of the rank and file were to the left of the party leadership, and tensions emerged between "new" and "old" Communists. The new Communists were also, according to Cunhal's own retrospective criticism, highly sectarian, intolerant, and indiscreet. The rapidly moving political situation in Portugal thus caught the PCP in a state of mutation, no longer the sleek clandestine organization it had been, but not yet a mass party.[45]

Second, the large and noisy factions of the far left continued to make their presence felt during these months, and events--as with the nationalization of the banks, the land seizures, and the takeovers of República and the Lisbon Catholic radio station--often moved faster under grass-roots pressure than the central committee of the PCP might have wished. Cunhal was right in believing that the staying power of the far-left factions was limited; yet the PCP was always obliged during this period to treat the criticism of the far left seriously and to counter the far left's impact among industrial workers and the rural laborers.

Towards the end of August and during the first week in September, the PCP suffered two serious setbacks. In the civilian sphere, a powerful coalition had formed around Mario Soares and the Socialists. Soares had led his party out of the fourth provisional government in July, and

was followed by the PPD. By August, the Socialists were providing cover for large and at times violent popular demonstrations against the rump of Communists and fellow-travelers appointed by Vasco Gonçalves to the fifth provisional government. In the military sphere, an equally formidable coalition had formed around Major Melo Antunes and his so-called "Group of Nine." The "Nine" were officers who had all been important members of the MFA from the beginning and included the military commanders in the center and south of Portugal. The units in the north, commanded by an officer close to Gonçalves, were refusing to obey him and had placed themselves at the disposition of the central military region.

The Communists' ally, Vasco Gonçalves, was forced out of office on August 29. The PCP in fact had already abandoned him.[46] A sixth provisional government was established which brought back the Socialists, the Popular Democrats, and many of the original members of the MFA who, led by Melo Antunes and Captain Vasco Lourenço, had conducted the struggle with Gonçalves over the summer. But the new situation was a critical one. The crisis had split the MFA wide open. The army had withdrawn its delegates from the MFA Assembly since the army believed the Assembly to be too heavily influenced by the Communists, and throughout the country the armed forces themselves had fragmented to such an extent that almost every unit found it necessary to define itself politically.[47]

The specter of civil strife became real. The removal of the Communist Party from government power and the gradual purge of its militants and sympathizers, which began throughout the armed forces, placed the PCP squarely in the opposition for the first time since the April 1974 coup. Faced with this situation, the Communists chose to ally themselves with the radical left in a United Revolutionary Front (FUR). The Communist Party's formidable organizational capacity added to the armed capability of the military units influenced by the radical left, especially the military police and the Lisbon light artillery regiment, posing an immediate and serious threat to the new government. Within the government, the moderate left was thus faced with the alternatives of moving against the radical left and seeking to disarm it or running the risk of being overthrown by it. The radical left saw the moderate left's reaction as an immediate threat to its own position, and believed that the longer it waited the more vulnerable it would become. The radical left had every incentive to act sooner rather than later, especially as the government had attempted to establish an elite military intervention force (AMI) loyal to it, threatening thereby to circumvent the remnants of the COPCON security force under Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho.

The demands which "internationalist" solidarity placed on the Portuguese Communists may also explain the behavior of the PCP in this period. It is impossible here to speak with certainty. But there can be no doubt now that as early as August 1975 Cunhal was privately urging caution on the central committee of the PCP. Yet in October, he led the PCP into its reckless front with the previously despised far left factionalists, an action which further alienated many Portuguese and helped consolidate a very broad-based coalition of forces against the Communists. The PCP, however, has never hidden its belief that the Soviet Union is, to use Cunhal's word, the "sun" of the Communist movement. And it is at least worth noting that the behavior of the PCP between August and November 1975

provided a very convenient smokescreen which did much to cover the beginning of large-scale Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola. The Communists may also have perpetuated the struggle to secure their base in the Alentejo, since the great expansion in land seizures occurred in the fall of 1975 after the Communists had lost the power struggle at the center with the ouster of Gonçalves. The Communists, of course, abandoned their new "allies" on the far left when the confrontation occurred in November.[48]

The West moved rapidly to shore up the sixth government. The U.S. government and the European Economic Community granted Portugal $272 million in emergency aid in early October 1975, following the ouster of Gonçalves. Both grants were openly described as political support for the moderate Socialists who had gained the initiative within the MFA and the government. The United States also pledged on October 14 to double its refugee airlift from Angola.

