

THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE EUROCOMMUNIST
CHALLENGE

by

VASCO FERNANDO FERREIRA RATO

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presented to the University of Manitoba
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in
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

On April 25, 1974 a group of junior military officers, designating themselves as the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), overthrew Europe's most enduring authoritarian regime. What became known as the "revolution of carnations" proved to be a relatively bloodless occurrence. If the military action of April 25 was itself a peaceful undertaking, the aftermath of that action was a disruptive and chaotic affair lasting almost two years. During that time a country so often ignored by the rest of the world was suddenly thrust into the international limelight. The military movement, inspired by vague and often contradictory left-wing ideals, adopted increasingly radical political postures; pushing Portugal to the brink of total paralysis. A communist party, and an ultra-orthodox one at that, occupied ministerial positions in the government of a founding partner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As the Portuguese revolutionary process intensified, Western Europe faced the concrete possibility that the Portuguese Communist Party would establish a communist dictatorship in the country. Nowhere in post-war Europe had the prospect of a full-scale revolution seem more imminent than in post-April 25 Portugal.

During the two years that Portugal's political forces battled over the future of the country, the international communist movement was itself in a state of flux. The cohesion of the movement, deteriorating since the dissolution of the Cominform, appeared on the brink of collapse. The Soviet Union and its ruling communist party, under the influence of Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Suslov, undertook a political offensive designed to bring the international communist movement together under Soviet tutelage. The growing demand for autonomy vis-a-vis the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was led by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and, to a much lesser extent, the French Communist Party (PCF).¹ These parties took a decisive step on the road to autonomy with their criticism of the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the subsequent process of "normalization" in that country. The quest for autonomy was accelerated by the ideological innovations expounded by Santiago Carrillo and Enrico Berlinguer, leaders of the

¹ The role of the Yugoslav, Chinese, and Romanian parties in the process should not be underestimated. After all, these parties, in varying degrees, had challenged the CPSU's hegemony over the communist movement in the post-1945 world. However, it is of fundamental importance to notice that these three communist parties are ruling parties. Therefore, the dynamics and motives for their dissent are largely different from those of the non-ruling parties. Questions of state power, and all that it implies, were involved in the former's challenge. In this work we are concerned with the non-ruling Southern European parties; namely, the Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese communist parties. However, the role of the ruling parties' conflict with the CPSU is given a brief treatment in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Spanish and Italian communist parties. The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), under the leadership of its Secretary-General Alvaro Cunhal, was a notable exception in this move towards greater independence from the Soviet Union and the CPSU.

The Portuguese Communist Party firmly supported the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968. This demonstration of solidarity, in accordance with the principles of proletarian internationalism as understood by the CPSU and its supporters, proved to be an event of infinite importance. The PCP, which had been a relatively small and obscure party functioning clandestinely in Europe's poorest nation, suddenly enjoyed a predominance far beyond what its strength would normally warrant.² By 1974 the Portuguese communists benefited from a solid reputation within the communist and workers' movement. Inside Portugal, the Party had, for decades, cultivated an image shrouded in myth. The country's oldest opponent of the authoritarian regime, the PCP created its martyrs and pointed to the USSR as the ideal society.³ In the aftermath of April 25, 1974

² The PCP's estimated strength immediately prior to April 25 was 1000 to 3000 members. Neil McInnes, The Communist Parties of Western Europe. London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p.40.

³ The creation of "Party myths" to maintain a high degree of cohesion is an established fact. The "cult of personality", especially the Stalin, Mao, and Kim variations, is only the most extreme manifestation of this phenomenon. In Portugal the myths primarily surround the clandestine experience of the Party and those "martyrs" that died for the revolution. The idea of a "worker's paradise" under socialism is compulsive to many. While

the PCP was to translate this image and prestige into membership, funds, and solid commitment to revolutionary change.

Whereas the PCP only emerged from the underground in 1974, the Eurocommunists, with the exception of the PCE, had been able to conduct their activities in the open since the close of World War II. Such a long period of clandestinity naturally leaves a profound impression upon any communist organization. Yet, if one considers the PCE, a party that operated underground for over three decades, and compares its positions to those of the PCP, the differences could not be more startling. There are a number of reasons that contribute to explaining this phenomenon, but it must be emphasized that the internal struggles of the PCP, which was banned for nearly five decades, was the dominant factor that accounted for the differences in perspective. Specifically, what would later become known as autonomist and liberal positions had grave consequences for the Portuguese Communist Party when this line dominated the organization. The "anarcho-liberal deviation", the PCP's designation for the period during which the political leadership of the Party advocated a peaceful resolution to the Portuguese

these domestic myths preserve the internal cohesion of the Party, the USSR provides the Party with a sense of universalism. I have briefly addressed this question in my "PCP: Anatomia de uma crise", Risco (No.9, Spring 1988, pp.58-59). For an interesting description of what occurs when these myths are shattered, see Richard Crossman (ed.), The God That Failed. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1950.

situation and the liberalization of democratic centralism, very nearly rendered the Party an inconsequential actor in Portuguese political life.

Harsh clandestine conditions, during which time "rightist" tendencies such as the "anarcho-liberal deviation" dominated the PCP, demanded that the organization become "forged in steel" in order to avoid total destruction. The Portuguese Communist Party's devotion to a rigid form of democratic centralism was the result of its attempt to preserve itself in adverse conditions. Simply stated, without an orthodox democratic centralism to maintain the cohesiveness of the Party, the organization would have disintegrated during the authoritarian regime. Cunhal's defence of democratic centralism in the 1970s was the direct result of the Party's negative experiences with the relaxation of discipline in the late 1950's.

If democratic centralism was indispensable for the maintenance of the Party machine, its ideology and its acceptance of proletarian internationalism served a complementary purpose. The PCP was, for the longest time, an irrelevant party operating in what was perceived to be an inconsequential country. Portugal remained unfamiliar to the outside world; knowledge of the country was reduced to its role as a colonial power and its conservative authoritarian political structure dominated by Antonio Oliveira Salazar. Proletarian internationalism integrated the PCP into a

world-wide movement whose declared objective was nothing less than the liberation of mankind. Obsession with such a noble mission became an indispensable source of the Party's purpose and self-identity. The sacrifices of clandestine work became slightly more bearable because "history was on the side of the Party". The security and purpose derived from membership in a world-wide movement dedicated to such noble ends could not be jeopardized by questioning the most prestigious and experienced of all the communist parties, the CPSU.

The preservation of democratic centralism and proletarian internationalism presupposed the correct interpretation of the movement's most important asset: its Marxist-Leninist ideology. Marxism-Leninism, at least the Soviet version of the doctrine, was the guide that would lead the working-class, and the Party as its vanguard, to victory. It was therefore imperative that it remain as pure as possible; distortion and revision would only weaken the communist movement and disorient the proletariat. The Soviet theorists had created an entire gallery of ideological deviants; including Bukharin, Trotsky, Tito, and most dangerous of all, Mao. The PCP was diligent and enthusiastic in its battle against the domestic supporters of these deviations. From the PCP's point of view, Eurocommunism was a deviation not easily distinguishable from the despised social democracy of the bourgeois Second International. Naturally,

one also has to consider the fact that ideological rigidity, like organizational cohesion, was a necessary contribution to the Party's self-preservation during its years of illegality.

If all of these factors help to explain why the Portuguese Communist Party did not adopt the autonomist road during the authoritarian regime, one is left to puzzle over why this option was not seized after the rupture of April 25, 1974. Of course, the organizational and ideological conceptions of the PCP could not have easily been changed as long as the leadership remained the same as the one that guided the Party through the dictatorship. If the leadership remained intact the establishment of political democracy would not have guaranteed the adoption of a more liberal posture by that leadership simply because the nature of the regime had undergone a change. Any possibility of adopting the Eurocommunist route was effectively terminated with the Portuguese revolutionary experience of 1974-75 and its consequences.

On April 2, 1976 the Portuguese Constituent Assembly promulgated the Constitution of the Republic; institutionalizing profound political and socio-economic transformations designed to lead the country to socialism. The Portuguese communists were not successful in their bid for power during the national crisis of 1974-75. They were not, however, completely unsuccessful either. The 1976 Constitution created a political order unlike any other in

Western Europe. The exaggerated length and detail of the document outlined a series of measures designed to preserve what had been attained during 1974-75; the revolutionary gains were considered by the PCP to be the necessary preconditions of a genuinely socialist polity. The Fundamental Law enshrined a collectivist economic form of organization that could not easily be altered. The political system arising from the law of the land also institutionalized the armed forces as a distinct organ of government. During the revolutionary process of 1974-75 the PCP was instrumental in the realization of mass nationalizations, Agrarian Reform, workers' control of enterprises, and a host of other measures which would come to be enshrined in the Constitution. In the political realm, the armed forces, acting through a Council of the Revolution, were constitutionally invested with the power to preserve the "spirit" of April 25. These political and economic measures, taken in their totality, came to be known in the communist lexicon as a "democratic regime".

At this point it is fundamental to note that the PCP's conception of a "democratic regime" has little in common with the Western liberal concept of democracy. The word "democratic" should be understood for its Leninist content. That is, an order superior to bourgeois democracy which is the prelude to socialist organization. It is precisely this Leninist conceptualization of democracy that the PCP utilizes to define Portugal's political system. Cunhal's

eternal slogan, the defence of the democratic regime, must be understood in these terms. Indeed, Portugal's communists to this day claim that the nation has two options - to evolve from a "democratic regime" to a socialist society or to revert to a "fascist" regime far more oppressive than the previous one.⁴

The Eurocommunist parties maintained that late capitalism was to be defined as state monopoly capitalism. Consequently, various strategies were adopted by the autonomist parties to confront this type of capitalist organization and lead the transition to socialism. Most of these parties agreed that the socialist revolution could be accomplished, through peaceful means, within the institutional framework of bourgeois democracy. A respect for the "formal freedoms" of liberal democracy was advocated. Power was to be attained through the ballot box,

⁴ The PCP has always defined the authoritarian regime as "fascist". This characterization, utilized for emotive purposes, is erroneous. The regime established by Antonio Salazar in 1928, and continued by Marcelo Caetano after 1968, was conservative, bureaucratic, authoritarian, and greatly influenced by Catholic social doctrine. There is a wide-ranging literature on the Portuguese authoritarian regime. Works that have been of particular use to me include: Philippe C. Schmitter, "The "Regime d'Exception" That Became the Rule: Forty-Eight Years of Authoritarian Domination in Portugal" in Harry M. Makler and Lawrence S. Graham (ed.), Contemporary Portugal: The Revolution and its Antecedents. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1979. From the same volume, Manuel de Lucena, "The Evolution of Portuguese Corporatism Under Salazar and Caetano"; and Howard J. Wiarda, "The Corporatist Tradition and the Corporate System in Portugal: Structured, Evolving, Transcended, Persistent". Also of interest is Howard Wiarda, Corporatism and Development: The Portuguese Experience. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976.

not through the barrel of a gun. As there were various "roads to socialism", so there must also be more than one model. Thus, the October Revolution, and the type of socialism that arose in the USSR, was only one of many possible models of socialism. Given that the CPSU's hegemony over the fraternal parties was dependent upon its experience in the construction of socialism, the rejection of the exclusivity of the Soviet model meant the rejection of the CPSU's tutelage of the communist movement. The gradual disintegration of the international communist movement seemed almost complete.

It is against this backdrop of communist disintegration that the Portuguese Revolution must be understood. While the autonomist parties were rejecting the Leninist conception of state power, and the seizure of that power, the PCP set forth to demonstrate that Leninism continued to be applicable in the Western half of the European continent. From April 1974 to April 1976, the Portuguese Communist Party applied its theory of revolution. Allied with the MFA, more often than not unconditionally, Cunhal's Party followed, but rarely led, the haphazard development of the revolutionary process. The Party's behavior, in particular its blatant disregard for liberal democracy, soon placed the Eurocommunist's prospects in question. The Eurocommunists, disregarding the rules of proletarian internationalism, publically criticized the actions of the fraternal

Portuguese Party. In this regard, the Portuguese experience served to crystallize the issues dividing the communist movement. Consequently, Eurocommunism was able to define itself in opposition to the orthodoxy of the Portuguese Communist Party. Herein lies the significance of the Portuguese national crisis for the Eurocommunist phenomenon.

This thesis will delineate the factors that prevented the Portuguese Communist Party from following the Eurocommunist path. In Latin Europe the PCP was alone in its rejection of these orientations. The proceeding chapters will outline the historical, ideological, and domestic factors that accounted for this development.

Chapter Two of this work will present a brief outline of the Eurocommunist phenomenon. The historical development of the autonomist trend, as well as the accompanying issues, are varied and complex. Naturally, it is not within the scope of this work to provide an exhaustive analysis of the subject. The stated purpose of this chapter is to provide a general understanding of Eurocommunism which will place the remainder of the work within a particular context. Eurocommunism is an orientation that brought together a number of communist parties with similar, although not identical, positions on a number of common issues. The phenomenon has a specific historical context and must be analyzed as such. In 1988, Eurocommunism is a non-entity. Its significance lies in the fact that it was the last act

in a conflict between a dominant center and "derived" parties seeking new expression and relevance through independence from that center.

Chapter Three of this thesis presents a historical summary of the Portuguese Communist Party. It traces the Party from its 1921 inception through numerous internal crises leading to the Party's 1965 Sixth Congress. It posits the notion that the PCP can best be understood today not as a Stalinist party, as is so often claimed, but as a bureaucratic party inspired by Brezhnev and Suslov. The chapter also suggests that the PCP attempted liberalization, the "anarcho-liberal deviation" of 1955-59, created the preconditions for its orthodoxy. This factor, combined with Cunhal's bitter battle against the Party's Maoists, left a profound impression upon the PCP that informed its resistance to Eurocommunism. The Party's clandestine legacy is suggested as a factor that contributed to the PCP's orthodox character, but certainly not the exclusive or even predominant one.

The following chapter, Chapter Four, is, along with Chapter Five, the pivotal section of this work. It is the author's contention that the theoretical understanding of Portuguese society elaborated at the PCP's Sixth Congress, held in the city of Kiev in 1965, is the fundamental element that prevented the Portuguese Communist Party from pursuing the autonomist orientation. Cunhal elaborated a notion unique to European communism at this Congress - the

"democratic and national revolution". The concept is meant to denote the duality of the Portuguese Revolution: it was to be simultaneously democratic and national. This theoretical formulation, understood as a distinct stage between capitalism and socialism, was predicated upon the characterization of Portugal as a "colonized colonizer". In short, while Portugal was an exploitative colonial power it was, in turn, colonized by foreign imperialism. Domestically, the "fascist regime" was the terrorist dictatorship of the dominant classes, the monopolists and latifundists. The path to revolution was by way of a national uprising culminating in the overthrow of the regime through armed struggle.

Chapter Five presents the consequences of this theoretical formulation. Since a full analysis of the Portuguese revolutionary experience would be beyond the scope of this thesis, the chapter restricts itself to a presentation of the consequences of that process. It delineates those political and socio-economic transformations that the PCP has labelled the "conquests of April". It then presents a broad analysis of the "democratic regime" instituted by the 1976 Constitution. In effect, the Portuguese Fundamental Law formalized the ambitions and victories of the PCP during the 1974-75 period. The 1976 document "institutionalizes" the PCP in the Portuguese system since the content of the Constitution gives

expression to the overall objectives of Cunhal's party. The preservation of the Constitution, given that the document enshrines the "democratic regime", became the primary political task of the PCP after 1976. Believing that the "democratic regime" will progress to a socialist regime if certain conditions are met, the PCP has adopted a strategy of protecting the status quo. That is to say, of protecting its privileged position, vis-a-vis other social and political forces, in the country's political order. It is in this light that the communist strategy regarding the various electoral acts after 1975 should be understood.

The following chapter, Chapter Six, is a general study of the Portuguese Communist Party's foreign relations. Like all other communist parties, the Portuguese Communist Party was created as a result of the world-wide impact of the October Revolution. The Comintern, through its agent Jules Humbert-Droz, attempted to secure the "bolshevization" of the Portuguese section of the Communist International. Since its inception the PCP has derived much of its understanding of itself, its identity, from this relationship with the Soviet Party. In its decades of existence the PCP has remained the unequivocal ally of the CPSU. Nonetheless, it was the Portuguese communists' support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 that initiated a new chapter in the Party's relationship with the CPSU.

Adherence to the CPSU's positions regarding matters of the communist movement ensured that the Portuguese Communist Party would reap many benefits in Moscow. As a result of its allegiance to Moscow, the PCP became one of the most influential of all European parties. In the eyes of the Kremlin, Cunhal and his party became the principal exponents of the CPSU's positions in Western Europe. This new-found stature allowed the PCP to act as the CPSU's spokesperson in the polemics surrounding the Eurocommunist issue in the 1970s. In turn, the CPSU was generous in its support of the PCP. It can be speculated with some certainty that the role of the privileged ally also allowed the PCP to collaborate with the CPSU in its elaboration of policy towards the Eurocommunist parties. It would not be until the ascension of Mikhail Gorbachev to the leadership of the CPSU that the PCP's perspectives became out of step with the CPSU's "new thinking" about the international communist and workers' movement.

The last chapter of this work will elaborate the conclusions drawn from the research and analysis presented in this thesis.

This thesis is clearly situated within the field of comparative politics as a whole, and comparative communism in particular. The work approaches the research question from the perspective of the political event. Thus, the approach utilized in the exploration of the research

question, the study of those factors delineated above, suggests a comprehensive understanding of the matter in question at the conclusion of the work. The work is analytical, and therefore, what is offered is an interpretation of the phenomenon in question.

A communist party can be best analyzed and understood if the researcher follows three criteria.⁵ First, one must consider how the particular party perceives itself. That is, its theoretical perspective and how this perspective impacts upon the project that the party is undertaking. It is assumed that a communist party carries with it some baggage that it cannot discard even if it denounces the Leninist label; as the PCI and others have done. While ideological perspectives may be modified, a historical identity permeates the party and its militants.⁶ A political party,

⁵ Many authors use this approach to the study of communist parties. Two excellent examples are: Eusebio Mujal-Leon, Communism and Political Change in Spain. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1983; and Anthony R. Brunell, "Parliaments and Eurocommunism: the Italian Case", Parliamentary Affairs, Vol.39, No.3, July 1986.

⁶ The example of the PCI may be useful at this juncture to clarify this point. While it may be granted that the PCI has abandoned the Leninist self-definition in its adoption of Gramsci, it is necessary to realize that Gramsci's thought, regardless of its innovations and differences, is grounded in Lenin's thought. In addition, there is no question that Gramsci identified fully with the October Revolution and its lessons. To draw an analogy from Freud, a communist party possesses a collective consciousness that it cannot escape. Even if a communist party attempts to reject its past by criticizing a particular leader or policy, it continues to define itself in relation to its past. Perhaps the only communist party that has taken this attempt to re-define itself to its logical conclusion is the Greek Eurocommunist party; which dissolved itself voluntarily in order to integrate in the broad European

and a communist party in particular, is the sum total of its ideological and historical components. A party's self-identity will condition the remaining two analytical criteria; as the two remaining criteria condition, in a dialectical manner, the party's self-perception.

Second, we must understand how the party is perceived as a political actor by the society in which it operates. For example, whether or not a communist party is a genuine participant in the democratic process of a western democracy is questionable. The response to a basic question such as this determines the response of the electorate and that of other political actors. As a result, the character of the party is partially reactive vis-a-vis the actions and attitudes of other social forces. Tactical positions, as well as strategies, are in part conditioned by this factor.

The two aforementioned factors, combined with the third factor, the relationship between the domestic communist parties and the CPSU/USSR, contribute to the overall formation of these parties. The European communist parties owe much of their experience to the CPSU and the Soviet experiment. Hence, the relationship of the derived party with the center reveals much about its identity. Whether these relations are friendly or antagonistic is informed by the party's conception of itself and its project. In turn, ideological modifications and domestic policies are informed

left.

by the state of affairs that a communist party cultivates with the CPSU.

In conclusion, the approach delineated above will be utilized to answer the question why the Portuguese Communist Party did not pursue the Eurocommunist option.

Chapter II

THE EUROCOMMUNIST QUESTION

The phenomenon that came to be referred to as Eurocommunism had a profound impact upon the European political landscape of the 1970's. While the Eurocommunist orientation of certain parties in Western Europe sparked numerous debates during those years, it always remained a vague, and often contradictory, option. Yet, there are enough similarities in the positions adopted by the Italian, French, and Spanish parties to conclude that Eurocommunism was a separate trend in the international communist movement. This is not to suggest that Eurocommunism was free of ambiguity and contradiction; it was not. Neither was Eurocommunism meant to be restricted to the West European parties; for example, the Japanese Communist Party also adopted Eurocommunism. However, since the term was used to describe a certain development, it shall be used freely in this work.

Still, it is important to note that the term is no longer valid in describing these parties and their orientation. The unique conditions that allowed for the convergence of specific themes to be developed by the Latin European communist parties under the label of Eurocommunism no longer exist. Naturally, it is difficult to point to a specific

point in time and suggest that Eurocommunism was conceived at that precise moment. The adoption of Eurocommunist positions varied in their timing from party to party. There are a series of historical occurrences that provide guidepoints to the development of the orientation. Yet, there is no question that it was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, met with widespread condemnation by the communist parties of Western Europe, that provides us with the fundamental clue to the genesis of the Eurocommunist option.¹ The Portuguese revolutionary experience, carried out as the CPSU and the fraternal parties conducted their negotiations designed to secure widespread participation at the 1976 Berlin Conference, served to clarify the Eurocommunist option as a distinct orientation within the communist movement. By the end of the decade, in the aftermath of Polish martial law and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Eurocommunism was a thing of the past.

¹ Manuel Azcarate, who was responsible for the foreign relations of the PCE, points to the three occurrences in 1968 that led to the "point of departure" for Eurocommunism. First, the Paris May demonstrated that capitalism was incapable of solving its contradictions and, as a result, new mass movements developed throughout Europe. The Prague Spring posed the question of the relationship between socialism and democracy. Lastly, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia demonstrated the need for independence from the USSR. See Manuel Azcarate, "The Present State of Eurocommunism: its Main Features, Political and Theoretical" in Richard Kindersley (ed.), In Search of Eurocommunism. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1981, p.28.

As we have noted in the introduction of this work, the purpose of this thesis is to explain why the Portuguese Communist Party did not pursue the Eurocommunist option. Many works of quality have been written on this subject; it is not the purpose of this chapter to either add to or summarize that work. The purpose of this brief chapter is merely to introduce the elements of Eurocommunism necessary to our discussion of the PCP. Therefore, many questions relating to Eurocommunism will not be addressed. The first section of this chapter will provide a brief historical outline of those critical events in the international communist movement that influenced the development of the Eurocommunist phenomenon. The second section will present a brief analysis of some of the theoretical issues raised. The concluding section will address certain specific changes in the domestic political life of those countries where Eurocommunism was most relevant.

The saga of the international communist movement begins with the elaboration of the Twenty-One Points of Adhesion to the Communist International, which were presented at the Comintern's Second Congress held in 1920. The rigid organizational principles were elaborated so as to ensure that the Third International would not meet the fate of its predecessor. Expecting the immediate outbreak of revolution in the West, this type of centralized organization would guarantee the victory of the communist sections. Not only

were the organizational details of the parties outlined in the Twenty-One Points, but so were the strategy and tactics to be followed. In short, the Twenty-One Points would ensure that the sections of the Comintern would remain revolutionary in theory as well as in practice. In fact, Point 13 called for periodic purges to ensure this end. This rigidity would ensure, it was hoped, that the reformism that overtook the Second International would not re-occur.

Theoretically, the Russian party was not supposed to dominate the other sections of the Third International. The Bolsheviks were merely to take a transitional leading role in the creation of a world party whose sections would all enjoy the same rights. In the meantime, since the Bolsheviks were the only party to have achieved power, they would assume the leading role in the support of the world revolutionary movement. However, with the failure of the European revolutions to materialize, the Comintern increasingly became an instrument of Soviet state policy.

The process that ultimately led to the subservience of the Comintern sections to the Soviet party is inseparable from the internal conflicts that plagued the Soviet party during this period. Following the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the Comintern, opposition to Stalin came from the "right", led by Bukharin both within the Bolshevik party and the Comintern. The Bukharinites enjoyed considerable support within the ranks of a number of the

western communist parties.² These all shared the conviction that the Bolshevik experience was specific and could not be automatically transferred to the west. This current also rejected the equation of Soviet state interests with the interests of the revolutionary movement as a whole.³ In addition, the necessity to take into account the specific conditions existent in different countries, and the formulation of adequate responses, was a fundamental concern of these parties.

The "Stalinization" of the Cominform evolved over a number of years and was conditioned by the internal conflicts within the Soviet party. Comintern Congresses had been a forum for discussion until, and including, the Sixth Congress of 1928. The Soviet party's internal debate between the "left" and the "right", represented respectively by Stalin and Bukharin, assured that the Comintern would become another forum for this strife. Bukharin's removal from the Comintern leadership in 1929, a position that he held since 1926, effectively stifled the debate and freedom of action that had previously existed in the Comintern. In short, this culminated the process of "Stalinization" of the international communist movement. Consequently, the removal

² Certainly this support was pronounced within the ranks of the Italian, German and American parties, to name but a few.

³ The elements that subscribed to this notion tended to reject the slogan "defense of the USSR" at the November-December 1926 Executive Committee session of the Comintern. However, the Soviet position dominated as always.

of Bukharin's followers from the ranks of the national parties brought this process to fruition. With the removal of the Bukharin faction, the path was open for the total domination and manipulation of the Comintern by the Soviet party.

It has long been affirmed by the communist parties that the Popular Front was a response to the growing strength of fascism in Europe. However, according to Heinz Timmermann, the adoption of the Popular Front strategy was not the result of the experience of the communist parties themselves, but was a Soviet response to "the threat of an encircling coalition of authoritarian, fascist, and strongly anti-communist regimes."⁴ The Soviet communists conceived the Popular Front strategy as the ideal vehicle to weaken the external threats posed to the USSR.

Another important factor in analyzing the relationship between the Bolsheviks and the parties of the Third International is the impact of the October Revolution on the latter. The role of the October Revolution in the communist movement, as well as its significance for the parties, would be an actively debated topic during the 1970's. Yet, one could suggest that without an alternative successful revolutionary experience, the October Revolution would necessarily become the pole of reference. As Heinz

⁴ See Heinz Timmermann, The Decline of the World Communist Movement: Moscow, Beijing, and the Communist Parties in the West. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987, p.18.

Timmermann points out,

Just because the world revolution was not taking place, the Soviet Union became the symbol of all hope for a revolutionary future, and the defence of the Soviet land became the duty of every communist.⁵

Given these factors it is not surprising that the Comintern would become, to use Lenin's expression, "too Russian".⁶ Despite Lenin's concerns, the October Revolution became a model to be followed in every detail.

Whatever the intentions of Lenin, then, the Comintern soon became a support mechanism for the Soviet Revolution and the Soviet state. While loyalty to the USSR became the dominant characteristic of the Comintern during Stalin's rule, Bolshevik loyalty to the world proletarian movement characterized it during Lenin's time. Indeed, this was implicit in the Twenty-One Points of Adhesion to the International. The "russification" of the Comintern is also evident in the fact that the International met with less frequency than originally intended.⁷ The Comintern became

⁵ Ibid., p.15.

⁶ By 1922, in his report to the Comintern's Fourth Congress, Lenin had begun to question the organizational conceptions underlying the Comintern. At the Fourth Congress, held from November 5 to December 5, 1922, Lenin suggested that the Communist International had become "too Russian". Questioning of the appropriateness of the Russian model for other societies had begun. For the content of the speech see Lenin's Selected Works Vol.3. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971, p.727.