The Associated Press reported on September 25 that the CIA had sent between $2 million and $10 million per month to the Portuguese Socialists since June. The West German Social Democrats had also contributed several million dollars to the Soares party. Support from the Soviet Union to the PCP was placed at $45 million since the April coup, although British Prime Minister Harold Wilson claimed on September 5, 1975 that Moscow had spent $100 million on the PCP.[49]

The center and the democratic right acted with great skill and restraint during these months, far beyond what the Communists might have expected considering the past and continuing high-jinks of the now-exiled General Spinola. As far as one can tell, the anti-Communist military in Portugal was scrupulous in keeping a distance between themselves and those nostalgic for a return to the old regime. Moreover, on several occasions when large-scale violence might have discredited and split the anti-Communist alliance now forming between Socialists, non-Communist leftists, moderates in the military, and civilian and Church leaders in central and northern Portugal, caution and restraint prevailed. The most dangerous moment perhaps had occurred when large numbers of Alentejan workers beseiged the Constituent Assembly and members of the government in the National Assembly Building in Lisbon. The commandos wanted to go in and clear out the crowd. But they were held back by then-President General Costa Gomes, who, despite his own very equivocal behavior during this period, was not prepared to see Portugal plunged into civil war. The caution and the defensive strategy of the non-Communist military paid off when officerless radical soldiers in the paratroop corps led the "left" uprising which provided the excuse for the anti-Communist alliance under the command of Colonel Eanes to crush them decisively on November 25, 1975.

Finally, it must be noted that the confused situation in the country allowed for effective action by agents provocateurs. Very little of a reliable nature has yet appeared covering this aspect of the Portuguese situation, but there can be little doubt that foreign intelligence operatives from the NATO countries were very active in Portugal between June and November 1975. The sudden emergence (and just as sudden disappearance) of a "revolutionary" movement (SUV) within the ranks during this period, for instance, is remarkably similar in its tone and impact to the sergeants' "movement" in Brazil in 1964, which helped precipitate the coup of that year

by conservative generals and politicans. In Portugal, as might have been anticipated, this development had a similar sobering effect on the Portuguese officer corps--even the leftists within it. It is perhaps only accidental that the two leading officials in the U.S. Embassy at this time, Ambassador Carlucci and Deputy Chief of Mission Herbert Okum, were both "old Brazil hands." The Communist flirtation with the rank and file during the time they were associated with the Revolutionary Front, and growing chaos and indiscipline among soldiers, sailors, and airmen, also helped to cement the officer corps back together again.

In any event, it was the PCP's isolation in the country, together with the isolation of the Gonçalvists within the military, which made possible the formation of a temporary alliance of anti-Communist forces after August 1975. During the November 25, 1975 showdown when officerless paratroopers had risen in a leftist putsch attempt, this alliance delivered the decisive coup de grace to the dream of "socialist revolution" so avidly espoused a few months before by Alvaro Cunhal and his allies.

V. Constitutional Government

> "Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm swiftly from success to success; their dramatic affects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants, ecstasy is the everyday spirit, but they are short-lived; soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crapulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of the storm-and-stress period."
>
> Karl Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

The institutional and political base of Portuguese democracy. Alistaire Horne in his brilliant book on the bitter struggles of French decolonization in North Africa, A Savage War of Peace, sees two classic failures of Western comprehension demonstrated in the experience of the Algerian war. The first was the West's failure to even comprehend the aspirations of the Third World. The second, he writes, was "the lesson of the sad, repeated failure of the moderates, or a 'third force,' to compete against opposing extremes." This lesson, Horne continues, is one of constant relevance to the contemporary scene, whether it be in Northern Ireland, South Africa, or Latin America. "As in 1793 or 1917, in modern revolutions it is the Montague that triumphs over the Gironde."

The most curious fact about Portugal is that despite Alvaro Cunhal, despite the "Third Worldism" of the MFA radicals, despite generations of repression, and despite the machinations of the far right, it was the moderates who won. By 1976, Portugal emerged with a pluralistic system of government not entirely dissimilar from the western European mainstream. The exercise of democratic responsibilities, however, was not to be an easy task, and part of the reason was precisely because of the manner in which moderation had prevailed.

Part of the problem lay in the nature of the constitutional settlement itself. Throughout the whole period of political turmoil, social upheaval, and military factionalism, the constituent assembly had been at work writing an extraordinarily long and complicated document. The

assembly, reflecting as it did in composition the electoral returns of April 1975, existed for much of its lifetime within a political climate in which history seemed to have passed it by. Under the terms of the agreement forced upon the political parties prior to the 1975 election, the outline of the constitutional settlement had been set. In particular, that agreement had demoted any future parliament to a role coequal with the assembly of the MFA. Both assemblies were to be jointly responsible for the indirect election of the president of the republic. The majority of the members of the constituent assembly--the deputies of the Socialist Party, of the PPD, and the CDS--therefore spent most of their energies defending what civil liberties they could within the overall conditions established by the MFA.

After November 25, 1975, of course, the guidelines for the constitution changed dramatically, and the pact between the MFA and the parties was drastically revised. The most significant change, embodied in the new agreement between the MFA and the parties (February 1976), was that the election of the president was to be by universal suffrage and secret ballot and the MFA assembly disappeared completely from the institutional structure. The constitution of 1976 was nevertheless a very curious hybrid. In rhetoric it was, as the left liked to claim, a "very advanced" document. It explicitly committed Portugal to a "transition to socialism" and a collectivization of the means of production. The nationalization and land expropriations were declared to be irreversible. The military retained an important role because the Council of the Revolution was not disbanded in 1976 but became in effect an advisory organ of the presidency. In addition, the Council acquired the very significant power to judge the constitutionality of acts by the National Assembly. Constitutional revision was made very difficult--any revisions being precluded before 1981, and then changes being possible only by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. The constitution of 1976 was thus a settlement with a built-in diffusion of power. The Council of the Revolution was intended to guarantee the progressive intent of the MFA's action in overthrowing the old regime in April 1974. The government, on the other hand, was based on the political parties in the Assembly, while the president of the republic held extensive powers, emphasized by the fact that he was elected by direct popular vote in considerable autonomy from the political parties.

The democratic regime inaugurated by the 1976 constitution, moreover, had two distinct legacies which strongly affected the attitudes of those who had to work within its rules--one legacy came from the reaction against half a century of right-wing dictatorship, but no less important was the legacy which came from the reaction against a traumatic encounter with the authoritarian left. The politicians of the new regime, especially the Democratic Socialists, Centrists, and Christian Democrats, therefore, had as clear a view of the threat to them represented by the Communists as they did of the threat from the right.

One consequence of this dual heritage was to make the formation of parliamentary alliances an extremely complicated affair, since one possible majority--a coalition of the left, for example, between the Communists and the Socialists--was completely out of the question. Yet a coalition between the Socialists and the right was not easy because, although the Church and the conservatives had supported the Socialists as a bulwark

against communism, the Socialists remained secular republicans who supported many social issues which the Church and conservatives opposed.

The election for Assembly of the Republic on April 25, 1976, moreover, revealed a remarkable stability of voting patterns--remarkable because the context within which the elections were held had totally changed.[50] In April 1975, the radical military leadership closely allied to the PCP was in the ascendancy. In April 1976, the radical left had been deposed and the colonels who had defeated them on November 25 held the reins of power. The army, which in 1975 talked of itself as "a revolutionary vanguard" and a "movement of national liberation," by 1976 praised "hierarchy" and "discipline."

Despite this dramatic reversal of circumstances, the Socialist Party again gained a clear plurality in 1976 and established itself as the key element in any political equation. The election returns, however, made the formation of a viable government majority in the National Assembly extremely difficult. No general coalition could function long without the Socialists. Neither could the parties of the center and the right, the Popular Democrats (with 24 percent of the vote) and the Social Democratic Center (with 16 percent), form a majority of the right. Nor could the PCP, which increased its vote (from 12 to 15 percent), join a majority coalition with the strongly anti-Communist Popular Democrats and Social Democratic Center against the Socialists, although a tactical alliance on individual issues was not impossible.