⁷ Originally, Comintern Congresses were to be held every year. After 1924, they were held every two years; after 1928 only the 1935 Congress was convened. While Lenin was active in the International, Stalin maintained little active participation in the 1928 Congress and was not even

the vehicle for Soviet national interests at the expense of the national interests of the western communist parties. Stalin's urging of the Chinese Communists to cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek was part of this policy. More evident was Stalin's pressure on the German Communist Party to turn against the SPD. While the SPD favored closer Franco-German relations, Stalin favoured the development a pro-Soviet German military. The dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, because it was seen as an impediment to better relations with the West, is the climax of this process. At any rate, the dissolution of the Comintern meant very little in practical terms, since the control exercised over the communist parties was undertaken over by the new International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU.⁸

The creation of the Marshall Plan, and its proposal to develop both Eastern and Western Europe, was a serious threat to Stalin's plans for Eastern Europe. The Plan was perceived by the Soviets as an attempt to infringe upon its zone of influence. Poland and Czechoslovakia, whose governments had expressed a desire to be included in the Plan, were forbidden to do so by Stalin. It was this

present at the Seventh.

⁸ Ponomarev, one of the veterans of the Comintern, played an important role in the creation of this organism and would become its chief in 1955. On the role of the International Department see Robert W. Kitrinis, "International Department of the CPSU" in Problems of Communism. Vol.33, No.5, September-October 1984, pp.47-75.

attempt to form a cohesive block, and to continue to exercise control over the communist parties, that led to the creation of the Cominform. The Cominform was dedicated to the elaboration of a strategy for the PCI and the PCF. Both parties were to cease their cooperation in the reconstruction of their respective countries and vigorously oppose the Marshall Plan. It was for this purpose that the Western European communist parties interested Stalin. Once Soviet attempts to expand their influence in Europe had ended with the failure of the Berlin Blockade, the European communist movement lost much of its importance to the Soviet leadership.

It has been suggested that the Cominform period witnessed the apex of the ideological monolithism of the communist movement. Cold War tensions were undoubtedly partly responsible for this condition since both camps became highly polarized. Indeed, it is during this time that the Soviets expound their "two-camps" doctrine. This doctrine held that the post-war world was divided into two hostile camps: the imperialist camp and the progressive, anti-imperialist camp. Since the imperialist camp, headed by the United States, coveted world domination, the anti-imperialist camp, headed by the USSR, was the only force that could prevent it. As a result of this analysis, it became the duty of all anti-imperialist forces to close ranks around the USSR and its foreign policy.⁹ For the

⁹ This doctrine was expounded by Andrey Zhdanov in a speech

Western Communist Parties, the practical result of the two-camps theory was that they were expected to defend "socialism in one zone" just as vigorously as they had earlier defended "socialism in one country".

The consolidation of Soviet state power in the post-war world allowed for the development of a dynamic that led to greater independence for the western communist parties. Since the Soviet state was consolidated, and the East European buffer states protected its borders, the western parties could enjoy more flexibility in developing their "own roads" to socialism. This is especially true after Khrushchev's pronouncements at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. The acceptance of the Tito heresy, and the dissolution of the Cominform in 1956, demonstrated that the Soviet Party was losing its dominance over the fraternal parties. Along with this development, Khrushchev's "secret speech" made it possible for the western parties to become critical of the Soviet Union. As Peter Morris claims, the "secret speech"

was an admission not only that the man whom all communists had worshipped was a tyrant but that the political and social system which had been regarded as Marxist perfection was not perfect at all. A Marxist analysis of Stalinism cannot be limited to Stalin.¹⁰

delivered at the founding conference of the Cominform, held in Sklarska Poreba. Zhdanov led the Soviet delegation at this conference.

¹⁰ Peter Morris, "West European Communist Parties and International Communism" in Howard Machin (ed.), National Communism in Western Europe: A Third Way for Socialism?. New York, N.Y.: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1983, p.32.

A number of theoretical changes undertaken at the Twentieth CPSU Congress are worth considering at this point. The acceptance of "peaceful coexistence" had a number of implications for the non-ruling parties. On the one hand, it would allow them a greater scope for action within their own countries since the USSR was no longer surrounded and threatened by imperialism as before. Given that the Stalinist notion of the inevitability of war was abandoned by Khrushchev, new tactical and strategic opportunities presented themselves to the fraternal parties. In Western Europe, "peaceful coexistence" would be a more suitable doctrine for the interests of the communist parties operating within the framework of bourgeois democracies.

The newly-adopted program of the CPSU predicted the imminent collapse of capitalism. Not only had the forces of change shifted to the side of socialism, but the program heralded the eve of the socialist revolution. Since this was the case, it was natural that the capitalist world was ripe for revolution. The Program elaborated at the Twentieth Congress stated that:

Imperialism is decaying and moribund capitalism; it is the eve of the socialist revolution. The world capitalist system as a whole is ripe for the social revolution of the proletariat.¹¹

¹¹ In Leonard Shapiro (ed.), The USSR and the Future: An Analysis of the New Program of the CPSU. New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1963, p.262. For an analysis of the Program's pronouncements on coexistence and revolution see, in the same volume, Victor Frank's chapter, pp.57-69.

A definite parallel is discernable here with the earlier conception that foresaw immediate revolution in the West. Yet, it was this offensive aspect of Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" that gave the non-ruling parties greater importance and independence vis-a-vis the Soviet center. Since the role of communist parties in bringing about revolution became more significant so did their independence, and their potential for extending Soviet influence. In short, the fraternal parties rediscovered their vocation as agents for revolutionary change in their societies, rather than mere appendages of the Soviet state. The logical consequence of this discovery would be the adoption of national roads that would best respond to the demands of their nations.

Given all of the above-mentioned theoretical changes, there was no question of the CPSU abandoning its role as the leading party in the international communist movement. Paradoxically, given the diversity allowed for by peaceful coexistence and the acceptance of national roads, a center of authority became even more necessary for the maintenance of a cohesive movement.

The Stalin-Tito split was a major blow for a monolithic communism dominated by the USSR. The Soviets were, in the short-run, able to secure the condemnation of Tito and brand him a heretic. In effect, the Yugoslav Communist League (YCL) became the pariah of the international communist

movement. Yet, the Soviets were never successful in bringing the Yugoslavs back into the fold. Stalin's threat to bring about the downfall of Tito by "waving his little finger" never materialized. With the expulsion of the YLC from the Cominform proletarian internationalism had been "irreparably compromised," as authoritative PCI representatives now suggested.¹² The Yugoslavs did provide an alternative model of communism to the Soviet model; a dangerous precedent as time would verify.

With the initiation of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the world communist movement lost even more of its cohesion. In 1963 the CPSU arranged to have the PCF propose a world conference to deal with the Chinese problem. The Italians, through a number of private meetings with the Soviets, made clear their opposition to this plan. In July 1964 Togliatti went to the Soviet Union to attempt to persuade Khrushchev not to expel the Chinese from the world communist movement; the Soviet leader refused to see him. The result of this snub was the Togliatti Memorandum of 1964.

The Togliatti Memorandum was made public by Luigi Longo, after the death of Togliatti. The Yalta Testament, as the Memorandum became known, publically stated the orientation that the PCI had followed privately for some time. The document called for full equality with the CPSU and made it clear that the PCI disapproved of the "expulsion" of the

¹² Timmermann, Op. Cit., p.28

Chinese - even though the PCI sided with the CPSU in this dispute. Togliatti's "polycentrism" envisioned a more autonomous international communist movement pursuing "national roads to socialism". Yet, this process was to be defined in collaboration, and not confrontation, with the CPSU. It was, in a sense, a negation of the Comintern and Cominform experiences. The decisions undertaken at the Twentieth CPSU Party Congress would certainly add credibility to this position.

The tensions between the Soviet party and the West European Communists started to become publicly manifested in the 1960's. There was unhappiness on the part of a number of the parties at the manner in which Khrushchev had been deposed in 1964. The 1966 trial of Andrei Siniavski and Julii Daniel raised a series of protests from the parties. However, it was the "Prague Spring" and the subsequent Soviet response that would have the most traumatic effect.

Publicly the PCI had expressed support for the Czech reforms from the beginning. The French, British and a number of other parties followed this lead.¹³ By July 1968, a joint PCI-PCF delegation went to Moscow to confer with the Soviets and make clear their opposition to armed intervention in Prague. "It was therefore in full knowledge of the effect of their action would have on the communist movement in Europe

¹³ The PCP supported the invasion. In 1968, the Austrian Communist Party condemned the invasion. However, under pressure from the CPSU, the Austrians retracted their criticism in March 1971.

that the Soviet Union and its allies invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968."¹⁴

At this point we are led to suggest that Eurocommunism should be understood as an intersection of positions. As Howard Machin notes,

Between 1974 and 1977 the ideological modifications, national strategies, relations with other communist parties and foreign policy positions of the Italian, Spanish and French communists became so closely parallel to each other that a new style communism seemed to have developed - Eurocommunism.¹⁵

Although there were numerous differences within and between the Eurocommunist parties, there were enough "coincidences", as Machin calls them, to identify this position as Eurocommunist. All of the Eurocommunist parties shared the idea that there were different roads to socialism, as well as different models of socialism. From this position, it would be only a minor step to the "denial of the uniqueness of the Russian model for socialist construction to an open criticism of the less attractive aspects of Soviet government."¹⁶

While it is true that Marx did present the possibility of the legal framework of bourgeois democracy as a forum through which the proletariat could come to power,¹⁷ the

¹⁴ See Leonard Shapiro, "Soviet Attitudes to National Communism in Western Europe", in Machin, Op. Cit., p.49.

¹⁵ Machin, Op. Cit., p.5

¹⁶ Ibid., p.6.

¹⁷ For example, David McLellan writes, "(I)t is true that

main body of Marx's work rejects it. However, given that we are dealing with communist parties, it is to be assumed that they would attempt to procure theoretical legitimation in the works of Karl Marx. Indeed, Marx and Engels had so little to say on the subject of the transition to socialism that a degree of justification for the Eurocommunist position can be found in their works. However, we must understand that communist parties are not merely Marxist parties, but more importantly, Leninist parties. And while theoretical justification can be found in the work of Marx, one is hard pressed to find it in the work of Lenin. At the very least, one must suggest that Lenin's acceptance of bourgeois democracy did not extend beyond tactical ends.¹⁸ There was no question that the bourgeois state had to be destroyed before the construction of socialism could be initiated.

In Lenin's work we see the unequivocal rejection of bourgeois democracy. It was not the seizure of bourgeois state power, but the destruction of that power, that would ensure the transition to socialism.¹⁹ For Lenin the

Marx advocated liberal democratic reforms in Germany in 1848, but this was in a country that had not yet achieved a bourgeois revolution and obviously cannot be applied to present Eurocommunist positions." See David McLellan, "The Theoretical Roots of Liberal, Democratic National Communism" in David Machin, Op. Cit., p. 13.

¹⁸ For Lenin, the bourgeois parliament was only one more arena in which the party engaged in class warfare. His views on this matter can be found in Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution.

¹⁹ For our purposes here it is unnecessary to engage in the

bourgeois state was a vehicle of class domination, relying on coercive force for its preservation. Hence the only option available to those political forces seeking revolutionary change was the liquidation, and not the transformation, of the bourgeois state.

The Eurocommunists suggest that the Popular Front strategy adopted at the Seventh Comintern Congress provides the historical antecedent of Eurocommunism.²⁰ This position suggests that the Popular Front allowed the communists to work with non-communist bourgeois parties to preserve liberal democratic regimes. The Popular Front strategy was defensive and geared to preventing fascist parties from coming to power. There was no question about the necessity of destroying the bourgeois state in the long term. Instead, the Popular Front attempted to prevent the bourgeois state from assuming a terrorist nature - fascism. While the Popular Front may be touted as the antecedent of

debate over the "young" versus the "mature" Lenin in regards to this issue. What can be said is that after 1914, and in State And Revolution as well as Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin sees no compromise with bourgeois state power. At any rate, when Lenin's Bolsheviks come to power in 1917 this was certainly their position.

²⁰ There is reason to believe that this position is primarily a self-justification. Heinz Timmermann accurately points out that "(T)he views on the Seventh Congress of today's autonomists, including the Eurocommunists, are highly dubious - indeed mere legend-making, when they call it the congress which conceded them greater scope for action vis-a-vis the Moscow center. The "scope for action" had been prescribed by the CPSU, even though it matched the circumstances and wishes of the national parties." See Heinz Timmermann, Op. Cit., p.24.

Eurocommunism, its strategy posited that the liberal democratic state would have to be eliminated if socialism was to be achieved.

The Eurocommunists rejected the notion that the bourgeois state needed to be destroyed in order to initiate the construction of socialism. The autonomist parties came to this conclusion through an analysis of contemporary European capitalism. The theory of state monopoly capitalism, dominant in the analysis of the Eurocommunists, posited that since a powerful monopoly sector had arisen in the advanced capitalist countries, the state had to respond to this new reality by being more protective of and responsive to the needs of the monopolies. The needs of monopoly capital would be protected by the bourgeois state, while the interests of the entrepreneur capitalist would be sacrificed. Thus, the state becomes an essential actor in the productive process. The state increasingly becomes the instrument of the monopolist sector while developing a symbiotic relationship with it. To counter this process, it becomes necessary to democratize the state apparatus. The Eurocommunists suggested that the type of capitalism characteristic of Europe in the 1970's was radically different from that analyzed by Marx and Lenin. In this respect the highest stage of capitalism was not imperialism, but state monopoly capitalism. It was precisely this type of capitalism that demanded a new response - Eurocommunism.

The democratization of the state implied the abandonment of insurrectionary politics. Power was to be attained through a gradual process, within the framework of bourgeois democracy; hence necessitating class alliances to reach that objective. In this respect the PCI had been the most sophisticated in its approach for years. However, the failure of the Chilean Popular Unity in 1973 convinced Berlinguer that a "historical compromise" was needed to avoid the fate of the Chilean experiment. While not entirely an original proposal, since the PCI had advocated an almost identical policy prior to 1973, it did formalize the notion that the PCI was prepared to accept liberal democracy. Yet, the tension between liberal pluralism, and the PCI's acceptance of the Gramscian idea of hegemony, remained unresolved.

The Spanish Communist Party advanced the concept of "social and political democracy". This notion denoted an intermediary stage prior to the actual building of socialism. The strategy called for massive intervention in the social and economic life of the country, but the process was to be peaceful and gradual. This stage of advanced democracy was to be led by the "alliance of the forces of labour and culture". Since state monopoly capitalism served the class interests of a reduced number of capitalists, the overwhelming majority of the populace would support, through the electoral process, the transition to socialism. The

"alliance of the forces of labour and culture" thus referred to all non-monopolist strata of the society. Bourgeois democracy, with all of its civic liberties, would not only be preserved, but enhanced by social and economic democracy.²¹

The rejection of insurrectionary politics was accompanied by the rejection of two important ideological features of a communist party: the party as the vanguard of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.²² If the revolution was not to follow the insurrectionary path, there was no need for the professional revolutionaries that Lenin had deemed to be the essence of the party. Following from this proposition, communist parties could establish the organizational structures that would lead them to become mass parties. Indeed, the PCI and the PCE were the most enthusiastic proponents of this course of action. If political change was to be carried out through broad alliances, a mass party would facilitate the establishment of those alliances.

²¹ This discussion is based on Eusebio Mujal-Leon, "The Domestic and International Evolution of the Spanish Communist Party" in Rudolf L. Tokes, Eurocommunism and Detente. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1978, pp.222-223. See also chapter four of his book, Communism and Political Change in Spain, Op. Cit., pp.78-83.

²² Refer to Appendix A for the PCP's position.

Given the above, the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable. In Leninist terms, the dictatorship of the proletariat denotes that period during which the proletariat assumes state power by smashing the remnants of the bourgeois state. The rejection of the dictatorship did not mean that the Eurocommunists were prepared to abandon the proletariat in the struggle for socialism. What it meant was that socialism could be constructed within the framework of bourgeois state liberties. In a sense, the Eurocommunists were not dismissing "formal" liberties, but accepting these as a component of socialism. Nonetheless, socialism continued to serve the interests of the proletariat and all other non-monopoly sectors of the society. If the PCI and the PCE came closest to the full acceptance of bourgeois democracy, the PCF was the most ambivalent in this regard.

While the specifics of the PCI's and PCE's vision of socialism continued to be somewhat vague, the PCF's rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat was not as solid as it could have been. In 1976, at its Twenty-Second Congress, the PCF removed the term from its platform. Particularly problematic was the PCF's contention that the Party should continue to act as a directing influence, influence dirigeante, in the popular movement.²³ The PCF's

²³ William J. Davidshofer, "France: the Evolution of the PCF" in David E. Albright (ed.), Communism and Political Systems in Europe. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979, p.119.

adherence to its conception of advanced democracy, combined with this notion of influence dirigeante, led many to conclude that the PCF had disclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat for the sake of expediency and in name only.

If the Eurocommunist parties appeared to be making significant modifications to their ideological matrixes, they continued to hesitate in applying pluralism to their own internal party apparatus. Democratic centralism continued to be manifest in one form or another. During its Eurocommunist phase, the PCI claimed that only the preservation of democratic centralism would ensure party unity and prevent factionalism. If the PCI accepted a degree of free debate within its ranks, the PCF was not as charitable. Democratic centralism was seen as an internal party matter that did not, in any way, influence the PCF's liberal credentials. Under the leadership of Carrillo the PCE retained democratic centralism, following the same line of reasoning as the PCI.

These ideological changes and the pursuit of alliance partners demanded certain changes in the policies of the Eurocommunist parties. Given that the Western European communist parties carried with them the experiences of monolithic communism, it was essential for these parties to define themselves in relation to the Soviet center. For some parties, particularly the French, a critical posture towards the Soviet Union would be unpopular at the lowest levels of

the organization. If the Eurocommunists were genuine in their acceptance of a pluralist democracy, the Soviet record on such matters as human rights could not be ignored. Indeed, the PCI and the PCE were the harshest critics of the USSR's and Czechoslovakia's human rights violations. Criticisms of specific aspects of Soviet society, as well as the USSR's foreign policy, surged.

If we are to consider seriously the degree to which the Eurocommunists broke from Moscow's foreign policy line, the question of NATO is perhaps the logical starting point. The PCI did not wish to impede the balance of power in Europe. For this reason it supported Italy's continued presence in the Atlantic Alliance. The PCF's posture was in the tradition of Charles de Gaulle; it opposed "Atlanticism" but supported the French independent nuclear deterrent. The PCE opposed the Spanish entry into NATO and called for a Europe free from military blocs. In regards to the European Economic Community, all three Eurocommunist parties supported the membership of their nations in that body. However, it must be pointed out that each party's conception of the EEC was very different. On matters that did not directly affect Europe, the Eurocommunists tended to support Soviet foreign policy in the developing states; although the invasion of Afghanistan was condemned by both the PCI and the PCE. The European disarmament movement constitutes another issue where the Soviets and the Eurocommunists were

in agreement. The fact that the Soviets and the Eurocommunists agreed on certain foreign policy objectives does not mean that Soviet tutelage was operating. It appears that the Eurocommunists, like other left-wing parties, adhered to a number of themes in the area of foreign policy which closely paralleled Soviet attitudes.

Despite some foreign policy similarities, we cannot ignore the fact that Soviet state interests are predominant, over ideological interests, as far as the CPSU is concerned. And it was this feature of the USSR's foreign policy that led to serious conflict between the CPSU and the PCF. Many deep disagreements were to surface between the USSR and the PCF following the establishment of detente in 1972. The Soviets attempted to assure the non-ruling parties that detente would not end, but would strengthen the class struggle. The Soviets could not be seen as abandoning the revolutionary struggle and be perceived as a power interested in great power objectives.²⁴ The propaganda offensive was conducted primarily by Ponomorev and Zagladin. The former claimed that detente was advantageous for world revolution because it neutralized anti-communism.²⁵

²⁴ Leonard Shapiro suggests that much of Soviet propaganda on this matter was directed at Soviet leaders who opposed detente until the issue was resolved at a Central Committee Plenum in March 1973. Leonard Shapiro, "Soviet Attitudes to National Communism in Western Europe" in Howard Machin (ed.), Op. Cit., p.50.

²⁵ This position is outlined by B.N. Ponomorev, "The World Situation and the Revolutionary Process", World Marxist Review, No. 6, 1974.

The Soviet position was also elaborated by K. Zaradov, the editor of World Marxist Review, in the summer in 1975. In a Pravda article commemorating the 70th Anniversary of Lenin's Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution the notion of the "arithmetic majority" was rejected in favor of the Leninist concept of a "political majority".²⁶ It criticized "modern compromisers" for allowing themselves to be swallowed up in a broad alliance that they did not dominate. Primarily directed at the PCF, the article was criticized by the Communist Party of Great Britain and the PCI, in addition to the PCF.

The problem between the PCF and the Soviets centered on the nature of state relations versus revolutionary politics. The Soviets were clearly more concerned with developing formal state relations with the French government than the with the interests of the PCF. For this reason the Soviets opposed the PCF's Union de la Gauche alliance. The French communists responded to this position in no uncertain terms. Jean Kanapa criticized the Soviet position because d'Estaing's policy would draw France closer to the United States. Soviet support for the French government's positions would diminish the PCF's potential for revolution. A year earlier the PCF had levelled the same type of criticism in a L'Humanite article. Leonard Shapiro writes that the

²⁶ In the summer of 1975 the PCP was conducting its assault on power in Portugal. Zaradov appeared to be showing his support for the PCP and its rejection of the "arithmetic majority".

real point at issue with the Soviet Union was whether imperialism should be treated delicately for diplomatic reasons and diplomatic considerations, or whether, as the PCF advocated, detente should be 'consolidated' by a more resolute struggle against imperialism'.²⁷

The Soviets also attempted to respond to the PCF's criticism. The CPSU's theorists argued that Soviet and capitalist economic relations did not threaten the potential for revolution in Europe. In short, the Soviet position suggested that

there is no incompatibility whatever between detente and the class struggle; and that proletarian internationalism had grown even more important when so many divergent international situations had come into existence in the different countries of the Western world.²⁸

The success of Eurocommunism was dependent upon detente between the superpowers. Paradoxically, detente assumed a political status quo with recognized post-war borders in Europe. Therefore, the task facilitated by detente, the seizure of power by the communist parties, became impossible within the parameters of the existing status quo formalized by detente.²⁹

²⁷ Shapiro, Ibid., p.51.

²⁸ Pravda, December 21, 1975. Quoted by Shapiro, Ibid., p.53.

²⁹ Morris makes this point and suggests that western communist leaders, most notably Marchais, "rejected the equation of detente and status quo." See Morris in Howard Machin (ed.), Op. Cit., p.41.

Underlying the PCF's displeasure with the USSR and the CPSU was its conception of proletarian internationalism. The PCF believed that the French left was on the verge of securing political power. Consequently, the strengthening of Franco-Soviet state relations led the PCF to believe that its interests were being compromised. However, the PCF's attitude towards proletarian internationalism continued to be ambivalent despite its difficulties with the CPSU. As it will be illustrated in Appendix A of this work, the French communists were the most active supporters of the PCP during 1974-75. At the same time that the PCF supported the PCP by invoking the principles of proletarian internationalism, Marchais' criticism of the USSR intensified. At the November 1975 preparatory meeting of the Berlin Conference the PCP continued to support proletarian internationalism while the PCI defended "international solidarity"; by mid 1977 the PCF had adopted the Italian concept. PCF-CPSU tensions culminated in Marchais' refusal to attend the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU in February 1976.

With this background we can begin to understand the significance of the debate over proletarian internationalism.³⁰ This concept had been a cornerstone of the international communist movement since Lenin's day. Although proletarian internationalism became a synonym for blind adherence to the CPSU during the Stalin years, it was always meant to denote much more than the means by which the Soviet party legitimized its

³⁰ The difficulties encountered by the PCP with the Eurocommunist conception of proletarian internationalism are elaborated in Appendix A.

dominance over the fraternal parties. How a communist party should conduct its dealings with its fraternal parties became one of the most significant issues addressed at the Berlin Conference. The traditional conception of proletarian internationalism posited that what unites the working-class movement is the struggle against imperialism. Thus, the vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle, the communist parties, are united in their solidarity and co-operation. As such, the concept retains the Comintern ideal of a world communist party because it claims that the interests of the international movement take precedence over the purely limited national interests of this or that party.

In real terms, proletarian internationalism has meant that the CPSU assumes the role of the leading communist party. There are a number of claims utilized by the Soviets to legitimize this position of dominance. Since it was the Soviet party which carried out the decisive break with capitalism, the October Revolution, the CPSU is privileged as the continuator of the first socialist revolution. By virtue of this fact, it is in the USSR that socialism has been most developed and consequently, the Soviets have obtained a deeper understanding of the laws of building socialism. The Soviet Union, and the socialist state system, had become the leading factors of the world revolutionary process.³¹

³¹ These factors are elaborated by Timmermann, Op. Cit., p.49-50.

A proposal for a world communist conference was made by Janos Kadar at the end of 1973; Pravda, on June 5, 1974, endorsed it. The non-ruling parties feared that the proposed conference was designed to serve the CPSU's purposes, as had the 1969 Conference. The Chinese issue was placed on the Conference's agenda by the CPSU; such a matter would have grave repercussions for the Eurocommunists' search for autonomy. To support the censure of the Chinese Communist Party would be paramount to accepting the CPSU's dominance over the movement - something the Eurocommunists were certainly reluctant to do. Faced with this problem the Polish party, with Brezhnev's support, proposed that a conference of the European communist parties be held instead of a world conference.

During the preliminary meetings for the 1976 Conference Ponomarev, the principal architect of the line the CPSU desired to see adopted, wanted the Conference to support the view that the progress of the revolutionary movement in Europe was due to Soviet foreign policy, especially detente. In addition, anti-Sovietism was to be attacked as an instrument of imperialism; and the Chinese attack on the Soviet conception of proletarian internationalism was to be condemned.³² The Eurocommunists opposed this proposal and a number of others designed by the Soviets to constrain the autonomist parties.

³² Pravda, October 18, 1974. Quoted in Shapiro, Op. Cit., p.53.

The disintegration of a cohesive ideological communist movement was highlighted at the Berlin Conference. The main setback for the CPSU was the content of the final communique unanimously agreed upon by all parties. The theoretical disputes were not solved through the compromise revealed in the communique. Not only did the communique reveal the tensions, but the East European press censored sections of the speeches given by Berlinguer, Machais and Carrillo. This Conference demonstrated that the CPSU could not impose its will upon all communist parties. This of course also meant the rejection of the USSR as the "center" of the communist movement. Consequently, the parties felt free to criticize aspects of Soviet society; notably its treatment of dissidents and the absence of civil rights.

The Soviet communists did answer the Eurocommunists in an original fashion. Leonard Shapiro writes that S.I. Dorofeev,³³ in a February 1976 speech, claimed that the adoption of Eurocommunism by the PCI was not a problem. The PCI's advocacy of democratic freedoms should be understood as a tactical maneuver designed to win the support of the Italian petit-bourgeoisie. There was "no need to be alarmed by changes of this kind in the programs of the CPs which maintained a consistently revolutionary position".³⁴ While this may be true, the caveat is in the notion of a "consistently revolutionary position". There is reason to believe that the PCI was no longer following what the CPSU understood to be a truly revolutionary position. Dorofeev's

³³ One of CPSU's experts on Italian affairs.

³⁴ Shapiro, Op. Cit., p.57.

analysis may have been accurate when applied to the PCF, but the PCI and the PCE were much more difficult to understand in this regard.