The two alternatives to a minority Socialist government--a coalition to the left with the PCP, or a coalition to the right with the Popular Democrats, both viable majorities in the Assembly--presented major domestic and international complications. An alliance with the PCP, quite apart from its intrinsic domestic impossibility, was strenuously opposed by Washington and the West Germans, whose economic support for the floundering economy was increasingly essential. A coalition with the Popular Democrats, who were long-time supporters of a liberal capitalist solution to Portugal's economic problems and a party opposed to the nationalizations and land reform, would risk confrontation with organized labor and the Communist-dominated rural areas of the south. Moreover, Mario Soares, the leader of the Socialists, and Sa Carneiro, leader of the PPD (now renamed the Social Democratic Party (PSD)), strongly disliked and distrusted each other. In the face of these constraints, the Socialists decided to go it alone, and a first constitutional government was formed under Soares' leadership. In June 1976, General Ramalho Eanes, the military mastermind of the November 25 countercoup, was elected president of the republic by an overwhelming majority. President Eanes' first task was to reestablish military discipline and bring about an orderly retrenchment and modernization of the armed forces as a whole. The task of the Socialist minority government was to make parliamentary democracy work, and their time to do so was short.

A further constraint which encompassed the new democracy lay in Portugal's geopolitical setting, something made very clear by the outcome of the political and social struggles of 1975. The geographical and social balance in Portugal which had favored the anti-Communist alliance in 1975 might have mattered less had the Red Army been at Portugal's borders. As it was,

Portugal was a member of NATO, and deeply embedded in the Western economic and strategic framework. Yet, whoever found the new Portugal within its sphere of influence would also find that supporting Portugal would be an expensive proposition. With the African territories gone, Portugal had lost economic advantages which, while not large in overall terms, were nevertheless highly important to those sectors of the economy which had depended on colonial markets, raw materials, and remittances. In addition, as a result of the return of Portuguese settlers from Angola and Mozambique, Portugal's population had increased by almost 10 percent, placing increasing burdens on government expenditures.

The most critical area of dispute remained the rural crisis. In the south, chaotic conditions continued in the wake of the seizures of large estates by landless workers, although the Communists rapidly asserted their control through rural unions, and collective units were established with Communist technical and organizational assistance. Practical problems abounded, however, which required government action. There was great need for irrigation, the organization of distribution, for fertilizers, technical assistance, the planning for improved crop yields, and the replacement of lost breeding stock. The Socialists were understandably none too anxious to help the communist collectives succeed. Yet the Alentejo was Portugal's breadbasket and Portugal was a chronic importer of essential foodstuffs. In the center and the north of the country, the small landowners remained terrified that the expropriations which had taken place in the south would continue. These small and medium proprietors formed the backbone of the anti-Communist riots in the summer of 1975. But some reforms are essential in the north and center of Portugal. The average farm holding in the north is only 2 hectares, and in the center, 3.5 hectares. Many retornados, as the Portuguese settlers who had fled Angola and Mozambique were called, settled in the north and center of Portugal. Their absorption proved easier than many had expected, but the reason they could be reintegrated so effortlessly was due to the fact that they tended to fill in the hollow in the demographic profile caused by mass emigration during the decades prior to the coup d'etat of 1974. With economic recession continuing in the major European economies and western Europe no longer absorbing Portuguese immigrants, most of whom came from these northern regions, dangerous population pressure threatened to eventually build up.

The modern industrial sector developed in the 1960s was based on oil, petrochemicals, and motor-vehicle assembly plants (with U.S., West European, and Japanese ownership). In large part, its economic viability had been predicated on an expanding and prosperous middle-class consumer. The new enterprises were buffeted by the inflation in oil prices and the changed social conditions in Portugal. With increasing food imports and unfavorable conditions for Portuguese exports, Portugal's balance-of-payments deficits reached huge proportions in 1976, forcing recourse to the IMF; and in consequence, because Portugal desperately needed foreign loans, Portuguese economic policy came under strict international supervision.[51]

By 1978, the Socialists' attempt to go it alone as a minority government, seeking parliamentary support on individual issues from both left and right, collapsed when the Socialist government's IMF-inspired austerity package failed to obtain sufficient support in parliament. The second

constitutional government, a coalition between the Socialists and the conservative CDS party, fell apart over the issue of land reform.[52] The failure of the political parties to agree on a viable parliamentary majority to back a party government enhanced the role of General Eanes, the president. As a consequence, Eanes turned away from the political parties and twice formed governments that were led by technocrats; both, however, proved incapable of attracting sufficient parlimentary support. The president then was forced to install a caretaker government and to call elections for December 2, 1979, the results of which gave a small parliamentary majority to the Democratic Alliance--a coalition of the Social Democratic Party (led by Francisco Sá Carneiro), the CDS (led by Freitas do Amaral), the small Popular Monarchist Party, and the "Reformers," a group of former Socialist ministers.

The heavy losers in the 1979 parliamentary elections were the Socialists and Mario Soares. The Socialists, who had received 37.9 percent of the votes in 1975 and 35.0 percent in 1976, now could muster only 24.6 percent at the end of 1979. In the municipal elections, held on December 16, 1979, the Socialist defeat was even greater, and the party lost control of Portugal's two principal cities, Lisbon and Oporto.

During the 1976-1978 period, despite the experiences of 1975, the Communist Party retained a strong hold on its faithful. In the December 1979 elections the Communists, in a coalition with the MDP, took 19 percent of the votes--improving their position not only in their traditional bastions but also receiving 10 percent of the vote in such places as Braga, one of the centers of the anti-Communist movement in 1975. Short-term Communist defeat in 1975, therefore, did not adversely affect a longer-term consolidation of Communist strength at the grass roots. Short-term Socialist victory, on the other hand, was followed by a longer-term decline. There are several reasons for this reversal.

While the Communists enjoyed the luxury of opposition in the years 1976-1979, the Socialist governments were obliged to take stringent economic measures, causing a deterioration of workers' purchasing power that was without parallel in recent economic history, except in Chile under Pinochet. The Socialists had little choice in the face of chronic balance-of-payment deficits and the IMF's insistence that Portugal--if it was to receive the substantial foreign loans needed to prevent the country's bankruptcy--had to implement stringent austerity measures.

After 1976, therefore, the Portuguese Socialists found themselves in the impossible position of representing, and being supported by, the very international political and economic interests which would inevitably insist on policies in Portugal which were doomed to undermine the Socialists' political base. The Socialists indeed paid a heavy price in popular support for the economic measures they were obliged to patronize. The political beneficiaries were the Communists to their left and the Social Democrats to their right.

Some of the blame for the Socialists' failure to consolidate their hold on the center of the political spectrum rests on their own shoulders. Socialists in government did not display great competence. Soares was a poor administrator, and the party functioned more as an employment exchange

for choice jobs in the public administration. Most important, the party was never able to resolve its deep internal divisions over ideology and tactics. The Communists used the period of Socialist preeminence to purge opportunists and establish a strong organization. In 1979, the party claimed 164,000 militants. The Communists' union organization expanded its influence. Communist cooperatives and collective farms absorbed many unemployed rural workers. The Communist parliamentary group acted effectively, and Communist municipal officials proved efficient and honest. Consciously imitating the Italian precedent, the PCP hoped to turn Evora, the major city of the Alentejo, into a "Portuguese Bologna." The Communists' objectives shifted, therefore, from a flirtation with an attempt to seize hegemony in the nation to the successful establishment of their hegemony on the left.

The political groupings to the right also gained support as the Socialists lost popularity. The Democratic Alliance in the October 1980 general election increased its parliamentary majority. And the Alliance staked out a clear position that opposed the cooperative and collective farms which had replaced the latifundia in the south, condemned the nationalizations and the constitution of 1976, and criticized in effect all the so-called "conquests of the Revolution" which the Communists had claimed as their own.