The problem for the Soviet Union was that criticism from the fraternal parties was much more dangerous than from non-communist parties. The latter can be easily dismissed as anti-Sovietism, bourgeois propaganda, or with any other euphemism. Criticisms from the western communist parties are qualitatively different. Communist parties supposedly have a greater understanding of Soviet reality than do non-communist parties. Therefore, their criticism cannot be easily dismissed since it presupposes, even by the Soviets themselves, a greater depth of knowledge. Not only does it assume this, but it also assumes that there does not exist an a priori adversarial conceptualization of communism and Soviet socialism. As Shapiro writes, "criticism of these conditions from communists who had hitherto been fulsome in their admiration of all things Soviet is considerably more telling than adverse comment from those who are opposed to communism".³⁵ But, not only is this criticism more telling, it is also much more politically devastating for the Soviet Union.

The leftist criticism of Eurocommunism claims that the roots of Eurocommunism lie in the works of Karl Kautsky. There is an undeniable parallel between Eurocommunism and the thought of Kautsky. However, one should not exaggerate this nor be blinded by the fact that this analysis contains an inherent political

³⁵ Ibid., p.55.

slant. More often than not it is expounded by the far left and, consequently, has a political intention. To suggest that Eurocommunism is a crypto-social democracy may make good political and polemical sense, but it does miss the point.³⁶

It is not surprising that Eurocommunism would be rejected by both the Soviets and the European social democrats. For the latter, it was impossible to accept an orientation that suggested a form of non-Leninist communism. For the social democrats, the acceptance of a national communism significantly different from the Soviet model would appear to pose a grave political threat. A national communism would have implications for electoral strategies and would make the communists appear less of a political threat to the European democratic regimes. For the Atlantic Alliance the prospect of communist parties in power posed a potential security threat that could effectively end that organization.

This chapter has presented a brief outline of the Eurocommunist phenomenon. The autonomist trend in the international communist movement climaxed with the adoption of the Eurocommunist posture in the 1970's. With the imposition of martial law in Poland and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the European communist parties had evolved beyond Eurocommunism. The PCI went so far as to announce, in the aftermath of the aforesaid Soviet actions, that it no longer considered itself an integral

³⁶ An excellent presentation of this analysis, perhaps the best, is: Ernest Mandel, From Stalinism to Eurocommunism. London: New Left Books, 1978.

part of the communist movement. In Spain, due to electoral setbacks and internal factionalism, the PCE became a minor party in Spain's political life. The French communists, for long a staunchly pro-Moscow party, appeared to find their way back to the fold and supported the invasion of Afghanistan. The Portuguese Communist Party, whose support for the CPSU had not prejudged their political base, and who continued to have a tremendous impact on the nation's politics, appeared to have been vindicated.

Chapter III

THE PCP THROUGH ITS PAST

In order to understand the motivation and positions of any communist party, or for that matter of any political organization, the historical development of that party is an essential element. The historical context provides the party with its traditions, myths, experiences, and lessons. It is the historical baggage of a communist that significantly contributes to the self-identity of that party. While the historical elements that contributed to the adoption of the Eurocommunist option by the Latin parties can in part be discerned from their history, the PCP's rejection of this orientation was also influenced by its historical experience. In particular, the conclusions reached by the Portuguese Communist Party at its Fifth Congress, and the subsequent practical results of these conclusions, provide essential clues in explaining why the PCP remained hostile to Eurocommunism.

This chapter does not proopt to present an exhaustive history of the Portuguese Communist Party. Although numerous valuable contributions have been made in this area, the limited availability of primary sources make this a difficult task even for the best of historians.¹ The purpose

¹ The work of Jose Pacheco Pereira should be highlighted

of this chapter is to present a brief political history of the PCP.² Given this limited aim, the author does not attempt to contextualize the political history of the PCP. However, a brief history is instrumental to an understanding of the PCP's Sixth Congress and the orientation adopted by the Party at that Congress.

Unlike other European communist parties, the Portuguese Communist Party was not formed as a result of a schism within the socialist movement. Born out of an amalgamation of groups sympathetic to the Soviet Revolution, the PCP retained a strong anarcho-syndicalist residual influence until the "re-organization of 1929". Until this time the PCP was, at best, a marginal force in Portuguese political life. Through the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), the anarcho-syndicalist movement enjoyed a much wider base of support amongst the working-class than did the fledgling Communist Party.³ With the "reorganization" of 1929, and the

here. He provides a clue to the difficulties involved in researching the PCP in present conditions in "Problemas da historia do PCP" in Fascismo em Portugal. Lisbon: A Regra do Jogo, 1982. It is difficult to access the documents of the Party published before 1974. Many archives, including those of the PCP, continue to be closed to the researcher.

² It is unfortunate that no complete history of the PCP has yet been published. However, of particular use is Ramiro da Costa, Elementos para a Historia do Movimento Operario em Portugal, 1820-1975 (2 vols.) Lisbon: Assiriro e Alvim, 1979. The PCP has published its own celebratory history: Partido Comunista Portugues. 60 Anos de Luta ao Servico do Povo e da Nacao. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1981.

³ For example, the CGT had 150,000 members in 1922. This figure is provided by Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.100.

elevation of Bento Goncalves to the post of Secretary-General, the PCP became a genuine bolshevik party.⁴

Founded on March 6, 1921, the Portuguese Communist Party was organizationally weak and ideologically incoherent.⁵ The Party could not depend upon the organizational experiences of its members as could so many parties that had arisen out of a split within the socialist movement. Ideologically, the PCP was influenced by the anarcho-syndicalist tradition that dominated the Portuguese working-class movement. While the Party published and adhered to the Comintern's Twenty-One Points, it did not possess the understanding of Leninism necessary to forge a party of a new type. The Party's work during this period was almost exclusively restricted to capturing syndicates in order to bring the Portuguese syndicalist movement under the influence of the Party.

By 1923 the PCP was divided into three different currents. The leadership of the Party, under Caetano de Sousa, derived its primary support from the PCP's youth organization under the leadership of Jose de Sousa. It was a

⁴ A good source for the 1921-29 period, including valuable documents, is Joao Quintela, Para a Historia do Movimento Comunista em Portugal: 1. A Construcao do Partido (1 Periodo, 1919-1929). Porto: Afrontamento, 1976.

⁵ For example, the Party's newspaper, O Comunista, declared that the PCP's objective was the creation of a society that was as much communist as libertarian. See O Comunista, November 13, 1921. An excellent article outlining the first year of the Party's life is Jose Pacheco Pereira, "O primeiro ano de vida do PCP", Historia. No. 47, September 1982.

current whose primary concern was the maintenance of the Party's ideological purity and did not shy away from violence. Opposed to this line was Carlos Rates, who proposed a policy designed to increase the influence of the Party in Portuguese society. The third faction opposed both Rates and de Sousa and attempted to create a revolutionary syndicalist movement independent of the CGT. Such was the disunity of the Party prior to its First Congress.

The unification of the PCP was mandated by the Comintern's Latin representative, the Swiss Jules Humbert-Droz. Humbert-Droz supported the Rates leadership and was instrumental in excluding the dissidents on the left at the Party's 1923 Congress.⁶ As a result of this action, the PCP was left in a position where it could not confront the rigors of clandestine work. The re-integration of the left into the Party was in itself insufficient to resolve these problems. In fact, the military coup of May 28, 1926 occurred as the Party held its Second Congress.

⁶ Carlos Rates travelled to the USSR in 1924. Upon his return to Portugal he set out to disseminate Marxism-Leninism and publicize the achievements of the Soviet Union. The impressions of this trip are outlined in his book A Russia dos Sovietes (Lisbon: Seara Nova, 1976). Rates would later become a journalist extolling the achievements of the Salazar regime. However, he is probably best remembered for his proposal, made while he was still a communist in the 1920s, to sell the Portuguese colonial possessions as a means of financing domestic socialism. Humbert-Droz's decision to support Rates is criticized by Alvaro Cunhal, O Partido com Paredes de Vidro. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1985, p.254. The political report to the First PCP Congress can be found in Cesar Oliveira, O Primeiro Congresso do Partido Comunista Portugues. Lisbon: Seara Nova, 1975.

The response to these organizational shortcomings and the general ineffectiveness of the Party came in 1929.⁷ The shift in orientation that came to be known as the "re-organization" of 1929 was led by Bento Goncalves, a syndicalist whose union, the Sindicato do Pessoal do Arsenal da Marinha, spearheaded the re-organization. The fact that the impetus for the organization came from a worker's organization explains the subsequent changes that the Party would undergo, both organizationally as well as ideologically, after 1929.

The re-organization that would prepare the Party for the new clandestine reality was effectively accomplished in 1930. By this time the Party had witnessed an increase of membership⁸ and its ideological work was underway. During this process Machado and his group were isolated from the PCP's leadership. With respect to the Party's cadres, the principal focus of ideological work was the struggle against the socialist and anarcho-syndicalist's conceptions of opposition to the authoritarian regime. A factor that contributed significantly to the cohesion of the Party was the initiation of the publication of the Party's newspaper, Avante, in 1931. Two years later, in 1933, the PCP's theoretical and organizational organ, O Militante, would begin publication and thus contribute to the further

⁷ While 100 delegates had attended the PCP's Second Congress, the 1929 re-organization occurred at a meeting where merely forty members were present.

⁸ At this time the Party had 130 members.

solidification of the organization. These two publications, and especially Avante, were to be essential contributions to the Party's activities in terms of propaganda and organizing protests against the regime.

It is following the 1929 re-organization that the PCP adopted as its slogan the "worker-peasant government".⁹ In essence, the strategy suggested that the worker-peasant government provided a transition between a bourgeois regime and the dictatorship of the proletariat. While the worker-peasant government would take steps to crush the power of the bourgeoisie, it was not to be confused with the dictatorship of the proletariat itself. The worker-peasant government was meant only to lead the masses in the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁰

While the CGT found it increasingly more difficult to conduct its activities under the authoritarian regime, the PCP reinforced its position within the working-class movement by creating the Confederacao Inter Sindical (CIS).

⁹ The worker-peasant government was the policy adopted at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1922. However this notion had its origins in the United Front strategy, elaborated at the Third Congress of the Comintern in June, 1921.

¹⁰ While this was true initially, under Zinoviev's influence, at the Fifth Comintern Congress, in June 1924, the worker-peasant government became a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This line was to be followed without alteration until the Communist International's Seventh Congress. The rise of fascist and authoritarian right-wing regimes in Europe would demand a change in strategy manifested concretely in terms of the Popular Front.

The CIS became involved in the opposition to the Estatuto Nacional de Trabalho. Not that the PCP and the CIS were the only working-class organizations that opposed the Estatuto; the CGT and the anarchists were just as determined in their opposition. However, the central difficulty faced by the opposition originated in the different conceptions of political action that informed communist and anarchist positions. The anarchist position - the CGT's - called for continuous, surprise actions culminating in a general strike that would overthrow the Salazar regime. The PCP's strategy foresaw the development of mass struggles which would then give way to superior forms of struggle and the eventual defeat of the authoritarian regime. Throughout this period, the CGT continued to be the most influential syndicalist organization. However, with the establishment of the CIS, the Communist Party began to expand its influence within the working-class movement.

Salazar's Estado Novo sought to consolidate itself by introducing four pieces of law meant to define the regime: the Constitution of 1933; the Condicionamento Industrial; Estatuto do Trabalho Nacional; and Acto Colonial. The communists would claim that the regime was not designed to crush the rising power of the proletariat, but rather to allow the petit-bourgeoisie to accumulate capital in conditions of backwardness and dependency.

The Estatuto Nacional do Trabalho was meant to regulate productive relations.¹¹ Part of this Estatuto, Decree-Law 23050, foresaw the dissolution of syndicates by December 31, 1933 if their statutes were not in compliance with the regime's guidelines. In part, the guidelines established by the Salazar regime intended, in accordance with corporatist theory, to remove the class struggle from the productive process. To remain legal, the syndicates were expected to reject the notion of class struggle and cease all activities that were not in the interests of a nation - i.e. strikes.

In its struggle against the Estatuto do Trabalho, the PCP proposed the establishment of a united front with the CGT and other opposition groups. Initially rejecting this proposal, the CGT ended by accepting the formation of Comites de Unidade (Unity Committees - CUs) composed of CGT, CIS, and FAO members as well as the Comissao de Sindicatos Autonomos and the Comissao de Trabalhadores do Estado. Nonetheless, this alliance of opposition forces should not be confused with the United Front strategy as outlined by the Comintern. Essentially, the Comites de Unidade were characterized by the lack of unity at the bases.¹²

While the immediate tactical positions of the opposition forces allowed for the formation of the Comites de Unidade, major divisions still confronted the working-class movement.

¹¹ The Decree-Laws that made it up were: 23049; 23050; and 23051.

¹² Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.39.

The PCP, using the CIS for its strategy, attempted to develop a mass movement that could utilize the General Assemblies of the legalized unions as its primary vehicle for action. The CGT preserved its traditional support of the general strike as the privileged method of defeating Salazar's regime. It was this position that eventually triumphed in the Comites de Unidade, with the support of the anarcho-syndicalist tendency within the PCP.¹³

The Comites de Unidade were never effective in their opposition to the Salazar regime. Untold delays in calling the general strike benefited the Estado Novo and the political initiative was never to be recuperated. Although the failure to call the general strike significantly contributed to the consolidation of the authoritarian regime, it was the re-organization of the syndicates, in accordance with the guidelines of the regime, that constituted the deathblow to the working-class movement. The divisions within the opposition movement allowed the deadline for calling General Assemblies to expire without a serious challenge to the regime's designs on the trade unions. With the passing of the expiry date, December 31, 1933, the syndicates came firmly under the control of the regime.

¹³ Ibid., pp.38-39. The author also writes that this tendency was especially strong in the Lisbon Regional Committee.

The general strike had been delayed innumerable times. However, on January 18, 1934 the strike was initiated with significant adhesion in the industrial zone surrounding Lisbon as well as in Silves and parts of the Algarve. However, the strike was to have its most spectacular results in Marinha Grande, a major glassware production area. It is here that a "soviet" was established under the influence of the Portuguese Communist Party. Although the general strike was easily crushed by the authorities and the Marinha Grande "soviet" lasted only one day, the political consequences of the January 18 events cannot be underestimated. The Marinha Grande uprising became a major event in the history of the Portuguese working-class movement in general, and in the history of the PCP in particular.¹⁴

It was at Marinha Grande that Jose Gregorio, a glass worker, was to distinguish himself as a communist militant. Many of the cadres that would come to lead the Portuguese Communist Party had either participated directly in the Marinha Grande incident or would be greatly influenced by its political lessons. In this way, the communist movement was to derive lessons that eventually helped it in its demarcation from the anarcho-syndicalist movement. In fact, the most salient consequence of January 18 was the PCP's critique of the anarcho-syndicalists and their conception of

¹⁴ The PCP now criticizes the leadership of the time for "lack of experience", "an incorrect assesment of the correlation of forces" and attributed the affair to "anarchist" influences in the Party. See, Avante, May 24, 1974.

the general strike.

The principal loser in the aftermath of January 18 was the CGT since it had defended the strategy of insurrection. The CIS was strengthened by the failure of the general strike when a number of previously autonomous unions joined it following the failed strike. The strengthening of the CIS naturally strengthened the implementation of the PCP in the working-class movement.

The fortification of the PCP was obtained at a substantial cost. The regime responded to the failed general strike with wide-scale repression. Although the CGT was the most affected, the PCP lost roughly 90% of its union cadres and 80% of its other cadres.¹⁵ However, the point that bears emphasis is the fact that the PCP emerged as the only organized opposition to the regime at the time. With respect to the organization of the working-class, the PCP returned to factory-floor organization as its main focus of activity. The formation of shop cells, combined with corresponding political agitation at this level, within the united front framework, created the preconditions for the implementation of the Party amongst the working-class.

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest that the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, held in 1934, was the most important of all of the Comintern's Congresses. For it was during that Congress that the

¹⁵ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p. 45.

conceptions of the Popular Front and people's democracy were elaborated under the influence of Dimitrov. For the PCP, the Seventh Congress was a near total disaster. The Portuguese communists were severely criticized by the Comintern not only for their policies, but also for their unacceptable clandestine work.¹⁶

By 1934 the European political landscape had experienced innumerable transformations. The rise of fascism and of the authoritarian right throughout Europe, combined with the influence of the social-democratic parties, demanded a new tactical route for the communist movement. In essence, the Popular Front was to extend the alliances already realized through the United Front. The Popular Front was to be the instrument to unite all classes opposed to the terrorist dictatorship of the monopolies and fascism. The goal of the Popular Front was the formation of broad class alliances capable of establishing people's democracies. A people's democracy, understood as a stage prior to socialism, would complete the democratic-bourgeois revolution in those countries where the national bourgeoisie was incapable of so doing. The worker-peasant alliance was to be the primary vehicle for this undertaking. Hence, the completion of the democratic-bourgeois revolution opened the way for the transition to socialism.

¹⁶ Cunhal claims that the Comintern debated the policies with the PCP and "understood" the unique Portuguese conditions. Cunhal, Op. Cit., p.254.

For the Portuguese Communist Party, the adoption of this strategy brought with it a number of serious problems. The Portuguese communists had published the Platform for a worker-peasant government in 1934, six years after it became official Comintern policy.¹⁷ However, the PCP found itself in a peculiar situation. According to Ramiro da Costa, the PCP

was the determinant influence on the Portuguese working class and the largest syndical force, in juxtaposition to what happened in the other European countries. In compensation, its ideological strength and understanding of Marxism-Leninism was clearly inferior to that of the rest of the European communist parties.¹⁸

It was Bento Goncalves, who was present at the Seventh Congress, that was charged with the implementation of the Popular Front strategy in Portugal.

The implementation of the Popular Front strategy antagonized certain sectors within the PCP. Perhaps the greatest challenge was to come from certain quarters of the syndicalist movement. The new policy demanded that the focus of union activity be transferred to the National Unions which were, in reality, creations of the regime and served the interests of the regime. The opposition to this shift in policy came from a number of CIS leaders who were also leading members of the PCP leadership. Jose de Sousa, a CIS leader and member of the party's Secretariat, was the most

¹⁷ The Platform for a Worker-Peasant Government was adopted by the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1928.

¹⁸ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p. 51.

noted of the critics.¹⁹

Clearly the problem of concentrating efforts within the National Unions was a very real one. The bureaucratic nature of these organizations made them quite difficult to penetrate. If penetrated, it was not easy to be effective in carrying out political action against the regime within the confines of their structures. One need not mention the difficulties faced by the Party in implementing this line since it had carried out a ferocious propaganda campaign against these unions. In addition, from an ideological perspective, the anarcho-syndicalist currents still present within the PCP did not see the utility of penetrating the unions or the Casas do Povo.

Despite these internal conflicts, the PCP did adopt the Popular Front strategy in Portugal; primarily through front organizations such as the Liga Contra a Guerra e Contra o Fascismo (LCGCF), established in 1934.²⁰ This organization, led by Bento de Jesus Caraca,²¹ defined its objective as the struggle against imperialist war and fascism. It elaborated

¹⁹ In 1935 Bento Goncalves and Jose de Sousa were imprisoned and sent to the Tarrafal prison camp. The polemic between the two men continued and eventually led to the expulsion of Jose de Sousa from the PCP.

²⁰ The Liga Contra a Guerra e Contra o Fascismo (League Against War and Against Fascism) had been established in 1932, with the support of the Comintern.

²¹ Bento de Jesus Caraca was a communist professor of mathematics who was to play a leading role in many other mass organizations such as the MUD and the MUNAF. He died in 1948.

a minimum program calling for the establishment of democratic liberties, condemning fascists, recognition of the U.S.S.R., the right of peoples to self-determination as well as a number of other demands. In essence, the Liga reflected the PCP's orientation and demands during this period.²² More importantly, it rejected armed action not rooted in work with the masses. In other words, it opposed "putschism", a strategy that republicans and other opposition political currents viewed with favor.

The Popular Front was constituted from the remnants of the Liga. Towards the end of 1935, the task of establishing the Popular Front was initiated; it came to fruition in the beginning of 1936. Although the Popular Front's program called for the establishment of a people's democracy in Portugal, it was, on the whole, much less radical than the program of the LCGCF. The watchwords of the organization, appealing for bread, peace, liberty and culture, betrayed the essentially bourgeois nature of the Front. By way of example, the Popular Front did not demand self-determination for the colonies, as had the LCGCF. It was this bourgeois aspect of the Popular Front that was criticized within the party.

²² The Program of the LCGCF can be consulted in L. H. Afonso Manta, A Frente Popular Antifascista em Portugal. Lisbon: Assirio e Alvim, 1976. pp. 81-87.

The Popular Front did have an immediate impact upon the Portuguese situation. The electoral victories of the French and Spanish Popular Fronts, and the initiation of the Civil War in Spain, were important factors in the development of the PCP's postures towards the Popular Front. Portuguese republican and other opposition groups derived inspiration from the victories of the Popular Fronts in Spain and France. Under the guise of combatting fascism, co-operation with the communists became more acceptable in the aftermath of Franco's attack upon the Spanish Republic. Co-operation with the PCP became more feasible since it was the only political force with a taut organization. However, the weakness of the bourgeois and socialist parties invalidated the Popular Front as a realistic strategy for the non-communist opposition. An acceptance of, and the success of, a Portuguese Popular Front would necessarily entail that it be dominated by the organizational superiority of the Portuguese Communist Party.

Although the Popular Front did not meet with any real success in Portugal, Franco's victory over the Republican forces in Spain effectively ended all hopes of forming a united opposition front along the directives of the Comintern.²³ The anarchist movement, indispensable to the

²³ Some of the organizational and ideological inadequacies of the PCP are pointed to by Ramiro da Costa when he suggests that "the democratic forces saw their own salvation in the salvation of the Spanish Popular Front." The PCP, however, was able to organize a group within the Navy (ORA) that attempted to lead a revolt against the regime on September 8, 1936. See Ramiro da Costa Op.

success of this strategy in Portugal, lost whatever dynamism that it still retained. The PCP also underwent one of its most difficult, if not the most difficult, periods of its existence. In 1939 the party's newspaper, Avante, suspended its publication. The Party's leadership was virtually destroyed in a series of police actions and the Party was expelled from the Communist International. The disarray encompassing the Portuguese Communist Party, so apparent at the end of the decade, set the stage for the 1940-41 re-organization. However, prior to the discussion of the re-organization, a number of issues must be considered.

The Popular Front strategy was only one of a number of factors that weakened the PCP in the 1930's. At the same time that Salazar consolidated his regime, partly through increased repression of the opposition, the Party's ideological and organizational inadequacies were not resolved. With respect to the organization, the party supported a fragile clandestine apparatus susceptible to police penetration.²⁴ Also, the Party's activity rested almost exclusively upon the decisions taken by its leading body, the Secretariat. A mediating apparatus between the highest party organs and the lowest, the cells, was all but non-existent. Naturally, when the Party apparatus was infiltrated the effects were devastating. This problem was

Cit., pp. 57-58.

²⁴ Indeed, this was one of the critiques levelled at the PCP by the Comintern and one of the factors that led to the expulsion of the Party from that organization.

further complicated by the "bad behavior" of Party members under police questioning and torture. Indeed, this type of behavior is one of the factors that led to the PCP's expulsion from the Comintern.

Another serious organizational defect was the manner in which the PCP operated its clandestine press. Three of its most important organs - Avante, Proletario and Jovem - were printed at one central typography, a typography that was itself integrated with the work of the Secretariat. Thus, with the arrest of the members of the Secretariat in 1935,²⁵ the Party faced a crisis of unimaginable proportions.

In the aftermath of the Secretariat's arrest, the Party's new leadership undertook an ideological offensive primarily directed against leftism and anarchism. Given that these two tendencies were deeply implemented within the working-class movement, and within the PCP itself, it was not a surprising consequence. It was believed that the excesses of leftist and anarchist influences had led to tactical errors that jeopardized the existence of the PCP. The other main criticism directed against the Secretariat was that it incorrectly applied the Popular Front strategy.

The new leadership's evaluation of the situation was informed by two important factors. The ideological offensive was a constituent element of the party's ongoing attempt to

²⁵ Bento Goncalves, Jose da Sousa and Julio Fogaca belonged to this body.

define itself in Marxist-Leninist terms. The struggle against the Party's left-wing, and especially the anarchical-syndicalist sensibilities, had been waged since 1921. With the strategic changes introduced by the Comintern, the PCP was forced to adopt a new line conducive to Portuguese conditions. With regard to the second criticism - the incorrect application of the Popular Front strategy - the PCP was, in effect, making a realistic evaluation of the dynamics existent in Portuguese society at the time. The new leadership claimed that the incorrect application of the Comintern strategy occurred because the Portuguese Popular Front had been established from top to bottom. In other words, the Popular Front was merely an alliance of political notables and opposition leaders lacking any real connection to the masses.

By 1939 the Portuguese Communist Party was under the leadership of Vasco de Carvalho and Sacavem. The inability of the Carvalho-Sacavem leadership to resolve the crisis of the PCP, and the Party's lack of links to the masses, demonstrated the necessity for a re-organization. The Party saw its presence in the society eroded to the point where it was reduced to the regional organizations in the Lisbon area and the Alentejo. The PCP also suffered a severe setback when numerous cadres were arrested by the police; probably as a result of police infiltration. The Carvalho-Sacavem leadership was largely responsible for this state of

disarray. It is also important to note that their leadership of the PCP was not supported by the OCPT - the historic PCP leadership imprisoned in Tarrafal.

It was also in 1939 that the Portuguese Communist Party was expelled from the Communist International.²⁶ Pavel, who had left jail with Pedro Soares, reported to the Comintern on behalf of the PCP. In Moscow he was accused of conduct unbecoming of the PCP's representative to the Comintern. Pavel allegedly had informed the police as to the location of the typography that produced the Party's central organ, Avante. While there seems to be very little truth to this accusation, ostensibly this was the reason for the PCP's expulsion from the Comintern.

The re-organization of the Portuguese Communist Party was decided upon by the Organization of Communists Imprisoned in Tarrafal (OCPT). The process was to be facilitated by the fact that Salazar's 1940 amnesty released many communists from the regime's jails. Simultaneously, many PCP militants were also released from jail as their sentences expired. It is the liberation of the historical party leaders during this time that facilitated the re-organization of 1941. Under the leadership of Jose Gregorio, Miltao Ribeiro and Alvaro Cunhal, the re-organization of 1941 proved to be a watershed in the history of the PCP.

²⁶ Cunhal claims that from 1939 until the dissolution of the Comintern, in 1943, the PCP was isolated from the former. See, Cunhal, Op. Cit., p. 255.

It is during this period that a curious development confronted the communist movement in Portugal - the existence of two communist parties. Both adopting the name "Portuguese Communist Party" and publishing Avante. The dissident PCP was made up of ex-PCP members that had left, or been expelled from the party for one reason or another. It was led by Vasco de Carvalho, Velez Grilo, and Cansado Goncalves. Ramiro da Costa describes this group as "being dominated by the petit-bourgeoisie and police provocateurs" where "Trotskyite and revisionist ideas dominated." This author goes on to suggest that the dissident PCP's primary purpose was the destruction of the re-organized Portuguese Communist Party.²⁷ In fact, the dissident PCP was the reaction of the PCP's right-wing to the 1940-41 re-organization. The Third Congress of the PCP recognized that it had not provided an adequate response to the challenge posed by the dissident PCP. In part, the party's weak clandestine work was simply not adequate enough to confront the challenge from the dissidents.

The 1943 Congress of the PCP, the first Party Congress held under clandestine conditions, introduced measures to reinforce the Party's work. Leninist principles were established and a group of professional revolutionaries was forged. Alvaro Cunhal presented the political report to the Congress. Basing itself on the experiences of the mass struggle preceding the Congress, Cunhal's report created

²⁷ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.62.

the basis for the establishment of a broad unitary front against the regime. Cunhal's report presented a critique of the "rightist" positions that dominated prior to the re-organization, but also presented a critique of leftist positions - exemplified by the "leftist" positions regarding the trade unions. However, the Party did not define the stage of the revolution nor did it provide an adequate strategy for the overthrow of Salazar's regime.

The 1943 Congress, and its positions exalting the unity of the anti-fascist movement, created the preconditions for the establishment of the United National Anti-Fascist Movement (MUNAF) in 1943.²⁸ At this point, the dominant opposition view held that the Allied defeat of the Axis powers would lead to the collapse of Salazar. While the local organisms of the MUNAF, the Committees of National Unity (CUNs), were composed principally of PCP militants the Party did not dominate the leadership of the MUNAF. In fact, the PCP virtually relinquished its vanguard role and assigned it to the National Council.²⁹

The defeat of the Axis powers in World War II was followed by mass demonstrations against the regime in Lisbon and Porto. Responding to pressure, the authoritarian regime

²⁸ The leadership of the MUNAF, the National Council, gathered representatives of the PCP, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the republicans. The PCP was represented in this body by Piteira Santos.

²⁹ Ramiro da Costa claims that this position was established in a February 1943 document.

granted a limited opening to the opposition. On October 8, 1945 the Democratic Unity Movement (MUD) was created.³⁰ Established in order to contest the November elections, the MUD was allowed to operate publicly. While the MUD enjoyed a legal existence, the MUNAF, which constituted an important element of the opposition's strategy, continued with its clandestine activities. However, the dynamism of the MUD soon led to the abolishment of the MUNAF.

The difficulties posed to the PCP by the MUD's legal work were various. The continued existence of the MUD was dependent upon an alliance with those political sectors to the right of the Portuguese Communist Party. It became increasingly difficult for the PCP to undertake strikes, such as the ones in 1943, and other forms of action outside the legal scope of the MUD. In this respect, the dynamic that the PCP had enjoyed in the aftermath of its 1940/41 reorganization diminished.

The formation of the MUD led to the establishment of the MUD Juvenil (Youth).³¹ The MUD Juvenil eventually supplanted the activities of the Federation of Portuguese Communist

³⁰ This body was composed of seven members. Luciano Serrao de Moura represented the PCP in this body. The neo-realist writer Alves Redol was first assigned the post, but was replaced in the aftermath of his expulsion from the Party for having talked under questioning while imprisoned.

³¹ The first Central Commission of the MUDJ was composed of Salgado Zenha, Jose Borrego, Oscar dos Reis, Maria Fernanda Silva, Rui Gracio, Nuno Fidelinho Reis, Mario Soares, Octavio Pato, Julio Pomar, Mario Sacramento and Antonio Abreu. The last five of these were communists.

Youths as well as the MUD itself. There is little question that the communist youth wing were the primary motivators of the MUDJ. Indeed, the overall orientation of the movement was under the guidance of Octavio Pato; already a PCP functionary at that point. The MUDJ was a vehicle by which the communists were able to extend their influence among sectors of the Portuguese youth movement. Since the MUDJ's influence was particularly felt in student circles, the PCP's positions began to penetrate this sector of society.

The MUD and MUDJ proved to be important contributions to the overall struggle against the authoritarian regime. However, the initial enthusiasm that surged immediately following the end of World War II soon diminished. As part of the regime's concession to the MUD, the Salazar government agreed to legalize the movement if it could demonstrate that it had a large following - more than 50,000 members - the MUD provided the authorities with its membership lists. These lists were later used by the government to battle the movement. With the changing international climate in the post-war world, namely the onset of the Cold War, Portugal was supported by the West and became a founding member of NATO. By 1947-48 the opposition to Salazar ceased to have any real strength. MUNAF eventually ceased to be a factor in Portuguese political life and the MUD was banned by the regime.

With the 1942 death of Bento Goncalves in Tarrafal, leftist positions within the PCP, espoused mainly by Jose de Sousa, were combatted in that camp; leading to the latter's expulsion from the Party. Given the increasing strength of the MUD and the critique undertaken against Sousa's leftist positions, a rightist orientation surged in the leadership of the PCP. The OCPT adopted its "policy of transition" under the leadership of Pedro Soares, Fogaca and Joao Rodrigues. This "policy of transition" advocated the dissolution of the PCP in the interests of the broad opposition movement.³² In other words, the "policy of transition" encouraged dissenters from the regime to come to integrate in the opposition movement and supported a military coup.

The Fourth Congress of the PCP, held in 1946, witnessed the ascendancy of Alvaro Cunhal. He not only delivered the political report, but also the organizational report to the Congress. It was at this Congress, in his political report, that Cunhal proposed the notions of the "democratic and national revolution" and the "national uprising" that would be further elaborated upon in 1965. Overall, the Party called for the unity of the opposition against the regime. This "line of unity" accepted the validity of many of the concessions advocated in the "policy of transition" line. The "national uprising" presupposed a growing mass movement

³² They also suggested removing the hammer and sickle from the Avante heading and refraining from using language that was overly class-based.

whose climax would be the uprising. It is at this Congress that one can discern the genesis of Cunhal's theoretical positions that were clarified at the 1965 Congress.

In order to achieve the aforesaid objectives, the PCP called for the takeover of the "fascist" unions, casas do povo and other organisms. It was through such activity that the PCP foresaw the development of a mass struggle concluding in the overthrow of the regime. Yet, at this Congress the "policy of transition" was criticized as a rightist and opportunist orientation and its proponents forced into a self-criticism of their former positions. The Fourth Congress also instituted the procedures of democratic centralism and called for a great national party.

The line of unity was further developed by the PCP's Central Committee in its reunions of October 1946 and July 1947. However, with the intensification of the Cold War, the line of unity encountered serious difficulties since the liberal and republican opposition forces had begun to distance themselves from the PCP. This crisis was reflected by Miltao Ribeiro's report to the Central Committee in January 1949. He argued that the PCP must not lose sight of its class nature. If the PCP lost sight of this fact, it would become just another party defending the interests of the bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie.³³ With the

³³ At this time the Secretariat was composed of Ribeiro, Cunhal, and Jose Gregorio. See Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.83.

imprisonment of Ribeiro one month following the presentation of this report, the line of unity was maintained.³⁴

It is during this period that the PCP suffered one of its most serious setbacks. Not only were two members of the Secretariat arrested (Cunhal and Ribeiro), but the Central Committee was reduced to five members.³⁵ The Party was also effectively restricted to the southern margin of the Tagus river, the Alentejo and Lisbon. The damage inflicted upon the Party was attributed to the actions of provocateurs and police spies. As a result, the leadership initiated a process of purges that led to the expulsion of many militants considered either "too right-wing" or too weak. In short, after the arrests of March 25, 1949 the PCP set out to rebuild its leadership and maintain a certain degree of cohesion. Given that a large number of cadres active in the intermediary organisms of the Party were arrested, the Secretariat decided to concentrate power in its hands. Part of the consolidation of the Party demanded a new self-criticism from Fogaca and others involved in the "policy of transition."³⁶ By 1951, when the self-criticisms were demanded, the "policy of transition" was perceived as

³⁴ Over a dozen cadres, including Cunhal, were also imprisoned on March 25, 1949. The sole member of the Secretariat to escape imprisonment, Jose Gregorio, assumed leadership of the Party. Ribeiro would die in prison in January of the following year.

³⁵ Gregorio, Fogaca, Vilarigues, Pires Jorge and Manuel Guedes. Two alternate members, Pato and the writer Soeiro Pereira Gomes, also remained at liberty.

³⁶ Fogaca would join the Secretariat in 1952.

having contributed to the weakness of the PCP since the policy undervalued the vanguard role of the Party.

The struggle against the right within the Party did not end at this point. In 1954, at a Central Committee reunion, the attack was directed against Joao Rodrigues, Candida Ventura and Montes for fractional work and for their support of the dissolution of the MUD.³⁷ However, the reunion of the Central Committee also undertook the elaboration of the Party's Program and statutes. The Program of the PCP foresaw the establishment of a people's democracy through the "expropriation of financial capital, of the latifundists and imperialists, agrarian reform, independence for the colonies"³⁸ and armed insurrection against the regime. The PCP also continued to support the National Democratic Movement (MND), the MUDJ, and established a National Democratic Movement for Peace.

In May 1949 the MND had been created to act within the sphere of influence of the PCP. With the death of President Carmona in 1951, the MND supported the candidacy of Rui Luis Gomes while the rest of the opposition supported Quintao Meireles. The regime's candidate, Craveiro Lopes, won the election after the opposition pulled its candidate in

³⁷ Montes was a pseudonym for a PCP militant who remains, as far as this author is aware, unnamed. A description of this event can be found in Candida Ventura's O "Socialismo" Que Eu Vivi, p.48-53. Rodrigues was expelled from the PCP; Ventura and Montes were removed from the Central Committee.

³⁸ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.100.

protest over the absence of freedom characterizing the elections. While the MND may have failed in its electoral strategy, it continued to claim that the struggle for peace was threatened by imperialism.

From 1949-55 the PCP was concerned with battling sectarianism within its ranks, as represented by the positions of Jose Gregorio. During this period the PCP shifted its focus from an attack on "fascism" to an attack on Salazar and his Minister of Defence, Santos Costa. In 1955 Jose Gregorio was marginalized from the leadership of the Party. It was the Sixth Enlarged Reunion of the Central Committee that undertook the battle against sectarianism. The critics, led by Pires Jorge and Vilarigues, asserted that the organization of the workers should be undertaken in inferior organisms since the Party could not attract large numbers to its cause. These organisms included the fascist unions, the casas do povo and so forth. This Reunion also attacked the concentration of power in the hands of militants and called for the establishment of a genuine collective leadership.³⁹ Whereas the Secretariat had concentrated a great deal of power in its hands under the leadership of Gregorio, the new line supported the active dynamization and participation of the cells and the intermediary organisms in the life of the Party. This led to a weakening of the Party cohesion by destroying the bonds

³⁹ The organizational report was delivered by Pires Jorge.

between the central leadership and the lower bodies.⁴⁰

The practical result of the Sixth Enlarged Reunion of the Central Committee was to move the priority of the PCP's work from clandestine to legal organisms. Overall, this new work would be centered where the working-class was supposedly to be found - in the regime's unions. While it was evident that the PCP would have to extend its base of support following the period of internal consolidation, the emphasis it placed on working within the regime's structures would have serious repercussions. The Commissions of Unity were replaced as the privileged vehicle for Party work in favor of the regime's unions.

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, held in February 1956, was a momentous event in the history of the international communist movement. The notions of "peaceful co-existence" and the "peaceful transition to socialism" developed during this Congress had a profound impact upon the Portuguese communists. The PCP's Fifth Congress, held in 1957, came to reflect the new line of the CPSU. The orientation established at the PCP Congress had its precedence in the Sixth Enlarged Reunion of the PCP. The PCP's critics have suggested that the "policy of transition" and the "unity line" adopted at the Fourth PCP Congress constituted the precedence for the establishment of

⁴⁰ Indeed, between 1958-59 about 40 functionaries were arrested; about a quarter of these were CC members. Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.118.

revisionism in the PCP.

It was at the Fifth Congress that Julio Fogaca was to make his mark on the history of the Portuguese Communist Party. Fogaca, who delivered the political report, adopted the position that the correlation of forces favoured the development of a peaceful transition to socialism. Externally, the advances of the USSR had paved the way for the proponents of socialism. Internally, the PCP was deemed to benefit from the disintegration of the regime. From this analysis Fogaca concluded that a peaceful solution to the national situation was at hand. From this position, Fogaca concluded that the PCP should maximize the opportunities presented by the legal mechanisms of the regime, including contesting elections to their conclusion.⁴¹

Following from the above conclusions, the Program that the PCP adopted at the Fifth Congress supported the nationalization of the monopolists, called for an agrarian reform, and demanded the granting of independence to the colonies. While this Program presented these tasks, the strategy that the Party would adopt to realize them was absent. There was no mention of the national uprising; the Program of the Party was to be realized through peaceful transition.

⁴¹ Avante, no.242, first half of October, 1957.

It was not only in these respects that the PCP emulated the conclusions of the CPSU. With respect to the organization of the Party, criticism was levelled at the excessive centralization of the Party and the lack of internal democracy following from such organizational defects. In addition, the Fogaca leadership conducted a domestic version of the critique of the personality cult; directed against Goncalves, Cunhal, and the Secretariat. This critique of the personality cult led to a collective leadership and the rotation of responsibilities that de-emphasized some of the elements of democratic centralism.⁴²

The Fifth Congress reached the conclusion that the disintegration of fascism was inevitable given the internal contradictions of the regime. The concentration of capital in the hands of the monopolists, and the consequent impoverishment of the bourgeoisie, would lead to massive defections from the regime and its eventual collapse. The obstacle then became not the regime itself, but, echoing positions previously expounded, Salazar and Santos Costa. A peaceful solution could be attained by removing the two individuals from power. As a result, the Party's task was to use the mass movement to accelerate the collapse of the regime's leadership. Consequently, the alliance policy adopted was one of broad-based unity whose purpose would be

⁴² It was this type of work that led to Cunhal's critiques of this position in Rumo A Vitoria.

to bring down Salazar and Santos Costa. However, even without the mass action the regime would inevitably collapse.

In one sense the proletariat ceased to be the vanguard of the masses. Political action was reduced to a secondary role while work within the regime's syndicates became the preferred method of action. Strikes and other such activities were to be subordinated to the Party's active co-operation with all sectors of the opposition. The practical consequence of this type of strategy is described by Ramiro da Costa:

The political, organizational and ideological independence of the working-class, in relation to all other classes, was lost. Instead of struggling for its own objectives, it was destined to play the role of a pressure group in the bourgeoisie's struggle for its own objectives. The ultra-rightist character of the policy made the working-class not merely an appendice to the liberal bourgeoisie, but more than that, an appendice of the fascist forces.⁴³

While da Costa's position may be somewhat overstated, the PCP did effectively cease to be an important force in the struggle against the regime.

In the aftermath of this Congress the PCP would also adopt the "putschist" positions criticized by Cunhal at the Sixth Congress. The Party had previously opposed the notion that the overthrow of the regime could only be realized through a coup d'etat. The previous Congress, the Fourth, rejected these conceptions since they demonstrated that the

⁴³ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.127.

Party viewed the proletariat, and its vanguard Party, as too weak to lead the struggle. Yet, "putschism" existed side by side with notions of "legalism" following the Fifth Congress. While these two conceptions may appear paradoxical they are, in reality, two sides of the same coin. Both conceptions reflect a lack of confidence in the revolutionary potential of the working-classes, recognize the weakness of the Party, and demonstrate a misconception of the nature of "fascism".

In practice, the adoption of the "peaceful road" amounted to very little more than civil disobedience. The Peaceful National Journey, which was to culminate in a peaceful general strike, called for the removal of Salazar from power. The movement initiated in May 1959 became the central tactic of the Party. The campaign presupposed that the army would either not intervene on the side of the regime or join the popular movement.⁴⁴

In 1958, one year following the PCP's Fifth Congress, the authoritarian regime encountered the most serious threat to its stability. General Humberto Delgado, formerly closely associated with the Salazar regime, declared his candidacy for the Presidency and challenged the regime's candidate Admiral Americo Tomas. Delgado's campaign created a mass

⁴⁴ The PCP's strategy was under the influence of the PCE theorists at this time. The Spanish communists initiated their own peaceful campaign to overthrow Franco which the PCP emulated. However, the strategy adopted by the PCE was clearly not applicable to Portuguese conditions.

wave of enthusiasm unlike anything previously seen in Portugal. In part, Delgado's mass appeal was based on the fact that he had publically stated that if elected he would use his constitutional powers to dismiss Salazar.

Initially the PCP supported the candidacy of Cunha Leal in the 1958 campaign, but soon transferred its support to Arlindo Vicente, a candidate whose sole support came from the communists. The lack of support for the Vicente candidacy, combined with the enthusiasm for Delgado, forced the PCP to fuse the two candidacies. Belatedly, the PCP came to support the General it had previously belittled with the euphemism "General Coca-Cola". If the Norton de Matos campaign had been supported by grass-roots organizations, the Delgado candidacy derived its support from opposition notables. Although the popular enthusiasm for Delgado was not understood by the PCP, the Party had little alternative but to support him.

The PCP, having thrown its support behind Delgado, was committed to the electoral act and believed that victory could be attained through the ballot box. The June 8, 1958 elections proved to be, by all accounts, fraudulent; Tomas was returned to office and Delgado was defeated. The electoral results were followed by strikes and mass demonstrations protesting the outcome. For all intents and purposes, the PCP had not expected such demonstrations and had played a limited role in what were truly spontaneous

protests. Only on June 25 did the PCP leadership call for a series of protests scheduled for July 1-3.⁴⁵

In August 1958 the PCP's Political Commission made an assessment of the events following the Delgado defeat. The "peaceful solution" and the delayed response to the 1958 presidential elections were justified at this meeting. The PCP adopted the position that if it had warned the masses that the results of the electoral act would be manipulated the masses would have lost their enthusiasm.⁴⁶ In the aftermath of the 1958 elections the Party adopted the position that all "honourable Portuguese" should unite to overthrow the regime.

It was the call for a peaceful solution during this period of the proletariat's mounting radicalization that led to the reduction of the PCP's influence. Simply stated, the PCP had not correctly understood the socio-economic conditions in the country and had failed to adopt an adequate political response to the dissatisfaction with the regime. It was this situation that led to the criticism of the "anarcho-liberal deviation". The initiation of the critique was facilitated by the escape of Alvaro Cunhal and a number of other Party leaders from prison in 1960. The

⁴⁵ The northern regional section of the PCP made the call on June 16 and the Political Commission did the same on June 18. However, these calls came after the protests had already began.

⁴⁶ This position is attributed to Jaime Serra by Francisco Martins Rodrigues and cited in Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.137.

critique of this deviation was aimed at the "legalist" and "putschist" conceptions that dominated the PCP. In this critique of the right, Cunhal was supported by the leftist elements of the Central Committee.

January 3, 1960 witnessed the escape from the Peniche prison fortress of a number of Party leaders who enjoyed a great amount prestige within the PCP and had not been part of the "rightist deviation".⁴⁷ By May of that same year the critique was underway. The document released by the Political Commission of the Central Committee severely criticized the "putschist" conceptions that had led to the development of illusions within the leadership and the rank and file.

This muted criticism became more pronounced by December 1961 when the Central Committee released a document much more critical of the "anarcho-liberal tendency".⁴⁸ The document criticized the fractional work within the PCP, including the Secretariat; the rotation of Party tasks; and the statutes introduced at the Fifth Congress which limited democratic centralism.⁴⁹ The critique of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" was initiated as, and only directed at, the organizational positions dominant since the

⁴⁷ Cunhal had been imprisoned for eleven years.

⁴⁸ The document was entitled "A tendencia anarco-liberal na organizacao do trabalho de direccao" (The anarcho-liberal tendency in the organization of the leadership's work). It appeared in O Militante, no.108, January 1961.

⁴⁹ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.151.

Fifth Congress. The document presented in December merely built upon the criticism elaborated in May. The former document suggested that it was the notion of the inevitable collapse of the regime that led to the disorganization of the Party. As a result, the organizational weakness led to a near total collapse of the Party's influence in the society. It was therefore proposed that recruitment and a return to the solid principles of democratic centralism were necessary to invigorate the PCP. Another conclusion reached was limiting the number of Party functionaries in order to create a genuine group of professional revolutionaries.

The March 1961 reunion of the Central Committee approved a political report critical of the rightist deviation.⁵⁰ This report, presented by Cunhal, claimed that the theses of the CPSU's Twentieth Congress regarding the transition to socialism through the parliamentary road had been mechanically adopted by the PCP. This mechanical adoption of the CPSU's thesis led to equating the peaceful solution with the notion of the irreversible collapse of the regime. Both legalist and putschist conceptions arose from the weakness of these former conceptions. The document also asserts that the "peaceful transition line" is the descendant of the "policy of transition" that dominated the PCP from 1945-48.

⁵⁰ The document was entitled "O desvio da direita no Partido Comunista Portugues nos anos de 1956-1959". It was published in O Militante, no.109, April 1961. According to Ramiro da Costa, World Marxist Review refused to publish the document and the PCE asked for an explanation. Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.154.

In addition, Cunhal criticized the lack of preparation that led to the Party's inappropriate response to the Delgado phenomenon. The reaction to Delgado, and the subsequent Peaceful National Journey, were deemed to have been the result of "the influence of a brother party's orientation weighed more heavily than the study of Portuguese reality"⁵¹ - a reference to the Spanish communists. The PCP's overtures towards "dissident fascists" alienated the Party from the liberal bourgeoisie and made anti-fascist unity more difficult. Not only did the deviation hamper anti-fascist unity, it also acted as an impediment in the development and intensification of the popular movement. Indeed, the rightist orientation led to a dependency upon the military and other conservative forces to remove Salazar and underestimated the potential of the mass movement.

The criticisms presented by Cunhal at the March 1961 reunion of the Central Committee were echoed by a number of proposals that came to be ratified by the 1965 Kiev Congress. The "peaceful solution" line was replaced with the concept of a national uprising; a proposal that had been suggested by Cunhal at the Party's Fourth Congress. The vanguard role of the proletariat during the revolutionary process leading to the national uprising was reaffirmed. Simultaneously, Cunhal called for a broad unitary class alliance that excluded only the monopolists and the latifundists. In this respect, there was a clear

⁵¹ Quoted in Ramiro da Costa, Ibid., p.151.

demarcation from the practical alliance policies followed by in the aftermath of the Fifth Congress. This demarcation rested on the fact that the PCP had adopted the position that fascism was the dictatorship of both the monopolists and the latifundists associated with foreign imperialism and that Portugal was a "colonized colonizer".

The March 1961 reunion not only criticized the line pursued following the Fifth Congress, but also the organization and training of cadres.⁵² As previously alluded to, this Central Committee reunion severely criticized the rise of a party of functionaries and collective leadership. These conceptions, combined with the rotation of tasks and the relaxation of democratic centralism, weakened the Party organizationally and politically. In addition, the loose discipline facilitated the infiltration of the Party by the regime's policy and "provocateurs". Indeed, this accounted for the police successes against the PCP in 1958-59. Cunhal and his supporters demanded that the guidelines for recruitment, promotion, and party work be altered. In short, the PCP had become a party were careerism dominated and the leadership had succumbed to bourgeois influences. What was needed to correct this situation was the introduction of a rigid democratic centralism that could cope with the difficulties of clandestine activity.

⁵² The document is entitled "Ensinamentos duma serie de prisoes" and appeared in O Militante, no.110, May 1961.

The critique of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" resulted from an alliance of Cunhal and his followers with the left of the Party. However, the dynamic created by the critique of the "right" put in question the line of unity still supported by Cunhal. As the left began to call for the logical conclusion of the critique, Cunhal began to side with the right of the Party against his former allies. The development of the struggle against "terrorism" arose out of the question of the national uprising. Cunhal maintained, as it would be affirmed at the Sixth Congress, that the national uprising could only be successful when the popular movement evolved to a higher stage of combativity. Since the revolutionary situation had not yet arrived the emphasis of the Party's work was to be concentrated on the popular movement. Therefore, the acts of violence and armed struggle proposed by the PCP's left were condemned as "terrorist".

To understand the rising influence of the leftist conceptions of revolution it is important to remember that the Delgado candidacy initiated a movement that was becoming increasingly more militant. The success of Fidel Castro in Cuba, the seizure of the Santa Maria and the failed Beja coup influenced the anti-Salazar opposition. The establishment of the FPLN in 1962 signified a broad unity of the opposition forces. Delgado, who became the Front's president in 1964, gave a certain amount of credibility to the organization. However, given the Front's propensity for

internal disagreements and the indecision of Delgado, the Front collapsed. The mass demonstrations in 1961 and 1962 also influenced the course of events within the PCP. In August 1963, the Party's Central Committee met to resolve a number of internal questions posed by the conflict between the "left" and Cunhal's supporters.

In the years following the initiation of the critique of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" the left-wing of the PCP began to demand armed struggle as a response to the crisis of the regime. Encouraged by the 1961-62 mass movement and the initiation of the colonial war in 1961, the left began to support the positions of the Chinese in their conflict with the CPSU. This position was represented in the PCP's Central Committee by Fransico Martins Rodrigues. Rodrigues presented a document to the Central Committee at this reunion entitled, "Peaceful struggle and armed struggle in our movement", critical of the unitary line adopted by Cunhal, and calling for more radical action. In essence the Rodrigues document maintained that Cunhal's conception of the "national uprising" was a bourgeois conception that replaced the proletariat with the bourgeoisie as the vanguard of the revolution.⁵³

By the time that the aforementioned reunion of the Central Committee was held Cunhal's faction had established the practice of isolating the left within the ranks of the

⁵³ Ramiro da Costa, Op. Cit., p.162.

Party. In part, this was accomplished by simply not notifying certain members of the Central Committee that reunions were held, and by expelling or marginalizing others. Rodrigues' documents were not distributed throughout the Party for discussion. As a result, Rodrigues would be formally expelled from the PCP in January 1964. However, his abandonment of the Party one month earlier created a split from the left.

Rodrigues was followed by a small number of PCP militants; and these never profoundly affected the organizational structures of the Party. Nonetheless, in January 1964 Rodrigues and his group created the Patriotic Action Front (FAP) dedicated to the armed struggle. Three months earlier, in April, Rodrigues was again the main instigator behind the creation of the Portuguese Marxist-Leninist Committee (CMLP) that began to attack the PCP from the left. The CMLP would eventually be destroyed as a force inside of Portugal with the arrest of its most important leaders.⁵⁴ While the group reformed in exile the initiative on the PCP's left would be filled by other groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The CMLP split was to provide a precedent for organization that would come to receive great support by criticizing the PC from the left.

⁵⁴ Avante had published the names of two CMLP leaders when they entered the country, thus effectively turning them over to the PIDE.

It was under these circumstances that the PCP held its Sixth Congress in 1965. The importance of the Sixth Congress and its conclusions cannot be underestimated. It was the watershed Congress that brought the internal conflicts, which had dominated the PCP since its inception, to a conclusion. In the aftermath of the Congress the PCP developed a cohesive organization and a coherent theoretical understanding of Portuguese society. In addition, the formulations adopted at the Sixth Congress impeded the PCP from pursuing a Eurocommunist option as long as they remained dominant.

Chapter IV

THE DEMOCRATIC AND NATIONAL REVOLUTION

The Sixth Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party, held in the city of Kiev in 1965, proved to be a turning point in the ideological and political development of that political party.¹ Held while the Party operated in clandestine conditions inside Portugal, this Congress defined the theoretical and strategic orientation that was to guide the PCP in its struggle against the authoritarian regime. Any attempt to reach an understanding of the Party's actions during the Portuguese Revolution would ultimately prove fruitless unless informed by the decisions of the said

¹ Alvaro Cunhal's report to the Central Committee of the PCP, delivered in April 1964, and published under the title Rumo a Vitoria, is the essential work in the PCP's elaboration of the "democratic and national revolution". A complimentary work is the report of the Central Committee of the PCP delivered to the Sixth Congress by Cunhal and published under the title Relatorio da Actividade do Comite Central ao Sixth Congresso do PCP. The results of the Sixth Congress were made available to the fraternal parties in an article by Vasco Moura, "The Portuguese Communist Party and the national-democratic revolution". World Marxist Review. Vol. 8, No. 9, 1965. It is curious to note that the "democratic and national revolution" is referred to in this article as the national-democratic revolution these are, however, two very different conceptions of revolution. Cunhal's Radicalismo Pequeno Burques de Fachada Socialista, first written in 1970, provides a critical look at the radical left as well as interesting insights on the "democratic and national revolution". The single best available commentary on the "democratic and national revolution" is Carlos Gaspar's "Historias do PCP: a tese da revolucao democratica e nacional". Revista de Ciencia Politica. (Lisbon), No.2, 1985.