Social peace and political paralysis. Socialist preeminence had rested on an enforced and uneasy compromise between two powerful, antagonistic, and regionally defined social and political movements. The Socialists had taken the lead in the anti-Communist counteroffensive in the summer of 1975, but the commitment of many of their supporters to the party's principles was tenuous at best. The Socialists, in fact, were much less scrupulous than were the Democratic Socialists within the military about accepting rightist support. Once the balance of power had changed after the November 1975 countercoup, it was inevitable that in time many who had supported the Socialists or the military Democratic Socialists in the anti-Communist and anti-Gonçalvist struggle of 1975 would find their way back to more congenial surroundings.

The essence of the Portuguese dilemma in the late 1970s, in fact, grew out of the unresolved tension which resulted from the ambiguous outcome of the struggles of 1975. The break with the past after 1974 was profound. But the Portuguese revolution was half-finished. Its protagonists became isolated from the majority of the population and fell out among themselves--and as they squabbled, the tide turned. The counterrevolution was only partly successful. The compromise which resulted was thus based on two contradictory views of social and political organizations each rooted in their own powerful but polarized social bases. Both coexisted within the same system between 1970 and 1980 only because they possessed neither the power to overthrow it nor the desire to face the bloody consequences of the attempt to seize supremacy, although under changed circumstances the forces of the right might be just as tempted to make the attempt as the Communists were in 1975. The political system of Portugal which emerged after 1976, therefore, is based on a truce, a truce which muted but did not resolve the hostilities.

The settlement embodied in the 1976 constitution is thus paradoxically both remarkably stable and extremely fragile. The contradictions beneath the compromise, however, are part of the explanation for the inability of the constitutional governments to act effectively or to resolve the structural economic problems which Portugal must solve. The Socialist governments as well as the later governments led by technocrats found it difficult to implement measures that threatened the unspoken demarcation upon which social peace was based. But it also explains the frustration of the Democratic Alliance, their desire to scrap the constitution of 1976, and the dangerous social and political consequences of attempts to undo the real social changes which occurred in 1974 and 1975.

Despite the formidable transformations set in motion by April 25, 1974, however, much in Portugal did not change. The social composition of the new political class differs very little from that of the old regime. The bureaucracy remains in place, merely expanding to accommodate a new political clientele superimposed over it, rather than being modernized by the infusion of new people and ideas. Workers whose purchasing power was temporarily increased after 1974 might have marched in demonstrations and chanted slogans of socialist revolution, but they spent their money on the clothes, appliances, and artifacts of West European consumer societies whose standard of living they aspired to. The white-collar workers in particular, who had been among the most vociferous "leftists" in 1975, moved quickly to the right as economic conditions worsened. In behavior and psychology, it is not yet clear how much really changed in Portugal, beyond the traumatic recognition, as revolutionary optimism evaporated, of the resilient power and divisiveness of class, regional, and personal antagonisms and jealousy.

Yet, to blame all of Portugal's problems as it enters the 1980s on the so-called "excesses" of the revolution is to risk dealing with symptoms and not causes, and to encourage a nostaglia for the past which is misplaced and dangerous. The economic dilemma, in fact, is much like that which afflicts the political system established in 1976--it is that Portugal is in many ways straddling the divide between the consequences of a capitalist transformation that was only partly completed, and a socialist revolution that had no more than begun, suffering the disadvantages of both and the benefits of neither.

Land and enterprises remain expropriated and nationalized under the constitutional regime established in 1976. Many of those who lost much of their patrimony, therefore, remain bitter and unsatisfied, and this in turn influences the attitudes of the Portuguese and international business, financial, and entrepreneurial communities toward post-revolutionary Portugal. It is ironic that after 1976 it was precisely these groups to whom Portugal, led by the Socialist Party, was forced to appeal for investment and innovation, in order to promote new economic growth. It is no less ironic that it is the two principal areas from which the oligarchy was expelled--the modern industrialized enterprises and the grain-producing plateau of the south--on which Portugal most depends for the increased productivity in both industry and agriculture needed to bring Portugal's payments deficits into balance and to prepare Portugal for the harsh competition which entrance into the European Economic Community will cause.