Congress. Not only did the 1965 Congress establish the "democratic and national revolution" orientation that still guides the Party today; it also was instrumental in defining the organizational character of the Portuguese Communist Party. The understanding of Marxism-Leninism responsible for guiding the Party during the Revolution, as well as its response to Eurocommunism, has its origins in this Congress. Indeed, it was the VI Congress that shaped and defined the PCP as a truly orthodox party.²

The formulation of the "democratic and national revolution" at the Kiev Congress was the culmination of the PCP's internal struggles as well as a reflection of Nikita Khrushchev's impact upon the international communist movement. Cunhal's daring 1960 escape from the Penhiche prison initiated a struggle for the leadership of the PCP which would culminate with him being de facto recognized as leader of the Portuguese communists.³ The preceding chapter

² This is certainly true in more ways than one. This Congress was highly unorthodox since it produced a unique conception of revolution not fully in accordance with the Soviet theoretical paradigm. However, as Gaspar suggests, the PCP elaborated its own "road to socialism" without distancing itself from the Soviet centre. Despite its theoretical originality, the result of the Sixth Congress was that it moved the PCP closer to the CPSU than it had been previously. Ibid., p.67.

³ It is always difficult to determine to what extent one individual's life influences the fortunes and character of a political organization. However, it is even more difficult to determine these influences when little factual evidence is available to the researcher. This is the case with the life of Alvaro Cunhal. Due to the nature of clandestine work, very little is known of Cunhal's private life and personality. What we can say is that the PCP is, to a large extent, the product of his efforts over

of this work has analyzed these developments. It is, however, worthwhile to point out that although the "anarcho-liberal deviation" had been defeated by 1965, it was still far from eliminated within the ranks of the Party. Cunhal defeated the "right" with the help of the more radical elements within the Central Committee, the same people that were so forcibly criticized after this aim was realized. Having defeated the "right", Cunhal was to co-opt these elements in his struggle against the Party's left-wing. The preoccupation with a balanced critical position regarding both of these orientations helps to explain much of the content found in Rumo A Vitoria.

The PCP's internal struggles did not develop in a vacuum. The criticisms of the "left" and "right" must be considered within a tangible frame of reference - the disputes within the international communist movement. Cunhal, who had been a domestic victim of the critique of the personality cult, sided squarely with the CPSU in its dispute with the Chinese

the years. He has written all but one of the PCP's theoretical works in the last two decades. Cunhal's brand of Marxism-Leninism is dogmatic, orthodox, and strongly influenced by Suslov and Ponomarev. The need for secrecy during the clandestine years has created a party that continues to be as rigid as before. Cunhal has support for this organizational method. Imprisoned for over a decade, Cunhal became the uncontested leader of the PCP as well as a popular folk-hero for the Party's militants. Born in 1913, Cunhal entered the ranks of the youth-wing of the PCP in 1934. Cunhal was elected General-Secretary of the PCP in May 1961, although he was the de facto leader prior to this date. A very unfriendly biography of Cunhal is Ferreira, Francisco. Alvaro Cunhal: Heroi Sovietico. n.p.: Edicao do Autor, 1976. Also of interest is Carlos Gaspar's "Pater, Petruschka et Pontifex", Risco, No.3, Fall-Winter 1985-86.

Communist Party. However Cunhal's pro-Soviet stance must also be seen as incorporating the CPSU's critique, under the Brezhnev leadership, of the excesses of Khrushchev's attack upon Stalin's personality cult. In this respect, Cunhal's unquestioning acceptance of the CPSU as the center of ideological purity was severely facilitated by Khrushchev's demise.⁴

The Portuguese Communist Party elaborated its own conception of a national road to socialism at its Sixth Congress. For the first time in its history the PCP undertook an analysis of Portuguese reality and developed a revolutionary strategy based upon that analysis. The result was the "democratic and national revolution". Yet, as Carlos Gaspar suggests, this particular stage of the revolution would end as soon as the construction of socialism was initiated.⁵ Despite the PCP's ambivalence towards its limited theoretical autonomy, the "democratic and national revolution" was truly a unique conception. Not only did the PCP call for a violent overthrow of the existing regime, unlike any other European communist party at the time, but the path leading to the revolution differed from every other European party. The "democratic and national revolution" is understood as an intermediary stage between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions. Herein lies the originality of Portuguese communism and the fundamental precondition to

⁴ Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.65-68.

⁵ Ibid., p.68.

understand why the PCP rejected the Eurocommunist option.

The Portuguese Communist Party's conception of the "democratic and national revolution" was premised on a particular analysis of Portuguese society. The starting point of this socio-economic analysis was a rejection of Salazar's notion that Portugal was a "naturally poor country". The authoritarian regime claimed that Portugal's underdevelopment was a natural outcome of the paucity of natural resources.⁶ Dismissing this claim as an attempt to "absolve the dominant classes and the fascist government"⁷ of their responsibility for this state of affairs, the PCP claimed that Portugal's underdevelopment was the result of the nature of existing capitalist relations of production.

According to the Party, the Portuguese economy was burdened by the lowest level of development in all of Europe.⁸ Asserting that the country's natural resources were "sufficient to guarantee the material well-being of all Portuguese",⁹ the level of underdevelopment was due to the degree of monopolization of the economy. The monopolist

⁶ Partido Comunista Portugues, Programa do PCP. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1974.

⁷ Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.15.

⁸ Although Portugal was the most economically backward country in all of Europe, Cunhal claimed that this low level of development was also characteristic of Spain under Franco and "reactionary" Greece. There is no doubt that the political lesson was to equate authoritarian regimes with misery and underdevelopment. Ibid., p.17.

⁹ Ibid., p.16.

groups, the latifundists and foreign imperialism were listed as the causes of this state of affairs. The "fascist" government of Salazar was characterized as being "entirely subordinated to the interests of the monopolists".¹⁰ While Salazar's government asserted that Portugal occupied an "intermediary position" in capitalist development, the PCP drew another comparison that was certainly less flattering. According to the communists, the Portuguese economy was to the advanced capitalist countries what the economies of the colonies were to Portugal. In other words, the country should not be classified as "intermediary", but as an underdeveloped nation. Portugal occupied an intermediary position only insofar as it occupied a half-way point between those nations under "colonial slavery" and the "advanced capitalist countries".¹¹

In its analysis of the Portuguese economy, the PCP went to great pains to demonstrate that the country was greatly dependent upon foreign capital. Yet this small, dependent nation was a colonial power; and it is precisely this paradox that gives Portugal its uniqueness. Given its nature as both a colonial power and a dependent nation, the dominant classes became "disinterested" in the development of the national economy.¹² Portugal was thus understood by the PCP to be to be a "colonized colonizer".

¹⁰ Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.35.

¹¹ Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.19.

¹² Ibid., p.23.

Given Portugal's status as a "colonized colonizer", the communists asserted that the path to development would only be realized through a radical transformation of the economic relations of production. However, this transformation clearly presupposed the overthrow of the "fascist" regime. Characterized as the "terrorist government of the monopolists, associated with foreign imperialism and the latifundists",¹³ the authoritarian regime was the instrument, as well as the protector of the monopolists.¹⁴ Following this perspective it becomes obvious that the main political aim of the PCP was the overthrow of the regime. It is this aim that became the first objective of the "democratic and national revolution". As a result, the movement to overthrow the regime assumed both an anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist nature.

Within the perspective of the Portuguese communists, the military coup of 1926 was carried out by the "reactionary forces" of big capital and large agrarian interests. Overall, the purpose of the coup was to place the state in the service of these groups. Such a state ensured not only

¹³ The definition put forward in Cunhal's report to the Sixth Congress varies slightly from this definition. The Party concluded that "the fascist regime is the terrorist dictatorship of the monopolists and latifundists ..." See Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.95; and Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.24.

¹⁴ Gaspar quite accurately pointed that the uniqueness of the "democratic and national revolution" did not arise out of the peculiarities of the Salazar regime. For the PCP, the regime was "a trivial fascist regime." Rather, the uniqueness of the concept arose out of the notion of the "colonized colonizer." Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.73.

the maintenance of these groups, but also their expansion by blocking the development of the medium and petit bourgeoisie as well as the working-class movement. If prior to 1926 the big bourgeoisie was less than dominant, the installation of the authoritarian regime ensured that state power would be utilized to defend the interests of monopoly capital. If the centralization of capital in the hands of the monopolists is bitterly opposed by the other sectors of capital, the monopolists must use the state in their attempts to concentrate capital. Thus, the legal and theoretical structures of the corporatist state were created so as to provide a legitimation for the said process.¹⁵

Whereas under the natural development of capitalism the centralization and monopolization of capital is an evolutionary process relatively free of major conflicts, when the state assumes the type of role that it did in Portugal the process becomes inherently violent. This violent process thus allows the financial oligarchy to establish its dominance over the entire economy. This position of dominance arises out of a particular form of organization; that is, the fusion of industrial capital and financial capital. Industrial and financial capital effectively became controlled by the same small group. In Portugal, this process could in 1965 be divided into two distinct periods. The first of these, up until the beginning of World War II, was characterized by the state's

¹⁵ Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.27.

facilitation of the development of large financial groupings. The end of the Second World War initiated the second period characterized by the state's active involvement in the accumulation process. Passive state co-operation had become, through a number of government projects and legislation, active co-participation in the process.¹⁶

The analysis outlined by Cunhal and the PCP suggests that it would be erroneous to consider the mere number of large companies and conclude from this that real competition was present. In fact, Cunhal goes on to argue, the economy was dominated by a small group of individuals who do not restrict themselves to monopolizing merely one sector of the national economy. Having an economy where financial and industrial capital were so interdependent, Portugal became dominated by "eleven large monopolist groups."¹⁷ These groups controlled various sectors of the economy and, consequently, were united by common interests. This is why the PCP suggested that the primary factor characterizing the relationship between these groups was their drive to eliminate smaller competitors.¹⁸

¹⁶ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.28; Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.35.

¹⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op.Cit., p.31.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.32.

It is at this point that the PCP's analysis becomes more relevant since what follows from this position will greatly influence the party's alliance strategy. If the interests uniting the monopolists were as great as the PCP claimed and primarily directed at abolishing competition, then the basis for an anti-monopolist, mass movement was created. To demonstrate that this was the case, the PCP emphasized the idea that the regime was actively undertaking this type of strategy. It is in this respect that the communists' claim arises that the laws of industrial conditioning (condicionamento) were designed to accelerate the process.¹⁹ In short, the regulatory policies introduced by the regime served a definite purpose that was fully contrary to the interests of the non-monopolist sectors.²⁰

These regulatory and protectionist features of the national economy were combined with the manipulation of financial capital. The state actively undertook the concentration of financial capital through its participation in the large companies. The state undertook this participation not to obtain profits, but "only to serve the monopolies."²¹ Therefore, the state was entirely at the service of and existed for the benefit of the monopolies.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.32 - 37.

²⁰ Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.31.

²¹ Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.41 - 42.

The solution to this situation proposed by the Communist Party included the nationalization of the banks and the industrial monopolies. Even in 1965 the PCP was thoughtful enough to realize that such an action would be, at the very least, a problematic solution. Cunhal was careful to assert that such a project "can be undertaken without any serious perturbation in the course of production and the economic and financial life of the country."²² At this point, there was no question that the model envisioned by the PCP would create state-owned enterprises and not co-operatives.

If the overthrow of "fascism" ends the political power of the monopolists and latifundists, the nationalizations are the first step in the destruction of the social power of these same groups. The destruction of the economic power of the monopolies would be accompanied by a strategy for development in the aftermath of the nationalizations. Part of this developmental strategy includes the protection of private initiative, the protection of small industrialists and businessmen. To a large extent, economic development would be dependent upon the output of small businesses still regulated by capitalist relations of production.²³ The problem with this analysis is that it leads the PCP to conclude that,

To struggle against the fascist dictatorship is to struggle against the monopolies; to struggle to liberate Portugal from fascist domination of the

²² Ibid., p.43.

²³ Ibid., p.42 - 43.

monopolies. The liquidation of the power of the monopolies is the central objective of the democratic²⁴

The other fundamental economic question that was considered at the VI Congress was the agrarian question. It is not at all insignificant to note that the section in Rumo A Vitoria analyzing agrarian reform is initiated by a recognition that Portugal is divided into two distinct forms of property ownership with the Tagus river acting as a demarcation line. To the north of the river, the existence of "small ownership"; to the south, the existence of "large properties."²⁵ This duality would eventually provide the PCP with most of its successes in the south as well as its most serious defeats in the north. There is no doubt that Cunhal was aware of this potential problem when he claimed that the solution to the agrarian question was the establishment of "two agrarian reforms." The two agrarian reforms would conform to the two distinct forms of property ownership and the classes affected by the reform.²⁶

²⁴ revolution. Ibid., p.43.

²⁵ This distinction between "big" and "small" is only meant to serve the most general of characterizations. Indeed, barring some exceptions, the generalization is both accurate and accepted. For a comparison of the numbers see Cunhal, Ibid., p.47 - 50.

²⁶ There is an ominous comment that Cunhal makes in Rumo A Vitoria. On page 49 he suggests that while it is impossible to transport land north, it is "not easy" to transfer northern peasants to the south. Judging by the actions of other CP's, this solution should not be ruled out.

The expropriation of large estates and the transfer of these over to rural workers and the peasantry would be the first step of such an Agrarian Reform. Two distinct advantages would result from such a process. First, rural workers do not own their own land and, consequently, do not have an attachment to it that would make expropriation difficult. Second, this measure would affect few property owners, but would benefit a large number of people.²⁷ There is another consideration that cannot be overlooked from a purely instrumental point of view. The PCP derived most of its support from the southern rural workers that would benefit from such an act. The consolidation of its influence and power in an area affected by such an agrarian reform was not overlooked by the Communist Party.

Unlike the question of nationalization, this type of measure was somewhat polemic within the ranks of the Party. Sectors within the party believed that segments of the agrarian propertied class could become potential allies in the struggle against the regime.²⁸ Cunhal rejects the possibility of the latifundists, as a class, becoming allied with the anti-monopolist movement since many monopolists were also latifundists; not only was financial and industrial capital fused, but landownership was fused with

²⁷ Ibid., p.49 - 50.

²⁸ This view was based on the fact that certain latifundist sectors did oppose the regime's agrarian policies. Indeed, Cunhal recognizes that some contradictions did exist between the latifundists and the monopolists. See Ibid., p.50-51.

them. Hence, the large landowners could be expected to struggle with the regime for a bigger slice of the pie, but could not develop any revolutionary potential.²⁹ In addition to this theoretical point, there was a more immediate political concern voiced within the party. This objection stemmed from concerns that such an agrarian reform would alienate those landowners whose sentiments were anti-regime. Cunhal replied to this objection by claiming that a revolution is the struggle of certain classes against others.³⁰ Both of these objections, from the PCP's right, were defeated.

Just as the Salazar regime was seen as actively serving the monopolists by destroying competition in the secondary sector, the same process was underway in the primary sector. Through a process of exploitation, making difficult small agricultural production, withholding credit, manipulating markets and a number of other measures, the regime was deemed to be working in the interests of the latifundists. In short, the government was "attempting to accelerate the rythm of capitalist development in the fields".³¹ The agricultural policies followed by the government, such as the "colonization" and the "agricultural reconversion" of the land south of the Tagus were pointed to by the Party as examples of the attempt to accelerate capitalist production

²⁹ Ibid., p.51 - 52.

³⁰ Ibid., p.52.

³¹ Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.56.

in the fields.³² In short, the intent of the regime was to destroy the small and medium landowners to benefit the large agricultural concerns. It was so successful in this aim that by 1964 the relations of production characterizing Portuguese agriculture were clearly capitalist.³³

The PCP posited that the result of these policies led to the proletarianization of small and medium landowners. Cunhal attempts to show that the passage from "independent producer to peasant without land" is a subtle process. Indeed, the process begins when the producer must sell his labour to survive, but continues to work on the land. The PCP's analysis suggested that in the north many of the agricultural workers were "semi-proletarian." In the south, the overwhelming majority were salaried rural workers.³⁴

It was imperative for the Party to undertake a fundamental analysis of the agrarian problem given the social tensions that Portuguese society was undergoing in the early 1960's. Cunhal's conclusion that the rural proletariat had become dominant in the fields of southern Portugal held out great promise for the PCP on a number of fronts. The rural proletariat "enlarges the social base of

³² Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.53 - 59.

³³ Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.71.

³⁴ The PCP gives the following figures: As far back as 1950, 87% to 91% of the agricultural workers in the Alentejo were salaried workers. In the districts of Lisbon, Santarem and Castelo Branco, the number was roughly 75%. See Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.60.

the democratic revolution in the fields and creates objective conditions favorable to socialism."³⁵ If there was any doubt on this matter Cunhal did not hesitate to point out that the revolutionary consciousness of the rural proletariat had been amply demonstrated through the various actions undertaken against the regime.³⁶ As a result, the growing strength of the rural proletariat was a "factor of the highest importance for the development of the struggle against the fascist dictatorship."³⁷

Given the above reading of the situation, the party is led to make the assertion that agrarian reform would benefit the overwhelming majority of rural workers and peasants. In practical terms this would mean expropriating large estates and handing these over to the workers. Individual exploitation of land could only be viable if co-operatives and state estates were established. Given this position, Agrarian Reform would go beyond "the mere handing over of expropriated land."³⁸ In part, this would mean that the state would have to work actively, using all of the economic

³⁵ Ibid., p.62.

³⁶ In his report to the Sixth Congress Cunhal claimed that the rural proletariat "closely accompanied", by virtue of its consciousness and heroism, the industrial proletariat. Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.104.

³⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.62. To the peasant, Cunhal quoted Engels and told them that capitalism had made their form of production historically obsolete. In the vary same paragraph he claims that the PCP defends their interests and presents them with "the only solution that can save them from complete misery." (p.62 - 63).

³⁸ Ibid., p.63.

resources at its disposal, to ensure the viability of Agrarian Reform. The importance of such a reform rested with the fact that not only did it affect all classes involved in agricultural production, but the nation as a whole.³⁹

Within the perspective of the Portuguese Communist Party, the originality of Portugal's fascist government was its total capitulation to imperialism. It was manifested by the fact that the "symbols of foreign imperialist domination" have penetrated all, including the most banal, aspects of everyday life.⁴⁰ The hardship imposed upon Portuguese society by foreign, primarily American, imperialism was as intense as that imposed by the domestic monopolists and latifundists. The logical conclusion reached by such reasoning is that imperialist exploitation of Portuguese resources is no less of a detriment to economic development than is domestic exploitation.⁴¹ The nation's lack of political independence stems from this form of economic domination.

In his analysis of imperialism, Cunhal accuses Salazar's regime of "a national betrayal." The policies of the "fascist regime" not only created a "semi-colonial country", but those same policies threatened to make Portugal a completely colonized country. Such a process had been

³⁹ Ibid., p.63.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.87.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.89.

greatly accelerated by the cost of conducting a war in the African colonies.⁴² What was significant about imperialist penetration in Portugal was that this penetration was supported by the full political and military might of the imperialist powers.⁴³ For the PCP, the commitment made by foreign imperialism to the Portuguese regime in the wake of the colonial war was much greater and, for the PCP, proportionally as dangerous to the future of the country.

According to Cunhal, it was interesting to note that there existed no "fundamental contradiction" between foreign imperialism and the domestic monopolies.⁴⁴ In fact, the latter were financially linked to the former in various forms. This relationship negated the possibility of there developing a contradiction between the two that would lead Portuguese capital to adopt a nationalist position that could be a factor in the overthrow of "fascism". Rather, Cunhal affirms quite the opposite:

Portuguese financial capital today voluntarily shares with imperialism the exploitation of our people, and turns itself into an instrument of the growing domination of Portugal by foreign

⁴² Ibid., p.90. Indeed, Cunhal suggested that Salazar's colonial policy was meant to create a greater interdependence between Portuguese and foreign capital. He writes, "the policy of Salazar is to further strengthen the position of the foreign imperialists in the Portuguese colonies in order to closely tie them to Portuguese colonialism and to the fascist policy of exploitation and war." Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.63.

⁴³ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.92.

⁴⁴ Cunhal characterizes these as "siamese twins in the exploitation of the Portuguese people and the Portuguese colonies."

imperialism.⁴⁵

Given the intimacy of foreign and domestic capital, as well as his conceptualization of the authoritarian regime as merely an instrument of their interests, Cunhal suggests that the former has "a determining influence in the orientation of the Portuguese economy and politics."⁴⁶

The problem of liberating the country from the grip of imperialism was not easily resolved as far as the PCP was concerned. In part, this was the result of a "weak national consciousness" that prevented many Portuguese from recognizing the level of imperialist domination. What Cunhal describes as a "weak national consciousness" is the result of two factors; the past glories of Portugal and its Empire, as well as the "disguises" used by imperialism to conceal itself. The first of these factors gave rise to a national chauvinism that created the illusion of dominance so long as Portugal retained her colonial possessions. The second factor manifested itself in terms of the "domestication" of foreign capital through the adoption of Portuguese names and the establishment of local headquarters in Lisbon.⁴⁷ The interaction of these two factors obscured the national consciousness and acted as an impediment to the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.93; See also Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., pp.43-46.

⁴⁶ Portugal's membership in EFTA and an eventual integration in the Common Market would then aggravate Portugal's dependency as well as the level of exploitation of the worker." Ibid., p.94 - 97.

⁴⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.97 - 98.

success of the revolution.

In 1964 this was quite a serious problem for the PCP. Considering the communist perspective, it was this lack of national consciousness that was responsible for the severe limitations encountered by the anti-imperialist movement. Indeed, this factor often led to the subordination of the anti-imperialist struggle in favor of the economic struggle of the working-class.⁴⁸ In other words, the failure to forge a clear anti-imperialist character to the anti-fascist movement was both a reflection of and a factor in the prevention of a truly revolutionary class consciousness. The political solution to this problem was to

tie the day to day struggle against the fascist dictatorship with the direct struggle, persistent, without respite, against imperialism. It is necessary to engrain in the spirit of the Portuguese people that the imperialists, hand in hand with the large Portuguese monopolists and latifundists, are behind the fascist government, supporting and inciting it in its crimes.⁴⁹

Having demonstrated the dependence of Portuguese capital upon foreign capital, Cunhal claims that the revolution then assumes both a democratic and a national character. Therefore, as Cunhal suggests, the establishment of a democratic regime in Portugal can only be successful if it also liberates the country from foreign imperialism. A failure to achieve this end would jeopardize the democratic regime at any given time. The economic power of imperialism

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.98.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.99.

must be defeated to ensure the survivability of the revolution; the struggle against fascism is then also a struggle against imperialism and vice versa. Only this successful realization of this struggle would be capable of securing the "genuine independence of our Homeland".⁵⁰

It is within this context of dependence that the colonial question becomes an urgent matter. The PCP came to the conclusion that only by ending the "policy of war" could the interests of the Portuguese and the colonized people be served. The development of a mass movement in opposition to the war would also be a contribution to the anti-fascist struggle.⁵¹ The anti-colonial struggle assumes a liberating dynamic not only for the periphery, but also for the metropolis itself.

In 1964, when Cunhal was writing Rumo A Vitoria, the colonial war had been underway for three years. Yet, within this relatively short period of time, certain important developments could be pointed to by the Portuguese communists. For example, as the pace of the war intensified, the military commitments necessary to continue the war pushed the Portuguese regime further into the hands of foreign capital. Paradoxically, as the struggle for freedom intensified on the part of the colonial people the independence of Portugal became increasingly compromised due

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.113.

to imperialist penetration of the country. In short, liberating the colonies also meant liberating the Portuguese people. In this respect, Cunhal was convinced that "in Portugal the best patriots are the internationalists."⁵² By proclaiming itself the most patriotic organization, the PCP was attempting to deflect the regime's accusations of treason as well as to benefit from the nationalist sentiment that it often criticized.

The Portuguese Communist Party had been committed to the independence of the overseas possessions since 1957. It therefore rejected any type of "self-determination", "federation", or other such proposal short of full independence. The PCP would necessarily play the crucial role in the alliance between the Portuguese working-class and the anti-colonial movement. Responding to internal party differences, Cunhal states:

Only a total incomprehension of the problem could lead a comrade to affirm that the alliance "is very underdeveloped" and to think that it would only be "developed" if the Party and the nationalist organizations in the colonies established common plans of action.⁵³

⁵² Ibid., p.115. The Soviet writers Y.M. Kukushkin and S.I. Semenov, under the editorial supervision of Zagladin, stated that the "... specificity of the revolutionary process in Portugal which went on against the background of a colonial war, brought to the fore the military question." Institute of Social Sciences, Theory and Tactics of the International Communist Movement. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985, p.419.

⁵³ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.117.

There is clearly no conception of determinism involved in this analysis, only the claim that independence of the colonies would weaken the fascist regime by aggravating its crises. By the same token, the anti-fascist movement in Portugal would "favourably influence" the African national liberation movements.

This perception of the role of the national liberation movements follows the theoretical line adopted by the CPSU. The solidarity existent between the Portuguese working-class and the national liberation movements is an expression of the international proletarian struggle for socialism. According to Cunhal it was the historic victories of the international working-class movement, and in particular the support of the USSR, that made the development of the national liberation movements possible. In this way, the PCP wholly identifies itself with the positions of the CPSU regarding the international communist movement and the national liberation struggles.

It is within this perspective of imperialist domination that the PCP arrives at its position regarding NATO. Given Portugal's military weakness and economic backwardness, Portugal's influence within the Alliance was deemed to be irrelevant and the country became little more than "... territory" in the service of the great imperialist powers."⁵⁴ In this context, NATO then becomes an instrument

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.124.

through which foreign imperialism was able to guarantee the preservation of its military bases in Portugal and to ensure the survival of Salazar's regime.⁵⁵ This relationship between Salazar's regime and the Atlantic Alliance was designed to ensure that Salazar had sufficient military aid to continue the colonial war.⁵⁶ In short, the PCP's position regarding this issue can be summarized in the following manner:

The participation in NATO is, in all aspects, contrary to the interests of the Portuguese people and the nation. NATO is an instrument of imperialist and fascist domination of Portugal and the Portuguese colonies.⁵⁷

There were other elements to the PCP's opposition to NATO. Starting from the assumption that the Soviet Union was not a threat to any other nation, the United States was condemned as the most aggressive of imperialist powers and, consequently, the greatest threat to world peace. Echoing Khrushchev's position that the shift in the correlation of forces had altered to the point where peaceful co-existence was imposed upon the West, peaceful co-existence is to be regarded as both a form of class struggle and a positive factor in the development of the world revolutionary movement. Yet, given that the nature of imperialism had not

⁵⁵ Cunhal states, "the existence of military bases in Portuguese territory places in question the existence of the Portuguese nation ... the military bases have no defensive end whatsoever." Ibid., p.125.

⁵⁶ Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.63.

⁵⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.125.

been altered and it therefore remained aggressive, the foreign military bases were perceived as a potential source of aggression against the socialist countries. This line of reasoning led the PCP to conclude that military bases in foreign territory are not destined for any other purpose except for the preparation of such an aggression."⁵⁸

The implications of the above analysis led Cunhal to assert that the Salazar regime, whose policies were "directed against the people and the nation", could only survive if it quelled the popular resistance to it by a "total suppression of democratic liberties, and the constant employment of the means of repression".⁵⁹ If this is the case it then follows that the struggle for a democratic regime and democratic liberties becomes the main task in the Party's struggle against the regime.⁶⁰ This of course raises the inevitable question of state power and the maintenance of that power once it is achieved.

The Portuguese communists claimed that a democratic regime could not be established within the institutional parameters of the Estado Novo. Cunhal is adamant in his rejection of the notion of simply "taking over" the machinery of the state.⁶¹ This position was directed not

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.126.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.145.

⁶⁰ Institute of Social Sciences, Op. Cit., pp.415-417.

⁶¹ Such an objective is only held by those who wish to preserve the power of the monopolists and latifundists

only at the non-communist opposition, but also at those communists who still believed in the "peaceful road" that had previously dominated the Party's political orientation. Cunhal summarizes his position by writing,

Political forces that want to take power and make profound transformations in Portuguese society, that want to remove power from the classes that today possess it and bring power to the classes that are today dominated, cannot limit themselves to take care of the fascist state apparatus. They must destroy ⁶²

It becomes self-evident that the "fascist state", in all of its dimensions, must be smashed. The failure to do so will mean the failure of the revolution.

Having arrived at this junction, the question to be considered is how the state is to be destroyed and what form it will take after the revolution. Clearly, the smashing of the state must be initiated prior to the taking of political power. In other words, the question of state power cannot be dealt with only after the "fascist" government has been replaced by another government. The smashing of the state must be initiated during the democratic revolution, and before the conquest of state power. The PCP envisioned the relationship between the revolution and state power in the following manner:

and all that this implies. He does of course recognize that the state could survive without Salazar. Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.150-51.

⁶² it. Ibid., p.151 (Cunhal's emphasis). The influence of Lenin's State and Revolution is clearly evident here.

But the popular revolution, in order to place a democratic government in power, must first inflict profound blows upon the military and bureaucratic apparatus of the fascist state.⁶³

Having come to the conclusion that it was necessary to destroy the fascist state and replace it with a democratic one, the problem then becomes one of defining the nature of that state. Obviously, as mentioned above, the origins of the democratic state lie in the revolutionary process which precedes the seizure of power by democratic forces. Cunhal addresses the question of state power by reiterating the PCP's acceptance of the Leninist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Cunhal, given that the state is the "instrument of domination of one or various classes over other classes", it is the "organized violence" of the dominant classes." For the Portuguese communists, the democratic state is "the working-class and its allies organized as dominant classes." The democratic state then serves three primary functions: first, it is the instrument to be utilized by the working-class and its allies to smash the resistance of the defeated classes, a resistance that would certainly be led by the monopolists and latifundists; second, to defend the regime against foreign imperialist intervention; and third, to realize the objectives of the democratic revolution. This can only be ensured by replacing the elements of the old "coercive institutions" - the military, the bureaucracy, the courts,

⁶³ Ibid., p.151.

and so forth - with truly democratic ones.⁶⁴

Since Cunhal claims that the Salazar regime is the "terrorist dictatorship of the monopolists and latifundists", the most urgent task is the establishment of "democratic freedoms". The conquest of these freedoms is not only a means by which Portuguese political life is to be reformed, but it also becomes the most immediate demand of the masses. Recognizing the existence of various interests and ends which characterize the various anti-monopolist classes, the PCP claimed that it was the demand for freedom which united all of the Portuguese people, "with the exception of a handful of millionaires and the small fascist band serving them."⁶⁵ The analysis set forth by the PCP essentially claims that the regime's social base of support is virtually non-existent. Consequently, Salazar and his government only survived with the aid of foreign imperialism and a coercive state apparatus. The overwhelming majority of the Portuguese population was objectively on the side of the revolution.

It is the above understanding that informs the PCP's alliance policy in the "democratic and national" stage of the revolution. The overthrow of the dictatorship and the installation of democratic freedoms is, in itself, sufficient reason to justify a policy of broad-based class

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.151 - 152. All emphasis is Cunhal's.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.153.

unity.⁶⁶ The PCP, while accepting the above, presents one caveat in regards to this policy of alliances. The establishment of democratic liberties not only responds to the profound desires of the Portuguese people, it is also "a necessary step to reach other objectives of the democratic revolution."⁶⁷ Responding to leftist criticism, Cunhal claims that the struggle for democratic freedoms is not merely an objective of the anti-fascist forces, but is also the fundamental objective of the Party and of the proletariat at that stage of the revolution.⁶⁸

Following from this point, Cunhal asserts that a Provisional Government must be established in the aftermath of the overthrow of the fascist regime. Such a government would ensure the establishment of democratic freedoms and hold free elections for a Constituent Assembly.⁶⁹ However,

⁶⁶ The task at hand, according to the PCP, was the overthrow of fascism. Thus, alliances were based on that simple fact. The underlying presupposition is that the choice was not between capitalism and socialism, but between fascism and freedom. See Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.150.

⁶⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.153. Cunhal's emphasis.

⁶⁸ The left wing of the Party suggested that this policy was a "renunciation" of the Party's revolutionary tasks and, consequently, an attempt to compromise with the bourgeoisie. This policy, according to Cunhal's critics, demonstrated the hesitation of the proletariat's revolutionary capacity. Cunhal responds by quoting Lenin's To The Poor Peasantry in which he writes that the conquest of liberties has to be the primary aim in order to unite the Russian proletariat in the struggle for socialism. This was written by Lenin prior to the 1905 revolution. See Ibid., p.153.

⁶⁹ Other tasks of the Provisional Government would include the release of political prisoners, the right to strike,

it is indispensable that the PCP participate in such a Provisional Government: its claim to participation rests upon the fact that the said government should be composed of all of the forces that overthrow "fascism".⁷⁰ Participation in such a government would allow the PCP to defend the interests of the proletariat and the labouring masses. While not making the adoption of the Party's program a condition of participation, the Party would actively attempt to implement all of those immediate changes that could aid in the realization of the "democratic and national revolution". In short, the only pre-condition set by the PCP for its participation in the Provisional Government is the implementation of democratic freedoms and the holding of free elections to a Constituent Assembly.

This work has undertaken a considerable effort to elaborate the Portuguese Communist Party's socio-economic analysis underlying the concept of the "democratic and national revolution". Only through a detailed elaboration of the reality of early 1960's Portugal, a reality as perceived by the PCP, can one contextualize the "democratic and

universal franchise, the creation of structures of a democratic state - i.e. a democratic armed forces, a democratic police, and a democratic justice system. Looking at the revolutionary process of 1974 - 1975 one can see that the PCP fought actively for all of these measures. Ibid., p.154; see also Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., pp.92-93.

⁷⁰ One really is never sure just exactly how representation is to be determined. Given that the PCP was the strongest anti-regime force, one can conclude that the PCP would have the greatest number of representatives.

national revolution" and its objectives. The objectives of the revolution, both democratic and national, guided the Portuguese communists not only until the collapse of the authoritarian regime, but also during the revolutionary process. The PCP's activity during the national crisis of 1974-75, as well as the Party's subsequent defense of the "democratic regime" established in the aftermath of the crisis, constitute a praxis informed by the said theoretical conception of the Portuguese road to socialism.

Cunhal's 1960 prison escape set the stage for a leadership battle within the PCP. The various Central Committee reunions held in the aftermath of the Peniche breakout served to consolidate his power within the Party. In February 1965, both Avante and O Militante, published a Central Committee communique announcing the outline of a new Party Program to be submitted to the Sixth Congress.⁷¹ The communique claimed that the objective of the PCP's Program was to scientifically define, based on the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the tasks faced by the Party at that junction of the revolutionary process. The PCP maintained that the primary objective of the "democratic and national revolution" was the overthrow of the "fascist regime". To this end, the immediate phase of the "democratic and national revolution" assumed a broad anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist character. Recognizing the ultimate aim of

⁷¹ The text of this communique can be consulted in Partido Comunista Portugues, Documentos do Comite Central, 1965/74. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1975. pp.13-16.

the PCP as the transition to socialism and communism, the Party Program asserted that the "democratic and national revolution" was an inherent and indispensable component of the transition to socialism. However, the construction of socialism, through the dictatorship of the proletariat, was not possible until the total completion of the democratic and national stage.

The "democratic and national revolution" was "democratic" because it would "end the fascist tyranny"; establish democratic freedoms; abolish the power of the financial oligarchy; defend the interests of the people; and implement a "series of profound reforms benefitting the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese people". It would be "national" because not only would it terminate the imperialist domination of Portugal, but also end Portuguese colonial domination over the overseas possessions. In addition, the revolution would assure Portugal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and "the genuine independence of the country."⁷²

In order to achieve the "democratic and national revolution", the Program of the PCP outlined eight fundamental objectives. First, the destruction of the fascist state and the installation of a democratic regime. Second, the liquidation of monopolist power followed by economic development. The third objective called for an Agrarian Reform that would give the land to those that

⁷² Ibid., p.17.

worked it. Fourth, improvement of the standard of living of the working classes in particular and the people in general. Fifth, the democratization of education and culture. The sixth objective was the liberation of Portugal from imperialism. Seventh, the recognition of the immediate right to independence for the colonized peoples. And, lastly, the development of a policy of peace and friendship toward all the peoples of the world. The realization of these eight objectives completed the "democratic and national revolution".⁷³

It becomes quite apparent that the PCP's strategy to obtain power was divided into distinct phases. The "democratic" aspect of the revolution would see the PCP coming to power as the vanguard of a broad anti-monopolist movement and establish an eventual dictatorship of the proletariat. This process would simultaneously demand a vigorous anti-imperialist stance. While it would be possible to achieve political power before defeating imperialism, it was not possible to maintain that power without its defeat. In this respect, the "democratic and national revolution" is both anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist - it cannot but be so.

The PCP's strategy demanded the formation and consolidation of a broad unitary movement in order to realize its end. In other words, the PCP's assault upon

⁷³ Ibid., pp.22-23.

state power would be preceded by a firm implementation in the civil society. To this end, the trade union movement, the students' movement, the anti-colonial movement and so forth became essential elements in the PCP's formula for revolution. In one sense, the state would not so much be smashed as it would be swept away. During the revolutionary process of 1974-75 the PCP combined its attack on the state with an assault on civil society. Although the Party failed to implement the eight objectives of the PCP Program that constitute the "democratic and national revolution", the exercise was not a total failure, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter. The PCP's success in creating a "democratic regime" in Portugal was presupposed by an alliance policy that would facilitate just such an endeavor.

The essential fact that must be considered in analyzing the alliance policies of the PCP is the Party position that the "fascist government" served merely the interests of the monopolists and the latifundists; the interests of all other classes and stratum were not served by "fascism". We can then see that the interest of the proletariat, the peasants (small and medium producers), the urban petit-bourgeoisie, sectors of the medium bourgeoisie, and intellectuals were all hurt by Salazar's policies.⁷⁴ It is this all-encompassing opposition to the regime which would determine the alliance policy to be followed by the Party.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.159

⁷⁵ Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.37.

However, it was well understood that the alliance policy to be pursued during the "democratic and national revolution" was context-specific. In other words, a broad unitary alliance policy would be followed during this phase of the revolution. This policy was dictated by the immediate need to overthrow the fascist regime during this phase of the democratic and national revolution. However, once the socialist revolution was initiated, it would

present the policy of alliances in different terms than those that it is presented in the democratic and national revolution. At the same time, it is not the abolishment of capitalism that is in question; what is now in question is the abolition of the power of the monopolists and latifundists and the liberation of Portugal from imperialism.⁷⁶

The struggle against fascism was a struggle that necessarily incorporated all anti-monopolist forces.

According to Cunhal, it must be remembered that such broad-based class opposition did not end the class contradictions amongst the opposition. The establishment of any anti-monopolist front merely recognized the regime and its base of support as the common enemy. Conflicts within the anti-fascist movement would arise in due time. Yet, this front would be the beneficiary of one of the regime's fundamental contradictions. The concentration of capital, the prime objective of Salazar's policies, strengthens the proletariat at the same time that it strengthens the monopolists and the latifundists. Simultaneously, the middle classes are "squeezed", thereby eroding the regime's

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.86.

social base of support. In other words, while the regime strengthens the social forces opposing it, it also creates an imperative for united action.⁷⁷

It can therefore be concluded that the fundamental class base of the anti-monopolist front was the working-class in alliance with the peasantry and the urban petit-bourgeoisie. One should not by any means overlook the external factor: the struggle of the colonial peoples was an essential element of this front. In Portuguese conditions, the question of working-class unity did not present itself since there only existed one working-class party: the PCP.⁷⁸ The absence of other working-class parties, and the fact that the syndicalist movement was formally dominated by fascists and informally influenced by the PCP through the unitary commissions, gave rise to the unique character of working-class unity in Portugal. Given that this unity existed under the leadership of the communists, it was translated into diverse economic and political struggles as well as the struggle of the unitary organisms.⁷⁹ While the working-class may not have been sufficiently united in its action, it was not divided either.

⁷⁷ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.159.

⁷⁸ The existing socialist groups are composed of intellectuals and cannot be counted as working-class parties (p.160). See also Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.101.

⁷⁹ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.160.

As has been alluded to, the question of the peasantry contained unique characteristics. The rural workers of the South were not only supportive of the democratic revolution, but are also in favor of socialism. The property-owning peasantry of the north had a reduced, often spontaneous, method of struggle. Notwithstanding, the anti-fascist movement can only be strengthened by the organization of the peasantry and its incorporation into the struggle.⁸⁰

There is no question that the leading role in the unitary movement belonged to the proletariat and, naturally, to its vanguard party. In Portuguese conditions, Cunhal claimed that it "is only the proletariat that is in the condition to promote the unity of all anti-monopolist classes and masses".⁸¹ Indeed, the PCP always enjoyed a determining role in the unitary movement, except during "some periods when sectarian or opportunistic conceptions predominated in our work."⁸² For Cunhal the fact that large sections of the anti-fascist movement accepted direct or indirect co-operation with the PCP was itself a great victory and a vindication of the Party line. Rather than having lagged behind the bourgeoisie, as the left contended, the Party had been strengthened by its moderate positions.⁸³

⁸⁰ The question of what type of worker-peasant alliance was to be constructed was addressed by Cunhal in Relatorio, Op. Cit., pp.113-118.

⁸¹ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.162.

⁸² Ibid., p.162.

⁸³ Ibid., p.163.

The approach to the question of alliances was a most serious one for the PCP. Having so often made serious mistakes in this regard, by 1964 the PCP was sufficiently strong enough to adopt the position proposed by Cunhal. Indeed, he went to great lengths to explain that the establishment of a common front could not be dominated by one political party and its political program. The establishment of a front must be based on a minimum program that will not alienate any member or allow any other to dominate. For this reason the PCP rejected the elaboration of detailed programs, something which was "a preoccupation absorbing too many energies" and which "distracts attention from fundamental tasks."⁸⁴ This is certainly not to suggest that the PCP did not have concrete proposals for a minimum program. It certainly favoured the elaboration of a Program for a Provisional Government which would be established following the overthrow of the fascist regime.

The elaboration of a Provisional Government Program was an essential task because such a program would be beneficial in obtaining the support of the masses for the democratic and national revolution, as well as support for the political program of the PCP itself. However, the development of a unitary program for the Provisional Government would serve an additional purpose; it would allow the masses to implement the program of the Provisional Government even prior to the holding of elections for the

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.164.

Constituent Assembly. The existence of such a document would inspire the masses to implement the measures contained in the program during the revolutionary process preceding the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Revolutionary mass action would guarantee the adoption of certain measures prior to the elections which would make these "truly free"; the result of this electoral expression of the will of the people would be respected the PCP.⁸⁵ It was this conception of free elections that was to have such a political impact during the crisis of 1974 - 75.

The adoption of a unitary program does not negate the fact that the program of the PCP is objectively correct - unfortunately, for the Party, the other classes and parties involved in the anti-monopolist struggle are simply not cognizant of this. Nonetheless, it is only the proletariat that finds itself in the position to fulfill all of the goals of the democratic revolution. The program of a Unitary Front will necessarily be much more limited than the Party's own program. In 1964, the Party was preparing its program; it was also active in the consolidation of the (FPLN) Patriotic Front.⁸⁶

The unitary movement envisioned by the PCP was to have its concrete expression in the form of the FPLN. The principal problem faced by the FPLN was the creation of an

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.166.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.167.

effective leadership inside Portugal itself. In 1963, the central leadership body of the FPLN, the Central Patriotic Junta, was non-existent. Until the Front held its II Conference, in January 1964, that remained unchanged. The PCP was instrumental in demanding the establishment of a leadership organ that would function clandestinely within the country. Indeed, the Communist Party's position was to develop a leadership organ within the country and another in exile. Leadership of the unitary movement would be exercised by those that de facto led the movement. In other words, the Party claimed for itself the leadership of the unitary movement.⁸⁷ The PCP's struggle within the country would act as a pole for other opposition groups. Therefore, a policy of broad-based alliances under the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party would ensure its dominance of the unitary movement.

The establishment of a broad unitary movement created favourable conditions for the PCP to exercise its influence in society. At the same time, Cunhal was adamant in his claims that the regime could only collapse through the use of force. The position expounded by the Secretary-General of the PCP was that all peaceful forms of struggle had been exhausted and that the regime did not understand any other language except that of violence. The overthrow of the regime would be realized through an act of violence that incorporated a "national uprising", a "people's

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.170-74.

insurrection", and "... the armed struggle of the people and revolutionary soldiers overcoming and destroying the fascist military and repressive apparatus."⁸⁸

In one sense, this conception of revolution is truly radical; the PCP was the only orthodox communist party advocating armed struggle in Western Europe at the time. However, the call was tempered by denying that the conditions for revolution were ripe. What then needed to be defined by Cunhal were the objective and subjective conditions for revolution in Portugal.⁸⁹ In Portugal, the crisis of the regime, aggravated by the colonial war, was an indication that the revolutionary situation was approaching, although it did not yet exist. The PCP's role was to create an impulse leading to the development of the revolutionary situation. Cunhal, arguing against the extreme left, suggested that the preconditions defining a revolutionary situation simply did not exist.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.189.

⁸⁹ For revolution to be successful there must exist a revolutionary situation (objective) and the revolutionary classes must be ready to take the decisive action that will topple the existing regime (subjective). The objective conditions exist when the revolutionary classes do not want to live the same way and the dominant classes cannot continue. (Ibid., p.189). On subjective see Lenin's Two Tactics of Social Democracy.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.191. The argument is directed primarily against the Comite Marxista-Leninista Portugues. The CMLP's criticisms of the "democratic and national revolution" can be found in the pages of its organ Revolucao Popular, 1964-65. Lisbon: Edicoes Voz do Povo, 1975.

Portugal's insurrection would contain specific features allowing it to be characterized as a national uprising. This is meant to denote that the

final and decisive shock with the dictatorship will be undertaken, not as the result of a "conspiracy" taken at the margins of the popular struggle, but in a situation of intense and generalized political struggle of the popular masses.⁹¹

The national uprising is the natural extension of the popular struggle. The popular insurrection is, according to Cunhal, the culmination of a broad movement of the masses preceded by the intensification of strikes and other such actions. These acts of opposition to the regime also serve as a training ground to educate the revolutionary masses for the final battle against the dominant classes. When the struggle is elevated to a "superior" form, the Party must act decisively to bring it to fruition. In order to do so, the Party must ensure that it has a "strong organization tied to the popular masses and with deep roots in the armed forces" so that it may "decide the moment of the final assault against the fascist fortress, the moment to undertake the insurrection."⁹²

Inevitably, for the revolution to succeed, the armed forces, the main pillar of support available to the regime, must be neutralized in some manner. In 1964 the PCP claimed that it was not yet in a position which would allow it to

⁹¹ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.191.

⁹² Ibid., p.193.

confront and defeat the military might of the regime. In order for the revolution to overthrow the regime it was first necessary to ensure the participation of a sector of the armed forces and the neutralization of the rest. Sectors of the armed forces would come to support the revolution as the popular movement against the regime grew.⁹³

The Party had already realized by 1964 that the induction of milicanos into the armed forces was a favourable factor for the opposition. The colonial war was also considered to be an essential element in the radicalization of the armed forces. Resistance to the regime's policies, and the war policy in particular, stimulated by revolutionary action would bring the armed forces to the side of the revolution.⁹⁴ As important as these two factors were, it was also necessary to actively organize in the armed forces in order to co-opt the soldiers into the revolutionary camp.⁹⁵ It is for this reason that the PCP devoted not an inconsiderable amount of time and effort toward developing a presence in the Portuguese armed forces. Indeed, the insurrection could not be successful without a strong revolutionary organization to guide the armed forces. Simultaneously, work amongst the masses would be reinforced in order to develop the conditions for the insurrection.

⁹³ Ibid., p.197.

⁹⁴ Relatorio, Op. Cit., pp.130-131.

⁹⁵ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.197.

The PCP concluded that the "sole path to the national uprising is the popular mass struggle."⁹⁶ The culmination of numerous mass struggles would bring down the regime. The popular struggle took various forms in Portugal; including the struggle of the urban proletariat, the rural workers, the students, and the anti-war movement. The Party's support for and reinforcement within the mass struggle was to be the immediate task of the communists in preparation for the national uprising.

The Portuguese communists also needed to encourage open struggles against the regime - demonstrations and strikes in particular. One of the more essential forms of struggle had been the Presidential and legislative elections conducted within the limitations set by the regime. The 1961 elections to the Assembly assume great political importance for the Party. Fearing the development of a movement similar to that of 1958, the government was forced to take serious measures to suppress the opposition. The practical result of these acts was the regime's alienation of the bourgeois opposition to the point that it withdrew from the electoral campaign prior to election day. The PCP opposed this strategy since the electoral campaign provided a forum for political agitation that should be maximized. For Cunhal's party the political significance of 1961 electoral campaign and act was that it ended the "remaining constitutional

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.207.

illusions"⁹⁷ about the regime's capacity for peaceful change which were held by some sectors of the opposition. Prior to 1961, the political opposition undertook action almost exclusively during electoral campaigns in legal and semi-legal conditions. The events of November 1961 demonstrated that the popular movement had progressed beyond merely accepting the constraints of the regime and had taken the offensive against the it.⁹⁸

It was the political situation created in the aftermath of the 1961 electoral campaign that provided the catalyst for the events of 1962. The May 1 demonstration, the May 8 demonstration in Lisbon, and the wave of strikes throughout the south were all components of the greatest mass movement against the regime until that date. They were also the "greatest victory of all of the Communist Party in the mobilization of the popular masses for a series of political actions".⁹⁹ Indeed, the Party claimed full credit, as it often did, for this series of disruptions. Yet, these activities were understood by the PCP to be of a limited scope; they were directed against the government but were not to be understood as the prelude to the insurrection.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.234.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.234-235.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.235-236.

The Communist Party was explicit in maintaining that illegal struggles had to be accompanied by legal and semi-legal forms of struggle and organization if the mass movement was to be successful under the conditions existent in Salazar's Portugal. The need for illegal organization was evident to the Party:

To desist from these would only be to desist from opposition to the fascist regime as well as the defense of the immediate, vital interests of the Portuguese people. The organization, the press and the clandestine action of the Communist Party has been, throughout the years, the principal instrument of the working-classes and Portuguese people's struggle¹⁰⁰

This seemed evident to all of the factions within the PCP and there was very little disagreement on this matter. However, it was the legal and semi-legal activities engaged in by the PCP that conflicted not only with the extreme left, but also with the Party's own "right". Characteristically, Cunhal took a centrist position between the left and the right-wing of the Party.

The PCP had previously addressed the problems associated with the exclusive use of clandestine methods of work. Following such a path would lead to the creation of a party closed within itself; out of touch with the masses and lacking the capacity to organize, mobilize, and lead the popular movement. If such an orientation was to be adopted, the Party could not prevent itself from becoming a "sectarian group, acting at the margin of the problems,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.239 (Cunhal's emphasis).

anxieties and necessities of the working-class and the people in general"; a group which could never become the "general staff of the proletariat."¹⁰¹ It was then essential to maximize all forms of struggle available to the party without adopting a sectarian method of work or capitulating to legalism.

The utilization of all available legal forms of struggle and organization facilitated the PCP's objective - reaching out to the masses. Through the Party's use of legal organizations and activities the masses could be educated in revolutionary activity leading to a heightened revolutionary consciousness. In fact, many of the Party's successes came as a result of the utilization of legal means in the promotion of its message. As Cunhal claimed, "(M)any of the great political battles against the fascist dictatorship began with the exploitation of legal possibilities of acting."¹⁰² To illustrate its point, the PCP points to the Party's work during the electoral campaigns and within the MUD as primary examples of the possibilities presented by legal and semi-legal action. While the dangers of "legalism" were ever-present, legal and semi-legal work, with a cohesive clandestine organization and ideology as its foundation, was an ideal vehicle for the consolidation and development of the revolutionary movement. Inversely, if the popular movement is sufficiently powerful, it can force the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.239.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.240 (Cunhal's emphasis).

government to recognize its claims to legalize any of its mass organizations.¹⁰³

There is no doubt that the PCP had to actively combat "legalism" at the same time that it waged a battle against leftism. If the danger of "legalism" was present, the problem of "economism" also had to be addressed. There was no questioning the fact that economic struggles were necessary in order to satisfy the immediate demands of the workers as well as to prevent the increasing level of capitalist exploitation. It was the duty of the communists to guide the workers in this form of struggle. It was also true that this type of struggle was the bedrock of the overall political struggle against the authoritarian regime. The economic struggle both enlarges the ranks of the revolutionary movement as well as raising the class consciousness of the said movement. Perhaps more importantly, under the authoritarian regime "the economic struggle today has a political significance and is, in many instances, a struggle with a political character."¹⁰⁴ The underlying reason for the significance of the economic struggles is the fact that economic demands forwarded by the workers automatically call into question not only the government, but the regime in its totality.¹⁰⁵ Not only are these economic struggles objectively political, they are

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.241 - 242. MUD and MND are examples.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.245.

¹⁰⁵ Institute of Social Sciences, Op. Cit., pp.417.

also subjectively political since the workers are clearly cognizant of their significance.¹⁰⁶

The aforementioned discussion does not mean to suggest that economic struggles can be replaced by those of a merely political nature; the level of consciousness is not equal in all strata and therefore the jump qualitative cannot be taken. In the Portugal of the early 1960's the importance of political struggles was evident, with economic battles acting as complementary forms. Political struggles, such as demonstrations, needed to be co-ordinated with the working-class' concrete political and economic demands. Such a form of interactive struggle rejuvenated the popular movement and allowed it to grow and prepare for greater struggles in the future, while continuously building on past successes. The guidance of the Communist Party was necessary in the organization and the development of both economic and political forms of struggle. Only in this way could the subjective conditions for revolution be created, leading to a total assault on state power.¹⁰⁷

The Portuguese Communist Party also had to concern itself with the development of "superior" forms of struggle. Needless to say, such forms of struggle could not be attained by simply skipping stages and abandoning "inferior" forms. Superior forms of struggle could only develop if they

¹⁰⁶ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.246.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.247 - 248.

were built upon inferior forms. Given that strikes are a superior form of struggle which will be met with violence, they must be preceded by inferior forms within the workplace. These inferior forms will unite the working-class and create the potential for the undertaking of strikes and other superior forms of struggle. The Party remained tied to the masses in order to guide them in an effective manner.¹⁰⁸ Cunhal writes,

When the Party insists in developing the mass struggle in all directions, in associating the clandestine forms of action to legal and semi-legal forms, in developing the economic struggle and the political struggle, the only path that can lead to the popular mass struggle surges ... In each sector and in the overall movement it is necessary to know how to choose at any given moment the fundamental direction, which can be an economic struggle, a syndicalist struggle, a solidarity movement, a political struggle.¹⁰⁹

In the context of the times, this position must be understood, to a large extent as a reaction to the criticism of the extreme left. Recognizing the necessity of creating "action of self-defense for the masses", the PCP did not favour the creation of self-defense mechanisms through spontaneous action. At the same time, elements within the Party that formally supported the concept of the "national uprising" remained committed in practice to the "peaceful transition" line of the former leadership.¹¹⁰ While

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.248-249.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.253.

¹¹⁰ The adoption of a violent road was in part a response to internal Soviet critiques of Khrushchev's excesses. In the PCP these "excesses" manifested themselves in the

supporting direct action against the regime, the PCP opposed the "leftist position" demanding immediate violent confrontation with the regime and its apparatus. Direct action for Cunhal meant the development of the mass popular movement until that time when the insurrection could be successfully undertaken. The adoption of the "petit-bourgeoisie revolutionary" positions criticized by Cunhal could potentially lead the mass movement to defeat.¹¹¹

The fundamental importance of this polemic cannot be overemphasized. From 1961 to 1964 this had been the main debate within the ranks of the PCP. The colonial war created a dynamic that was easily exploited by those that believed that the war created the objective conditions leading to the immediate collapse of the regime.