The revolution has had other paradoxical consequences. The nationalizations, for instance, have important implications for Portugal's ability to bargain effectively in the international arena. By taking so vast a sector of Portuguese industrial enterprise into the hands of the state, and by simultaneously allowing foreign enterprise to remain inviolate, the result has been that the nationalization of nationally-owned enterprises has tended to inadvertently promote a denationalization of the economy as a whole. Given the political and economic trajectory of Portugal since the end of 1975, it is perhaps inevitable that this occurred. The state, because of paralysis and the failure to rectify the problem of chronic deficits in the balance of payments, has been in no position to argue against the predispositions of the international financial community, which is innately distrustful of nationalizations in any case. The preference of outsiders to place their investments in private and foreign-affiliated businesses, combined with the state's lack of capacity to effectively manage nationalized enterprises, and compounded by the virtual abandonment of control over economic policy-making to IMF dictation, all served to confirm this pattern.

This interplay of dependency and nationalism is a recurrent problem of small nations forced to live with overpowering neighbors, and Portugal has always faced the difficulty of balancing the need for external support against the desire for national independence. Yet, when this economic constraint is paralleled by political linkages, there is a potential danger to those who would place too great a reliance on outside support for a fragile political system, since they risk abandoning the potent claims of nationalist sentiment to the forces of obscurantism and reaction. The historical record, however, does not offer much support for the hope of many well-meaning economists and foreign bankers that denationalization of enterprises and the working of the so-called free market will dynamize Portuguese business, either.

The 1980s will see Portugal's accession to the European Economic Community, which is almost certain to provoke major changes and adjustments within Portugal. The decisions concerning Portugal's future relationship with the European Community have been taken almost exclusively for political reasons, both in Lisbon and the major EEC capitals. The arrangement has been promoted as a means of securing a Western-oriented democracy in Portugal. Yet, the contrast between the impact of Portugal's membership on Europe and the impact of the Community on Portugal is total disproportionate. Portugal's gross domestic product will correspond to only one percent of the global product of the EEC, and unlike Spain, the economic impact on Europe of Portugal's accession will be marginal.

For the Community, therefore, the decision on Portugal is cheap and attractive, involving as it does a convenient combination of minimal sacrifice with moral gratification. The rationalization which will be forced on some sectors of Portugal's economy by accession to the EEC, and the disruption of the means of livelihood for some segments of Portugal's population, will be severe. Among those social sectors most likely to be affected adversely by economic rationalization will probably be those small businessmen and farmers, especially in the north and center of Portugal, whose mobilization and support were crucial to the establishment of the very system now seeking guarantees for its future through their potential destruction.

Some will gain from the accession of Portugal to the EEC, to be sure, and the gamble is that accession will provide the pre-conditions for renewed economic growth and prosperity. Some agricultural producers (especially olive oil, rice, and corn producers) might benefit from the increase in the cost of agricultural products which membership in the EEC will bring, but the less efficient producers of grain-beef, wheat, and milk will be under severe pressure, and higher food prices will aggravate urban-rural tensions as they will come on top of the drastic fall in real wages which took place in Portugal between 1976 and 1979. There will be political repercussions from these developments, and they will not necessarily be the beneficial ones for Western democracy that the proponents of early accession to the European Economic Community anticipate. The story of the revolution and counterrevolution in Portugal is thus far from ended. There has been merely a pause of the pendulum.

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[3]U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, in a speech on February 3, 1976, stated that "for the first time in history the Soviet Union could threaten distant places beyond the Eurasian land mass--including the United States. . . . Angola represents the first time that the Soviets have moved militarily at long distances to impose a regime of their choice. It is the first time that the United States has failed to respond to Soviet military moves outside the immediate Soviet orbit. And it is the first time that Congress has halted national action in the middle of a crisis." (The Washington Post, February 16, 1976). He repeated this view more starkly in an interview published in Encounter (November 1978): "Had we succeeded in Angola there would have been no Ethiopia. The situation in Southern Africa would be entirely different, and I think this was one of the decisive watersheds." (p. 12). Also see "Statement by Hon. Henry A. Kissinger, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, January 3, 4, 6, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1976).

[4]The best brief accounts of the roles of the various European countries in Africa can be found in Colin Legum (ed.), Africa Contemporary Record (New York), especially Volume 7 (1974-1975) and Volume 8 (1975-1976).