We must now turn our attention to the role that the PCP envisioned for itself in the struggle against Salazar's regime. Given the repressive nature of the authoritarian regime, one of the fundamental tasks that the PCP had to undertake in 1964 was that of internal Party organization.¹¹² This is true not only in regards to the

form of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" and their acceptance of a "peaceful transition" in Portugal. On this point see Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.67.

¹¹¹ Cunhal suggests that such actions may be taken by the Party, but if they are undertaken the Party cannot divulge the fact that it has assumed such a position. Yet this silence can be justified by the very fact that the aforementioned are not tasks for the entire Party. Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.255.

¹¹² "What characterizes the repression in the last few years

Party apparatus itself, but also in regards to the cohesion of the legal and semi-legal organizations. There is no doubt that such a process was extremely slow and did not result in immediate dividends. Cunhal is not only aware of this fact, but also realizes that such illusions can quickly lead to organizational and political immobilization. For this reason, he recommends "patient" and "tenacious" work, as well as an appreciation of the political and psychological significance of "small successes."¹¹³ The PCP was the leader of the opposition not only because it was the vanguard of the proletariat armed with a revolutionary ideology, but also because it possessed a solid organization benefitting from the cohesion of non-party groups in which it participated.

Despite the above factors, the Party's apparatus was in dire need of organizational rejuvenation. Cunhal himself writes that the PCP must pay more attention to organizational matters as well as to leading the fight of the industrial proletariat against the regime. He claims that the leading local and regional organisms of the Party were not sufficiently aware of the varied struggles for workers' demands. Yet, perhaps more disturbing for the communist leadership, was Cunhal's assessment that those

is its generalized character, its extensive presence in all aspects of social life, the exhibition of brutality as a process of general intimidation." Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.73.

¹¹³ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.261.

same organisms did not attempt to draw serious conclusions from the mass struggle; nor did they transmit their particular experiences to higher organs of the Party. This situation had degenerated to the point that "months and even years go by without certain sectors making the Central Committee aware of the organizational experiences in the struggle for revindications. Routine has installed itself in many sectors, that repeat the same formulas throughout the years."¹¹⁴

The general malaise affecting the Party was by no means restricted to one particular level of the Communist Party's apparatus. Many of the organisms involved in the everyday struggle of the proletariat were also judged to be deficient in their work. The "stagnation" of these organisms resulted from the debilities of the Party and the syndicalist movement. The latter's actions did not correspond to the level of the proletariat's radicalization, according to Cunhal. Since these organs were paralyzed, there was very little possibility of the Party being able to lead the industrial proletariat to superior forms of struggle. The practical result of such a state of affairs manifested itself in growing disenchantment and defeatism. Where the organizations did exist, they were plagued by a "timidity" that often made political work ineffective.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.263.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.263.

Another serious problem that the PCP was forced to contend with was the limited scope of action which it could undertake. While the traditional forms of organization were to be maintained, their work was clearly not satisfactory at that point in the history of the working-class movement. Despite their drawbacks, the Commissions of Unity were to be maintained in the factories and other workplaces where they existed, and would continue to be the basic organizational expression of the movement in each location. What had to be overcome was the tendency to limit actions to one workplace; this tendency would be replaced with broad working-class unity that would encompass the same profession or sector.¹¹⁶ The PCP points to the rural proletarian movement in the Alentejo and Ribatejo, under its leadership, as the example to be emulated.

These issues were all to find concrete expression in the syndical work of the Portuguese Communist Party. Although the National Syndicates were controlled by the government, their importance was derived from the fact that they encompassed thousands of members. It was this mass organization that was to be targetted for control by the communists. The utilization of the said syndicates by the working-class presupposes a highly developed level of both organization and class consciousness.¹¹⁷ In attempting to

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.264.

¹¹⁷ Although the struggle was conducted within the structures of the state, it was also to be carried out against these structures. Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.109.

prove this point, Cunhal suggested that the Party's virtually non-existent work in these organizations prior to the strikes of July and August of 1943 was a reflection of a low level of development which would not sustain such work.¹¹⁸ The momentum that the movement gained in 1945 allowed the working-class to obtain control of a number of syndicates. The political conclusion drawn from this phenomenon was that work within the fascist syndicates was only possible when the level of struggle matured.¹¹⁹

To this point, this thesis has considered the theoretical position of the Portuguese Communists - the "democratic and national revolution" and the alliance policies arising from this concept. Nonetheless, this analysis would ultimately prove to be a useless undertaking if the organizational conceptions of the PCP were not also examined. Ultimately, it is the self-definition of the PCP as a Marxist-Leninist party that is greatly responsible for determining not only the role of the party in the revolutionary process, but also the nature of this same process. The conception of a

¹¹⁸ The fundamental orientation to be pursued by the PCP in their work within the syndicates was outlined in an O Militante article of April 1943. The three points were: first, to pressure the leadership of the syndicates through the existing commissions; second, to enter the syndicates en masse to wrestle control from the exploiting classes and transfer it to the working-classes; and lastly, to elect honest workers which enjoy the confidence of their fellow workers. These three conditions were to be maintained and expanded in 1964.

¹¹⁹ The case with the casas do povo is relatively similar to that of the national syndicates, and does not need to be elaborated upon at this time.

"national and democratic revolution" is the result of the particular view that the PCP has of Marxism-Leninism as well as its role as a Portuguese party responding to a national phenomenon.

The bearers of a history littered with internal battles, by 1964 three orientations particularly disturbed Cunhal and his supporters: terrorism, putschism, and legalism. These three tendencies, varying in strength at different points, are all inspired by petit-bourgeois class positions, although at times supported by the medium bourgeoisie. All three are a reflection of the impatience and disillusionment of this strata regarding the revolutionary process, compounded by a basic lack of confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat. In addition, these orientations reflect the attempt of these bourgeois sectors to attain hegemony over the revolutionary process and, by doing so, supplanting the proletariat's role. From 1945 to 1961 the putschist and legalist orientations were stronger, in conformity with the nature of the political situation. The terrorist tendency proved to be the dominant current after 1961. These orientations were, in their totality, considered to be a result of a corresponding lack of political support and organizational weakness on the part of groups proposing such solutions.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.281.

By the time that the PCP held its Sixth Congress both the putschist and legalist currents had been soundly defeated within the ranks of the Party. The influence of various extreme left groups and their conception of revolutionary action was the main threat to the centrist PCP orientation by 1964. Within this context the principal, although not exclusive, ideological battle that had to be waged was precisely against these groups to the left of Cunhal's Party. It was therefore no coincidence that a great number of the internal PCP polemics were directed against the "left".

The advocates of various forms of direct action were alternatively referred to by the PCP as exponents of petit-bourgeois radicalism or revolutionary verbalism. The danger of such conceptions, aside from their theoretical bankruptcy, was that they could prevent the evolution of the mass movement. It would seem that the main concern for the PCP was that these leftist conceptions would contaminate the opposition and create unrealizable expectations that would culminate in general defeatism.¹²¹ In practical terms, the influence of the PCP would necessarily be diminished in proportion to the developing strength of the left-wing groups outside the Party. Theoretically, the error committed by these groups was that they conceptualized direct action as a means of leading the masses to revolution while ignoring the objective conditions for such a revolutionary.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.282.

Since a revolutionary situation did not exist, according to Cunhal and his supporters, direct action would not only be in vain, but would also be a serious detriment to the development of the mass revolutionary movement.

The inherent danger in the use of direct action was that these individual terrorist acts could separate the vanguard from the masses; the danger was not underestimated by the PCP. Not only would these terrorist acts provoke further repression by the regime, but they would also create serious hesitations on the part of the popular movement. The PCP's position supporting the inevitability of armed action against the regime, was partly a response to pressures from the left within the Party's ranks. However, the real issue for Cunhal was not the need for eventual violent action, but "... the fundamental direction of the activities of the Party and other democratic forces, and the orientation to be given to the working-class and the popular ¹²²

In attempting to trace the genesis of these terrorist conceptions Cunhal points to the elections of 1958 and the subsequent disillusionment provoked by the "electoral farce". The initiation of the colonial war, the hijacking of the Santa Maria, and the experience of the fraternal parties in other countries were also influential in this process. The call for direct action and the associated belief that the regime would quickly be overthrown by such action "had

¹²² masses." Ibid., p.284. Cunhal's emphasis.

all the markings of the petit-bourgeoisie."¹²³ This impatience was caused by the fear that the monopolists would ruin the petit-bourgeoisie as a separate class. As such, the calls for direct action were to be opposed and unmasked as a form of petit-bourgeois radicalism that feared the determining role of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle.

While the aforesaid tendency was clearly the most inconvenient for the PCP, putschism also proved to be a problematic tendency within the Party. This orientation essentially suggested that a military conspiracy and a subsequent coup d'etat would be sufficient to overthrow Salazar.¹²⁴ Clearly part of the danger, as well as the appeal of this tendency, was that there did indeed exist such a tradition in the Portuguese military. The most detrimental aspect of military action, from the perspective of the Communist Party, was that such action was conspiratorial and did not presuppose the building of a military revolutionary movement. The military, or at least a sizeable part, could only be won over to the revolution if the popular mass movement created the conditions that would allow for such a development.

¹²³ Ibid., p.287.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.288.

Although putschism needed to be fought on principle, the PCP did not abandon the possibility of participating, directly or indirectly, in the execution of a military coup. Leninist strategy does not discourage such an act if the dynamic following such an act could be dominated by the Party. In fact, the PCP had supported such action in the past. Cunhal was blatantly honest when he said that "the Party's participation in an act is conditioned by the Party's participation in the leadership."¹²⁵ Perhaps this readiness to co-operate with the military rested upon the realization that a sizeable sector within the armed forces had to support the revolution if the PCP was to realistically contemplate victory.

Despite the necessity of addressing the question of putschism, the problem of "legalism" was a much more immediate one for the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party. This orientation had developed in the aftermath of the Allied victory of 1945 and, as a consequence, there arose the belief that the regime would collapse in the new international environment. Not only was such a conception the product of "an incomprehension of the nature of the fascist regime,"¹²⁶ it also resulted from a fear of the proletariat and its vanguard party. The principal characteristic of this orientation was the notion that the utilization of legal methods, to the exclusion of all

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.292.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.292.

others, would ensure the triumph of the revolutionary process. At the time of Cunhal's writing this tendency was the preferred method of the medium bourgeoisie in its search for compromises and an eventual liberalization of the existing structures. As a result of this position, not only does "legalism" reject the use of clandestine methods but it also opposes the illegal activities of the communists because these actions have the tendency to lead to increased repression of the opposition by the regime. Anti-communism develops amongst these sectors as a result of the conception outlined above.¹²⁷ Within the ranks of the Communist Party, legalism was considered to be a form of capitulation to the regime.

Priding itself on being the largest and best organized opposition group with a national organization, the PCP "enjoys a prestige that no other political force dares to contest."¹²⁸ To a large degree, the prestige of the communists was consolidated and extended not only because of their ideology, but also because their history of struggle and the "solidarity of the international communist movement."¹²⁹ The PCP was not only an indispensable factor in the revolutionary movement, but the revolution simply could not be successful without the active participation of the Party.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.293.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.299.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.299.

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the PCP was, in 1964, beginning to emerge from a general immobilism that had almost made the Party inconsequential in the late 1950's. For this reason a serious effort was made by Cunhal since his 1960 prison escape to restructure the Party, its ideological underpinnings, and, perhaps more importantly given the conditions of the period, its democratic centralism.

In a brief retrospective of the Party's fortunes since the reorganization of 1929, Cunhal claims that the problems associated with the development of an effective leadership had been a constant. Due to its weak organizational work, once the leading cadres were arrested the Party's activities came dangerously close to being terminated. The development of a solid group of leaders that could continue the Party's work in the aftermath of effective police actions against the Party was seen as the answer to this problem. Even bearing in mind the shifts in the Party's orientation, a solid group of cadres had been a constant following the 1940 - 1941 reorganization of the Party.

By the time that the Sixth Congress was held, the dominant concern was not merely one of preserving such a group of professional revolutionaries, but to radically reinforce such a leadership.¹³⁰ One must not forget that in the latter half of 1961 the PCP lost many of its most

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.301. Cunhal's emphasis.

respected and experienced leaders. The first step that needed to be taken to stabilize and improve the work of the PCP was the reinforcement of the Central Committee itself, as well as an improvement of its day-to-day work and improvements in the functioning of its organisms. Secondly, the Central Committee decisions were to be respected and implemented by the organisms responsible to it - in short, a higher level of political discipline. The third necessary step was an improvement of the Party's propaganda. The fourth condition called for "the adoption of methods of work that guarantee the defense of the Party in the face of repression and the establishment of an iron discipline in this regard."¹³¹ Lastly, the selection, education, and promotion of cadres had to be improved.

This last matter, the selection of cadres, was quite complex. Cunhal admitted that for years the Party had been overly dependent upon the liberation of its members from the regime's jails - the "recuperation" of its leaders. This priority, at the exclusion of all others, was impossible to maintain by the time of Cunhal's presentation to the Sixth Congress. It therefore became necessary to prepare younger cadres for political work in case the experienced leadership was lost. Certainly Cunhal was quite correct in this approach to the problem. Nonetheless, there was a political consideration which must have been a factor of some importance in Cunhal's analysis. Simply stated, Cunhal had

¹³¹ Ibid., p.301.

wrestled control of the Party from many of those that found themselves in the regime's jails by 1964. While the PCP may not have benefitted from the capture and detention of the Party veterans, one can be quite certain that the Secretary-General's grip on the Party was much more secure as long as these cadres remained in jail.

The problem of selecting cadres was indeed a crucial one for the Party in 1964. Cunhal went so far as to describe the process of selection prior to 1964 as an "authentic lottery."¹³² The proposals made by Cunhal amounted to little more than the re-establishment of a genuine democratic centralism that would avoid the difficulties inherent in the type of organization that prevailed within the Party in the late 1950s. Greater supervision of cadres by the Central Committee, an adequate distribution of tasks in accordance with the individual capabilities of the cadres, and the betterment of ideological formation were only some of the concrete proposals that were forwarded to strengthen democratic centralism.

The proposal calling for an improvement in the ideological formation of Party members was the response to a practical internal ideological conflict within the Party in the early 1960's which would have a profound impact upon the PCP's reaction to the Eurocommunists a decade and a half later. Cunhal delineated two distinct positions within the

¹³² Ibid., p.302.

ranks of the PCP in the period immediately preceding his leadership. One of these positions claimed that ideological education was not very important since such education would automatically arise in the everyday work associated with the struggle. At the other extreme, there existed the naive view that proper ideological training would turn anyone, irrespective of personal qualities, into an invincible communist militant. Cunhal, adopting his usual consensual perspective, observed that only through an examination of the member's practical work can his assimilation of Marxism-Leninism be discovered.¹³³ Close supervision of cadres was necessary prior to making a promotion to higher Party organs because the Party had to be certain that if the individuals were arrested, they would demonstrate exemplary behavior under police interrogation.

Such an obsession with the political education of cadres and the accompanying close supervision of these people was more than justified. To a large degree it was the very survival of the Party which was at stake during this period. The central clandestine apparatus of the Party had to be maintained at almost any cost.¹³⁴ If the PCP's analysis of the "democratic and national revolution" was correct in claiming that the movement against the regime had reached a near-crucial stage, then the preservation of the Party to

¹³³ Ibid., p.303.

¹³⁴ The Party's own self-definition incorporated the notion that the PCP had been "forged" in clandestinity. Cunhal, Relatorio, Op. Cit., p.9.

lead the struggle was the most important of tasks.

The need for improved organizational work was evident when one considers that the majority of successful police actions against the PCP "were not so much a direct success of the enemy, but the consequence of failures in the work of the Party."¹³⁵ In the past these failures had been attributed to the "anarcho-liberal deviation" that had dominated the Portuguese Communist Party. At the time of the writing of Rumo A Vitoria the vestiges of this tendency had not been fully eliminated from the ranks of the Party; many militants continued to accept the conceptions and practices of the "anarcho-liberal" tendency.¹³⁶ As a result, Cunhal clearly stated that the failures of 1961 - 1963 demonstrated the errors of the "anarcho-liberal tendency" and its emphasis on "democratism" and petit-bourgeois conceptions of equality. For Cunhal, perhaps the most detrimental result of the influence of this current was the damage inflicted upon the orthodox Leninist conception of democratic centralism.

It was at the Central Committee's Reunion of August 1963 that the new guidelines for political work were formally adopted. In addition to some of the changes outlined above - the strengthening of the organization and the selection and

¹³⁵ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.305. Cunhal stated that if proper methods had been observed, only 20% of the Party's jailed members would have been captured.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.305.

promotion of cadres - two other important steps were taken to improve the Party's clandestine apparatus. One such change was intended to improve the methods of conspiratorial work; a war against "traitors" and "provocateurs" was initiated along with the establishment of internal "iron" discipline. These methods had to be implemented at the lower levels of the Party in order to dynamize the local organisms and their militants.¹³⁷ Indeed, it was logical that this task be undertaken in the aftermath of Cunhal's victory over his opponents within the PCP. The influence of the "anarcho-liberals" had to be uprooted from the lower-level organs. This is not to say that there were no longer any deficiencies in the work of the central organs and its leadership. The main task at the top level of the Party apparatus was the supervision and execution of the Party line. Inevitably, such a task demanded that power be concentrated in the hands of the Party's Secretary-General, Alvaro Cunhal.

The priorities established by the PCP at the Kiev Congress targetted certain sectors of the population for the implementation of PCP influence. These sectors included not only the industrial proletariat and the rural worker, but also certain service sectors, "the barracks, the schools, the intellectual circles."¹³⁸ While certain elements within the Party, cognizant of the successes of the police in the

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.306.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.306.

years prior to 1964, criticized the policy of extending the reach of the Party, the leadership concluded that those police successes resulted from inadequate organization and, hence, the principle of increasing the Party's influence was not to be questioned. The August 1963 Reunion of the Central Committee abolished the "Organizational Plans" previously in existence; the "Plans" established a target number of cadres each local organization was to recruit by a given date. That type of recruitment was not seen by Cunhal as realistic within the context of clandestine activity.¹³⁹

The conclusions of the aforesaid Reunion of the Central Committee were not greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm by all levels of the Party's apparatus. Indeed, months after the Central Committee met certain "comrades responsible for large sectors of the Party speak as if they had not even discussed the resolutions of the Central Committee."¹⁴⁰ While the resolutions of the Central Committee were passed, the problems of implementation remained unresolved. Despite the optimistic tone of some of Cunhal's statements in Rumo A Vitoria regarding the PCP's role as the vanguard of the proletariat and of the mass struggle, the facts seemed to indicate a very different reality. There can be very little doubt that the PCP's reluctance to intensify the political struggle against Salazar at that moment was as much dictated by its political and organizational weakness as by the

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.307.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.307. Author's emphasis.

theoretical considerations enumerated above. Cunhal himself seemed to recognize this when he wrote that "... the party is not in condition to de facto lead and direct to a superior level the mass struggle at a national level."¹⁴¹

It then appears that the self-proclaimed prestige enjoyed by the Party within Portugal was, to a large extent, merely fictional. Glorified by individuals opposed to the regime who saw it as the only alternative, coupled with a relatively effective propaganda network, the PCP was heard and supported but failed to establish a concrete presence in the everyday activity of the population. Since "only the active presence of communists in the midst of the masses will permit the leading of any movement",¹⁴² the deficiency of the Party's work was demonstrated by the moderate successes that could otherwise have been transformed into great successes if the Party had been a factor in the daily reality of the masses.

¹⁴¹ Some of the numbers that indicate the weak organizational position of the PCP are illustrated by Cunhal in the following passage:

If, in a certain sector, where dozen of important factories exist, the party only has one or two comrades in one of them; if in concelhos where 2,000 to 5,000 rural workers live the party does not have even one member, if the same occurs in various important fishing ports and military unities. Ibid., p.308.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.308. Cunhal's emphasis.

The concern with recruiting new members was symptomatic of a lack of adequate cadres trained to fulfill the necessities of a clandestine communist party. This did not however mean that the PCP foresaw the creation of a mass party along the lines of the Italian Communist Party. The criticism made of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" and their system of quota fulfillment was ample proof of Cunhal's rejection of any trend leading to a mass party. Under clandestine conditions there was no question that the only effective form of organization was that of a cadre party.¹⁴³ The issue was certainly not the character that the Party should assume; this was certainly indisputable. What was needed was further organization and recruitment to make the Party relevant in the society.

If this problem was of an immediate nature and could be addressed by adopting concrete measures, a potentially more serious problem was the ideological heterogeneity of the Portuguese communist left. It is not an exaggeration to say, as Cunhal himself did, that there was a great deal of "disorientation" and uneasiness arising from "the complexity of the national and international situation."¹⁴⁴ At the

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.310. Cunhal offered some insight on this matter, as well as the strength of the Party in 1964: "Even if the Party had five times the militants than it presently has, it would still be a "party of cadres"."

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.310. Cunhal not only recognized the "disorientation"; he was much more specific when he stated that there are "doubts, there are questions, there is, even at times, despair on the part of some of our comrades."

time, the PCP was not immune from the repercussions of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the questions it raised. The "complexity" of the international situation profoundly affected the ranks of this small party. This situation arose not only as a consequence of the complex nature of the international situation, but also as a direct result of the errors committed by the pre-Cunhal leadership.

The Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party was not to be exempt from the criticisms of Alvaro Cunhal. Quite simply, the Central Committee itself had failed to establish a political line and explain it correctly to the lower echelons of the Party. Not only did the leadership fail to issue documents that could have clarified the ideological complexities, but the Party press "appears to hesitate in regards to the political line of the Party".¹⁴⁵ Thus, in order to deliver a correct ideological line to the masses, the Party was required to "defeat the variations, the doubts, the deviations"¹⁴⁶ within its own ranks. Solid party unity on all political and ideological matters had to be assured.

¹⁴⁵ Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.311. Given the emphasis that communist parties place upon questions regarding the role of the Party press since Lenin's time, this is a very serious defect in the workings of a communist party - especially a clandestine one.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.311.

At the time this would mean a two-front battle. The PCP had to purge itself of both "left" and "right" deviations. The "left", a much more serious threat, was to be fought primarily on ideological lines as well as the political and tactical lines that were the outgrowth of the ideological errors. The "right" needed to be defeated in those matters relating to organization and other internal questions bearing upon the functioning of the Party. To realize these ends, the PCP did not only have to persuade the sympathizers of these currents, but also had to "energetically" carry out the battle in more concrete forms:

It must energetically combat, not energetically in terms of disciplinary measures, but energetically in the political realm, the negative tendencies, the errors and deviation that manifest themselves. It must go from a "defensive" position to an "offensive" position which will educate, enlighten, and sweep the Party of the influences of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology, (a position) that will unite the entire Party and lead all of its activities.¹⁴⁷

Although the 1961 criticism of the "anarcho-liberal deviation" effectively made that current unviable, it continued to exert a certain amount of influence within the Party. The overall influence of this rightist current had been reduced since 1958, as a consequence of the opposition's disillusionment with legal and constitutional methods. However, it was the potential revitalization of this current that so disturbed Cunhal and his allies. Liberalization of the authoritarian regime would once again

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.311.

encourage the "right" if Cunhal's current was incapable of maintaining its predominance over the Party apparatus. The struggle against the "right" was unavoidably ongoing since the triumph of this orientation would debilitate the Party and guide it to passivity. If such a situation came to fruition the PCP would once again find itself in a political wilderness.

Despite the ominous threat to the Party from a "right" deviation, the "left" was a much more immediate concern. With the defeat of the "right", the augmentation of of the regime's repression, the initiation of the colonial war, and other developments in Portuguese society after 1961, "leftist" sentiment began to manifest itself in the interior of the PCP; particularly amongst the students and the intelligentsia. "Right" and "left" deviations possess, according to Cunhal, a class basis that cannot be divorced from the political positions espoused by either deviation. In essence, both tendencies are petit-bourgeois "reflexes" to changing socio-political conditions.¹⁴⁸

The communists insisted that the steadfast influence of the "left" was amply explainable by a "foreign stimulus" which utilizes Marxism-Leninism to disguise its petit-bourgeois ideology. In other words, Cunhal suggests that the Chinese conceptions of Marxism-Leninism accounted for the influence of the "left" within the PCP.¹⁴⁹ Given

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.313.

that this was the main concern of the PCP, the Party began to actively engage in the growing polemics that characterized the Sino-Soviet dispute. The reaction to Maoism was informed by the threat within the PCP which, under clandestine conditions, was clearly more detrimental to the Portuguese communists than it was to the other communist parties of Europe. The PCP's rigid pro-Sovietism in the 1970's was conditioned by the life and death struggle that defined its internal battle against Maoism.

It was within this context that the deficiencies plaguing the PCP's propaganda and agitation were once again raised. According to Cunhal, Avante simply did not fulfill the functions of a communist newspaper; it was not "the leading voice of the Party" and neither was it "directed toward action." More significantly from an organizational perspective, Avante merely announced the elaboration of a Central Committee resolution without either discussing or printing it in its pages. The Party's theoretical organ, O Militante, restricted itself to publishing the text of the resolutions without any further elaboration or theoretical work.¹⁵⁰ Needless to say, this situation seriously hampered the Party's overall efforts. In clandestine conditions, where the ties between the leadership organs and the militants are exceedingly tenuous, the role of the Party newspaper, as well as the theoretical organ, becomes

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.314.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.314.

critical. To strengthen both the role as well as the organizational and ideological cohesion of the Party, these shortcomings had to be rectified as rapidly as possible.

The Party statutes adopted at the Sixth Congress were elaborated and approved by the Central Committee in November 1962. The discussion of the said statutes had been delayed as a consequence of police action against the PCP. Yet, the timing of the discussion proved to be fortuitous since it was being conducted during the 1964 ideological offensive against the left. The said discussion served two principal purposes; both of which were intimately related. The implementation of the rules of democratic centralism would centralize the Party which in turn would allow the leadership to effectively battle the "left". Simultaneously, the discussion arising out of the said conflict with the "left" would "educate" the cadres and make them more resistant to the deviations.

As far as Cunhal was concerned, democratic centralism had made the victories of socialism and the international working-class movement possible. Furthermore, the PCP's significant political role within Portuguese society could largely be attributed to the correct application of these Leninist principles.¹⁵¹ Those periods during which democratic centralism was applied correctly by the PCP coincided with a stronger Party presence in Portuguese

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.315.

society. Obedience to the rules of democratic centralism assumed an even greater significance given that the "democratic" life of the Party was necessarily constricted under the conditions imposed by clandestinity. Democratic centralism, under these conditions, was the sole method that ensured the continued survival of the Party. There was no absence of problems within the Party as far as the practical application of these principles was concerned. On the one hand, criticism was not encouraged. The other problem arose when "neutrality" developed in certain Party organisms that turned these same sectors into little more than debating societies where the official line of the Party was often treated as being insignificant.¹⁵²

The PCP's orthodox conception of democratic centralism had fully triumphed within the Party by 1964. Nonetheless, the influence of the "right" continued to be present in matters relating to the organization of the Party. Calls for the establishment of internal tendencies and the right to dissent from majority decisions were repeatedly forwarded prior to the Kiev Congress. Cunhal's response to these demands was unequivocal: factional work was to be combatted and purged.¹⁵³

¹⁵² This was especially true in intellectual cells. In many cases the Party line was not even referred to at these meetings. Debate was restricted to what should be the orientation of the Party. Ibid., p.317.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.319.