[5]For a more detailed treatment of the role of outside powers in the process of Portuguese decolonization, see Kenneth Maxwell, "A New Scramble for Africa?" Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., (eds.), The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 515-534.

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[9]On the popular movement, see Phil Mailer, Portugal: The Impossible Revolution? (London: Solidarity, 1977); Maria de Lurdes Lima Santos, Marinus Pires de Lima, and Vitor Matias Ferreira, O 25 de Abril e as Lutas Sociais nas Empressas (Porto: Afrontamento, 1976); Jose Pires, Greves e o 25 de Abril (Lisbon: Base, 1976); F. Avila, C. Ferreira, B. Lory, C. Orsoni, and Ch. Reeve, Portugal: l'Autre Combat--Classes et conflits dans la Societe (Paris: Spartcus, 1975); Orlando Neves (ed.), Mil Dias: Diario de uma Revolução (Lisbon: Mil Dias, 1978); Chip Downs, Fernando Nunes da Silva, Helena Gonçalves, and Isabel Seara, Os Moradores a Conquista da Cidade (Lisbon: Armazem das Letras, 1978); Victor Matias Ferreira, Movimentos Sociais Urbanos e Intervenção Politica (Porto: Afrontamento, 1975), and "Movimentos de Moradores: Luta pela Habitação," Intervenção Social (Lisbon) No. 2 (September 1979); also, Luis Leitão, Antonio Dias, Jorge Manuel, and Laurent Dianoux, "Mouvements urbains et commissions de moradores au Portugal: 1974-1976," Les Temps Modernes (Paris), November 1978.

[10]The role of the media in the transition in both Spain and Portugal is the subject of a collection of chapters by some of the leading editors involved: Kenneth Maxwell (ed.), The Rebirth of Iberian Democracy: The Role of the Press in the Transition from Dictatorship in Spain and Portugal (1973-1980) (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981 forthcoming). The point is often made that the Communists did not initiate the seizures in either the case of the newspaper República or the Radio Station Radio Renasença and therefore should not be blamed for either of these assaults on press freedom. This argument is, in my view, a technical one. The Communists were attempting to monopolize the press throughout Portugal at this time, and the view of the party and the "independent" workers involved coincided as to the desirability of suppressing "bourgeois"

information, i.e., news inconvenient to their own political line. It is certainly true that both cases were used to good effect by the enemies of the Communists, especially by the Socialists, but one cannot blame the Socialists for making use of a propaganda weapon handed to them on a plate by the heavy-handedness of Portugal's Communists. And it is also true, of course, that the Communists' attempts at monopoly of information failed. The Lisbon Weekly Expresso, founded by Francesco Pinto Balsemão in the Caetano period, remained an independent voice throughout this period, and several new newspapers were founded--such as the weekly Tempo established by Nuno Rocha and Jornal Novo (now defunct).

[11]The debate in fact has already begun--some now argue that the revolution was little more than a figment of the imagination. Such at any rate seems to be the argument of Bill Lomax in his essay in the volume edited by L. Graham, The Portuguese Revolution, to be published by the University of Wisconsin Press. His views will undoubtedly surprise those landowners whose estates were seized and expropriated, the industrialists whose enterprises were nationalized, the military officers and businessmen who spent 18 months in jail without charge, and the thousands of management personnel purged from their jobs in 1974 and 1975.

[12]Philippe C. Schmitter summed up the view most succinctly in his "The Portugalization of Brazil," in Alfred Stepan (ed.), Authoritarian Brazil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) when he wrote "I speculated that certain characteristics of Brazil's delayed economic and social transformation had 'conspired' to make it highly unlikely that it would replicate either the evolutionary liberal-pluralist or the revolutionary nationalist-collectivist route to political modernity." Political scientists who had been working on Portugal were even less prepared for the events of 1974. Schmitter, to his credit, is one of the very few social scientists to have directly dealt with the issue of this failure of perception; see his "Liberation by Golpe: Retrospective Thought on the Demise of Authoritarian Rule in Portugal," Armed Forces and Society 2:1 (November 1975), 5-33.

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