The "democratic and national revolution" was made possible by Portugal's peculiar economic development. The "fascist" regime had allowed the monopolists and latifundists to accumulate capital to such a degree that Portugal could be characterized as having a highly developed form of capitalist relations. On the other hand, Portugal's dependence upon foreign imperialism condemned the country to a state of dependence that placed it at the periphery of European economic life. As a result of this situation the Program adopted by the PCP at its Sixth Congress declared that "Portugal was not an independent country."¹⁵⁴ In addition to the above, it could not be overlooked that Portugal was also a colonial power. However, Portuguese colonialism only survived because of its dependence upon foreign imperialism. Portugal's dependence and its colonial status led the PCP to claim that the nation was a "colonized colonizer."

This condition, of "colonized colonizer", was to prove to be the determining influence on the PCP's development of a revolutionary strategy.¹⁵⁵ While the high degree of capitalist development in Portugal made the socialist revolution feasible, the country's status as a dependent nation made a socialist revolution quite impossible. The solution to this paradox was the adoption of a strategy that was to be the "first and indispensable stage towards

¹⁵⁴ Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.71.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.72.

socialist revolution".¹⁵⁶ The "democratic and national revolution" was neither wholly an "anti-monopolist" revolution nor was it completely a "national-democratic" revolution. The former, the strategy characteristic of communist parties in the advanced capitalist countries, and the latter, characteristic of dependent nations, simply did not apply in their entirety to Portugal. The PCP's revolution would be both and neither.

The reasoning for this line has been coherently elaborated by Carlos Gaspar and is worthy of summation at this point. The "democratic and national revolution" is democratic because it is a popular revolution but not a bourgeois revolution. It is national because its objective is the attainment of genuine national independence. Therefore, the revolution is democratic and national because it fulfills both aspects simultaneously.¹⁵⁷ Portugal's status as a "colonized colonizer" makes this process inevitable. The "democratic and national revolution" and socialist revolution. However, Portugal's transition to socialism cannot be secured without the complete success of the "democratic and national revolution".

¹⁵⁶ Programa do PCP, Op. Cit., p.17; Institute of Social Sciences, Op. Cit., p.416.

¹⁵⁷ Cunhal, Radicalismo, Op. Cit., p.68-69; Gaspar, Op. Cit., p.73.

The practical political and tactical implications of such a definition were not lost upon the PCP. The inherent generality of the "democratic and national revolution" facilitated the development of alliance policies. The concept would also avoid a restricted theoretical outlook and, consequently, was immune from schematic conceptions so often common to communist parties. The absence of such a schematic framework allowed the PCP to pursue a number of policies no matter how complex or banal, that could not contradict the Party's ambiguous theoretical framework. The "democratic and national revolution" was a "grey area"¹⁵⁸ that lent itself to great tactical flexibility. This point was also evident to Soviet theorists,

The PCP not only defined the stages of the revolution but also proved that each stage consists of different phases which do not conform to any pre-determined rigid patterns. These phases contain something new and unforeseen. The direction of the main blow and the main immediate goal must be determined in order to further the revolutionary process.¹⁵⁹

The tactical flexibility allowed by an adherence to such a conception was clearly inspired by Leninist precepts. It was also this flexibility that allowed the PCP to carry out a role during the Portuguese Revolution that often seemed anything but consistent. As long as the PCP adhered to this theoretical outlook there was no possibility of the PCP accepting Eurocommunism as anything more than a tactical

¹⁵⁸ The expression is Gaspar's.

¹⁵⁹ Institute of Social Sciences, Op. Cit., p.415. The emphasis is the Institute's.

shift, if at all. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the regime that was created in the aftermath of the Portuguese revolution sealed the PCP's position as an orthodox party quite out of step with its fraternal southern European communist parities in the 1970's.

Chapter V

THE PCP AND REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

On April 25, 1974 the Portuguese armed forces, acting under the leadership of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), overthrew the authoritarian regime that had ruled for forty-eight years. Perhaps it is more accurate to describe this occurrence, as well as the following months, not as a coup d'etat or a revolution, but as a rupture with the former regime. In other words, the process that developed in Portugal following April 1974 was a complete and total break with the institutions, social organization, and political order that had hitherto characterized the nation. One can, however, delineate three specific periods in the Portuguese revolutionary process: the first, from April 25, 1974, to September 28, 1974; the second, from September 28 to March 11, 1975; and lastly, from March 11 to November 25, 1975. Each period witnessed an intensification of the process as well as a radicalization of the same. With each successive period, the Portuguese Communist Party came closer to capturing total political power. It was only on November 25, 1975 that the radicalization, so characteristic of the Portuguese experience, was terminated by moderate military officers. Between April 1974 and April 1976 Portugal faced a national crisis that threatened to result in the

establishment of the first communist regime in Western Europe. During this period, the country experienced the traumatic and chaotic effects of the Processo Revolucionario em Curso - the PREC.¹ The Ongoing Revolutionary Process was initiated with the April 25, 1974 rupture, slowed by the events of November 25, 1975, and terminated with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic on April 2, 1976. Although more than a decade has transpired, the results of the PREC continue to be felt in the Portuguese polity. The profound transformations that touched every aspect of Portuguese society during that period continue to affect the capacity of the Portuguese state to respond to various pressures and demands placed upon it.² The PREC was also the period during which the Portuguese Communist Party attempted to realize its "democratic and national revolution". The transformations that arose out of the revolutionary process led to the creation of a "democratic regime" prescribed in the 1976 Constitution.³ This

¹ The Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC) was meant to denote that the revolutionary process was geared to the establishment of a socialist order. The military actions of November 25, 1975 halted the intensification of the revolutionary process without establishing a constitutional regime. Therefore, it is with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic, on April 2, 1976 that the PREC reached its conclusion.

² For an extremely interesting analysis arguing that certain structural changes, dating from April 1974, continue to impede the state's ability to formulate and implement decisions. See Jose Durao Barroso, "O Estado portugues desde 1974: capacidade de adaptacao e incapacidade de decisao". Analise Social Vol.20, No.83, 1984. pp.453-465.

³ Throughout this work the use of quotation marks around the phrase "democratic regime" is meant to differentiate this

"democratic regime", and the PCP's defence of it, have guaranteed the Portuguese Communist Party a place in Portuguese political life far greater than it would otherwise deserve. In fact, many Portuguese scholars agree that the 1976 Constitution in effect "institutionalized" the PCP in the nation's institutions and economic organization. This chapter will consider the "institutionalization" of the communists in the Portuguese regime and the "conquests of April" that allowed for the development of such a situation.

Until September 28, 1974 the Armed Forces Movement maintained an inconspicuous role in Portuguese political life. On April 26, 1974 the Movement that overthrew Caetano established a number of political organs each with limited capacity to intervene in the decision-making process. The only guide available to the various decision-making centers was the ambiguous, and often contradictory, Program of the Armed Forces Movement. The Program called for a solution to the colonial question without specifying the particulars of that solution. It was this question that tended to dominate the relationship between the MFA and the appointed head of state, President Antonio Spínola. Spínola favoured the elaboration of a compromise solution that would not necessarily grant immediate independence to the colonies. More radical sectors of the MFA, as well as the PCP, demanded the immediate recognition of the right to

concept, as understood by the PCP, from that of a liberal (bourgeois) democratic regime.

independence of the colonized peoples. During the months that followed April 1974 Spínola's moderation and attempts to reach compromise solutions led to his political marginalization. It was becoming increasingly clear that the leftists within the MFA were beginning to set the agenda in the country.

In the days following the April rupture a Provisional Government was established with Professor Palma Carlos as Prime Minister. In order to ensure tranquility on the industrial front the PCP was assigned ministerial responsibilities in this government. Cunhal, who was appointed Minister without portfolio, had satisfied one of his Party's demands. One assumes that Spínola believed that the PCP could ensure industrial peace since it controlled the central trade union federation - Intersindical. The coming months proved Spínola wrong. While it is true that the PCP discouraged the working-class from striking or taking any other measures against the government, spontaneous action and the demand for wage increases did not end. Simultaneously, the Portuguese Communist Party began to ally itself closely with the MFA. Meanwhile, the Party began to organize political fronts, designed to act as transmission belts, in a concerted strategy to capture power. The classical Leninist approach to revolution was adopted by the Portuguese communists.

The conflicts that had become manifest since April reached their conclusion on September 28, 1974. Given that Spinoła's position was becoming increasingly more precarious, he called for a massive demonstration, in his support, to be held in Lisbon. The communists, and other left-wing sectors, immediately denounced this manoeuver as a counter-revolutionary coup. To prevent the demonstration the PCP, Intersindical, and the PCP's fellow travellers, the MDP/CDE, established barricades around the entrances to Lisbon. The PCP's action succeeded not only in preventing the demonstration, but initiated the downfall of Spinoła and the moderates. Buoyed by their victory, the PCP and its allies further intensified the revolutionary process. In all spheres of civil society, as well as in the state apparatus, the PCP sought to consolidate its power. It is also in the aftermath of September 28 that the MFA began to conceptualize itself as a national liberation movement, or, in the lexicon of the military radicals, as the motor of the revolution. The alliance between the PCP and the MFA was solidified and expanded.

The dynamic initiated with the defeat of Spinoła and the moderates culminated with the murky events of March 11, 1975. Accused by the military left and the PCP of attempting to launch yet another counter-revolutionary coup, Spinoła was forced to seek exile. Following the events of March 11, the PCP and its allies launched a campaign

designed to nationalize large sectors of the economy as well as to consolidate their political power. The massive socio-economic transformations that occurred in the aftermath of March 11 cannot all be ascribed to the intentions of the PCP. It is true that much of this process was spontaneously demanded by the underprivileged strata of the society. Nonetheless, the radicalization of the revolutionary process was inspired and motivated by the Portuguese Communist Party. As we shall see in this chapter, the transformations that occurred during this period came to be referred to by the PCP as the "conquests of April".

By the late summer of 1975 the PCP was poised to seize power. Allying itself with the pro-communist Prime Minister, Vasco Goncalves, the Party attempted to monopolize the media, the trade unions, and other sectors of the society and the state. When Goncalves formed his last Provisional Government, the Fifth, the communists had succeeded in capturing much of the state apparatus at the expense of the moderate political parties. The Fifth Provisional Government created a popular backlash that led to large-scale strife throughout the country. The Communist Party was placed on the offensive and eventually withdrew its support from Goncalves. The turbulence of the revolutionary process continued after Goncalves resigned his position. The military left, with the tactical support of the PCP, prepared itself for the seizure of power. On November 25, 1975, moderate officers under the leadership of General

Ramalho Eanes removed the leftists from positions of authority in the military and state apparatus. This is not to say that the influence of the PCP and its allies was terminated, but the momentum had definitely passed.

One realizes that the above summary does not do justice to the complicated events that characterized Portugal during the revolutionary period. This summary has attempted to provide a brief overview of the PREC. However, what is important for our purposes here is not a detailed description of the process itself, but rather the PCP's understanding of that process as well as the lessons derived from it.

The MFA's first official press conference, held on December 31, 1974,⁴ served to clarify the political situation in the aftermath of September 28. It was at this press conference that Vasco Goncalves, speaking in the name of the MFA, attempted to delineate the ideological position adopted by the MFA. Goncalves asserted that the MFA was not favourable to either the socialist or capitalist road to development. However, it was to be clearly understood that the MFA supported a socializing (socializante) orientation. In other words, while not making any formal political commitment to socialist development, it was to be understood that the socializing of the means of production was inevitable. In this way, the MFA asserted its

⁴ Various representatives of the newly-created Co-ordinating Commission of the MFA were present at this conference.

anti-monopolist character, a step that was in full accordance with the MFA Program. The conclusion derived from this new MFA position was that capital would either co-operate with the regime or the socialist option would be adopted.

This was not the only serious re-definition undertaken by the MFA in the aftermath of September 28. The events of September 28 convinced many elements within the MFA that it was necessary to institutionalize the movement in one form or another if the MFA's role was not to be jeopardized. As a result, closer co-operation between the MFA and the J.S.N. was seen as one crucial element leading to the movement's implementation in the society. The declaration read by L. Colonel Charais at the December 31 press conference makes the point relatively clear. He stated that the MFA program

can only be considered ambiguous or irrelevant by those who give it a formal reading, without understanding its spirit, a spirit which is clear by a careful reading, without prejudices, without integrating it in the geopolitical conditions in which Portugal is inserted.⁵

In the short months following the aborted "Spinola coup", the MFA actively attempted to define itself within the context of a changing Portuguese reality. It was obvious that the Movement was becoming radicalized at a rapid pace. Significantly, the MFA ceased to define itself as merely a military movement, but began to think of itself as a liberation movement. Carlos Fabiao illustrates this new

⁵ Interview, Expresso, December 31, 1974.

conception, albeit one still relatively ambiguous, that the MFA had of itself:

The MFA is not only a military movement it is today, above all, a spirit that all progressive forces have adhered to that genuinely want, to renovate our homeland.⁶

In addition, Fabiao asserted that the MFA would not disappear from the Portuguese political scene, regardless of whether it was to be institutionalized or not. This officer, no doubt expressing the view of many MFA officers, saw the military's continuation in Portuguese politics not as a new development, or policy, but as the correction of a process that should have been followed from April 25. In other words, the events of September 28 had merely served to resolve the ambiguities present within the MFA since its inception and to set the revolution on its proper path.⁷

It is important to note that in early March 1975 three main currents could be discerned within the Armed Forces Movement. The first of these was identified with Vasco Goncalves and, as would become most apparent over the summer months, the PCP. Officers identified with this current could be found in the J.S.N., a majority of the Co-ordinating Commission, the Engineers and large sectors of the Navy. A more conservative wing of the armed forces rallied around Spinoia prior to March 11, but then lost much of its dynamic.⁸ The third, and certainly the most amorphous of

⁶ Interview, Expresso Revista, January 18, 1975.

⁷ Ibid.

these three currents, supported Melo Antunes and his positions.⁹

By early 1975 part of the MFA's plan to institutionalize itself foresaw a prominent role for the movement in the Constituent Assembly. The Air Force rejected the proposal that the MFA establish itself as a political party and supported political pluralism. In effect, the Air Force rejected overt participation in the political process. Its position suggested that only active non-participation would give the MFA sufficient prestige to influence events. In other words, the Air Force's position was that only through a rejection of formal political participation could the MFA influence the political process. There was present in this conception a clear concern that the MFA's participation in the Constituent Assembly would be a cover for providing the PCP and the MDP a majority in the Constituent Assembly.

In the aftermath of March 11, the MFA established the Council of the Revolution.¹⁰ The new organ granted itself

⁸ This group derived its strength mainly from the calvary and the commandos. Many officers not directly involved with the MFA, the conservatives, supported Spínola.

⁹ This current has often been given the name "terceiro-mundistas" (third worldists). They derived support from influential officers and had reasonable support within the Air Force.

¹⁰ It was made up of 24 members: the President of the Republic; the three chiefs and the three vice-chiefs of the three branches of the armed forces; seven members of the Co-ordinating Commission of the MFA Program (including Charais); and eight representatives of the armed forces - four from the Army and two each from the Navy and the Air Force.

the power formerly reserved for the J.S.N., the Council of State and the Council of Chiefs of the General Staff. The most significant aspect of the newly-created organ was its power to legislate. Indeed, immediately following its establishment the Council nationalized the banks. The Council of the Revolution and the Assembly of Delegates were the two organs that attempted the institutionalization of the MFA.

At the same time that the MFA was engaged in the aforementioned process, there was growing concern that the endless all-night meetings that characterized the Council of Ministers as well as some of the MFA organs were counter-productive. While it was practically impossible to resolve this problem within the MFA organisms, Prime-Minister Goncalves announced that government efficiency demanded an end to the marathon sessions and their endless discussions. To that end, Goncalves established a restricted council composed of the Prime-Minister and his ministers without portfolio - Cunhal, Soares and Sa Carneiro. The various ministers would submit proposals that would be discussed individually without it becoming necessary for the full cabinet to ever meet.

The April 25, 1975 Constituent Assembly elections had a profound impact upon the MFA. Gradually, the MFA had come to see itself as a genuine liberation movement. Otelo suggested that the ideal solution to the problems of the day

would be to transform the MFA into a liberation movement that could overcome the divisions created by the political parties. This conviction led Otelo to claim that the MFA would "go beyond" the political parties, especially the coalition parties - i.e. the PCP. He said,

I am convinced that the MFA, as the real motor of the Revolution, at a certain point will overcome the political influence of the parties in relation to their bases of support.¹¹

Carvalho did propose an intriguing solution as to the future of the militants of these parties. In essence, he suggested that these individuals would become the "political technocrats" of the MFA liberation movement.¹² Any Marxist-Leninist party would certainly not accept such a solution with great enthusiasm. The PCP's difficulties with Otelo were further compounded as a result of this and similar statements.

The COPCON (Continental Operation Command) was created on July 8, 1974 by Decree-Law. The primary duty of COPCON was to intervene in internal crises and to restore order on those occasions where regular armed forces intervention was inopportune. Led by junior officers closely identified with the Armed Forces Movement, and under the overall command of Otelo, the COPCON was to support the creation of a dynamic armed forces.¹³ This idea of creating a dynamic armed forces

¹¹ Interview granted to Expresso Revista, May 17, 1975.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Otelo interview to Expresso, July 27, 1974.

seems to have been influenced by the "hearts and minds" operation that Otelo had participated in during his tour of duty in Guinea. Indeed, such an operation appears to have been what Otelo had in mind at the time when he spoke of having COPCON work with the population.¹⁴

The military movement that would eventually designate itself as the Armed Forces Movement was formed in reaction to Decree-Law 353/73 of July 13, 1973 issued by Caetano's Minister of Defense - General Sa Viana Rebelo. Initially, the movement was composed of junior military officers interested in debating the Decree-Law and expressing their professional grievances within the framework of the authoritarian regime. With the publication of the Decree-Law in July 1973, the miliciano issue became a secondary consideration, replaced by the concern over the restructuring of the officer course at the Military Academy. The traditional four-year course, equivalent to a secondary education degree, could now be successfully completed in two semesters. The professional concern arising out of the miliciano issue and the duration of the Military Academy course were the immediate causes that led to the formation of the MFA.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ This was the analysis of Otelo in his interview with Expresso Revista, July 27, 1974.

Behind these immediate causes there was an overriding political question that had troubled the junior officers. It became increasingly apparent to many of the junior officers that the colonial wars could only be resolved politically. Having lost faith in the ability of vanquishing the national liberation movements through a military solution, these junior officers became increasingly disenchanted with their role as the Pretorian Guards of the authoritarian regime. After December 1973, the movement went beyond a concern with professional grievances to an authentic, anti-regime movement.¹⁶

The anti-regime character of the MFA became increasingly pronounced as the armed forces saw their prestige within Portuguese society become increasingly compromised.¹⁷ As the armed forces, and the army in particular, saw their prestige eroded the demand for drastic measures became increasingly felt. The political radicalization of the MFA went hand in hand with the down-grading of their formerly prestigious status within Portuguese society.

The Caetano government suspected that a conspiracy was underway within the ranks of the armed forces. On March 16, 1974 an attempted coup failed due to poor planning. As a result, many of those officers suspected of involvement in the aborted coup were to be transferred either to the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ This is especially true after the Beira incident of January 17, 1974.

colonies or to the islands. The Caetano government intended to remove the threat of a coup by physically dispersing those elements suspected of involvement. In light of this situation, the projected date for action against the regime would have to be established with due haste. Therefore, the coup d'etat that successfully overthrew the forty-eight year old authoritarian regime was hurriedly planned and executed. Indeed, the failed March 16 (Caldas) coup and its consequences was to be decisive in the MFA's decision to carry out its plans. On March 24, 1974 the Co-ordinating Commission of the MFA met and decided to take the steps necessary to overthrow Caetano.

The Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC) came to a conclusion with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic on April 2, 1976. In effect, the new Constitution brought into being a regime that the PCP would come to designate as a "democratic regime". The 1976 Constitution envisioned the creation of a regime whose fundamental purpose was to steer the country to socialism. As such, the political order outlined in the Constitution was considered as a transitory one that would be replaced when the political aims enshrined in the Fundamental Law were realized. Because it enshrined fundamental socialist principles, Portuguese democracy was understood by the communists and others on the left to be qualitatively different from, and superior to, the other liberal democratic European regimes.

For the PCP, the revolutionary process initiated in 1974 had been extremely irregular, contradictory, uncertain and dangerous. Despite the nature of the process, its finality was a series of profound political and socio-economic transformations that successfully altered Portuguese society for the better.¹⁸ While at its Sixth Congress the PCP claimed that Portugal was the least developed nation in Europe, this description was no longer apt by the time that the PCP held its Eighth Congress in 1976. Indeed, in the two years following the April coup the country had been radically transformed almost beyond recognition. Not only was the nation no longer the most underdeveloped and retrogressive in Europe, by 1976 it was the most advanced, both in political and socio-economic terms, among all the

¹⁸ The PCP's strength cannot be measured only in electoral terms. Fluctuating between 12% to 19% in electoral support, it exercises a virtual hegemony over certain regions of the country. This is particularly true in the Alentejo province. Here the Party has historical roots dating back decades, and, in this region of Agrarian Reform, has been the staunchest supporter of the collectivization of the land. The PCP's electoral strength in this region of agricultural workers, reaching 50% in some areas, is premised on a network of socio-cultural organizations that allow the PCP to have a pronounced social implementation. Indeed, one can accurately describe this as a sub-culture. The notion of a communist sub-culture can also be applied to the industrial zones surrounding Lisbon where the PCP is also strong. In this area, primarily in the south bank of the Tagus river, the PCP is the "party of the proletariat". It derives its support from the industrial proletariat who see the PCP as a champion of their interests. The notion is reinforced by the fact that the PCP controls the country's largest and most militant trade union federation - CGTP-Inter. As we can see from this brief note, the PCP is, in some ways, a different party in the Alentejo than in Lisbon's industrial belt. See Bermeo, Nancy Gina, Revolution Within the Revolution: Worker's Control in Rural Portugal. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton

non-socialist European states.

The adoption of the 1976 Constitution must be considered as the most important political milestone in post-April 25 Portugal. The document, which continues to pose very concrete problems for Portugal's development today, guaranteed the legitimation of the Portuguese Communist Party in that society. The document guaranteed that the PCP would maintain a role and exercise an influence in the system far greater than its real political strength would warrant. Having lost its opportunity for seizing complete political power, the PCP solidified and institutionalized its position in the system through the 1976 Constitution.

As far as the Portuguese Communist Party was concerned the military action of April 25, 1974 could not be characterized as a mere coup d'etat; it was to be understood as a military uprising. To suggest that April 25 was simply a military affair would be an admission of theoretical deficiency on the part of the Portuguese communists. The last chapter of this work considered the PCP's position in relation to the question of a military coup as a means of deposing the authoritarian regime. To admit in the aftermath of 1974 that the events of April 25 constituted a vulgar coup would be an admission that the conception of the "democratic and national revolution", and the strategy

University Press, 1986. As well, see Jose Pacheco Pereira, Conflitos Sociais Nos Campos do Sul de Portugal. Lisbon: Publicacoes Europa-America, n.d.

arising out of that analysis, had been erroneous. At its 1965 Congress the PCP claimed that the "fascist" regime would collapse as a result of an uprising. By labelling the April 25 military coup as an uprising, the PCP proved that it had been correct in its analysis. In turn, the precepts of the "democratic and national revolution" constituted the bedrock for the PCP's behavior in post-April 25 Portugal.

According to the PCP, the military uprising was immediately followed by a popular uprising.¹⁹ It is important to note that the PCP does not consider the military coup an isolated occurrence. The military action is understood as the initiation of a process that was completed on May 1, 1974. The mass demonstrations of May Day were the culmination of the mass movement, allied with the military uprising, that sealed the overthrow of the authoritarian regime. While the overthrow of the "fascist government" was the work of the military, the overthrow of the "fascist regime" was the consequence of the alliance between the mass movement and the military. As Cunhal stated at the Party's Eighth Congress,

The overthrow of the fascist government was the work of the MFA. However, the effective defeat of fascism, the installation of the liberties, the democratic transformations, the revolutionary conquests, were the work of the great People-MFA

¹⁹ To label the enthusiasm that occurred on April 25 as an uprising is nothing less than an exaggeration of the facts. Yet, it became necessary to label the spontaneous support for the coup as an uprising in order to maintain the theoretical consistency of the "democratic and national revolution". Since the PCP had led the "mass movement", the "popular uprising" had to follow.

alliance; the alliance of the organized popular revolutionary movement with the revolutionary soldiers of the MFA.²⁰

When analyzing the PCP's role in, and understanding of, the Portuguese Revolution this is a fundamental point that cannot be ignored in any interpretation of those events.

In retrospect Cunhal was to suggest that the MFA committed two historic errors on April 25, 1974. The first of these was to look for support amongst those officers that had been alien to the Armed Forces Movement and the anti-fascist struggle. Not only did the Captains look to this group of soldiers for support, they also placed them in positions of political power. If the MFA's first mistake was not having assumed the levers of power itself, the second was remaining in the shadows for as long as it did.²¹ These two errors marked the revolutionary process and facilitated the divergences that developed between the revolutionary movement and the centers of political power.²²

²⁰ Alvaro Cunhal, A Revolucao Portuguesa: o passado e o futuro. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1976, p.58. My emphasis. This book, which is the Central Committee's Report to the Eighth Congress, held in 1976, is the most detailed and important document that considers the meaning of the PREC for the PCP. The "popular revolutionary movement" did become organized in the aftermath of the coup. However, the days leading up to May Day can best be characterized as a spontaneous explosion of support for the military. It is not only inaccurate to suggest that the movement was organized at that point; it is also inaccurate to claim that the movement was in alliance with, as opposed to in support of, the military.

²¹ Ibid., p.59.

²² Ibid., p.60.

These two errors have their origins in the nature of the MFA itself. The PCP is correct when it claims that the "MFA was a movement politically very heterogeneous."²³ It was so, according to Cunhal, because it was the product of a series of broad compromises within the ranks of the military. On one side were those military men that saw the survival of capitalism as necessitating the overthrow of an authoritarian regime that no longer ensured the efficient preservation of their interests; opposing them were those officers that shared the aspirations of the revolutionary masses. Although rather simplistic, this explanation is essentially correct in positing the claim that the MFA was a heterogeneous political movement. It is also correct in postulating that it was this broad alliance, whose unity extended only to the overthrow of the Caetano regime, that made the coup a success.²⁴

The tensions that existed within the MFA can be discerned by an examination of the celebrated Program of the MFA. The short-lived agreement that preceded the elaboration of the Program evaporated in the immediate aftermath of the coup.²⁵

²³ Ibid., p.60.

²⁴ Ibid., p.60.

²⁵ The Program of the Armed Forces Movement that was eventually published and referred to as the official document was amended numerous times so as to make it acceptable to all groups and individuals, including Spínola. The ambiguities of the Movement's program soon gave rise to fundamental interpretive differences. The document demonstrated the "compromise of the "captains" with the "generals" as well as a lack of foresight as far as the role of the mass movement was concerned. The

The retrospective elaborated at the Portuguese Communist Party's Eighth Congress maintained that the struggle of the masses was the "determinant factor in the revolutionary and democratic transformations"²⁶ accomplished in Portugal. This factor gave the Portuguese Revolution its own special character. Since the organs of political power were reluctant to maximize the revolutionary process, the initiatives always surged from below. The transformations implemented would then be belatedly be accepted by the various governments. Finally, these "democratic transformations" were given legal recognition by being implemented in the 1976 Constitution of the Republic.²⁷

Without the persistence of the mass revolutionary movement the "democratic conquests" that surged following April 1974 would not have been possible. The PCP observed that the liberties initially obtained would not have endured for any length of time in the absence of the revolutionary movement. These freedoms did not arise automatically out of the ashes of the fascist regime; but "in each case the people conquered the liberties by exercising them."²⁸ The right to assemble, demonstrate, speak, strike, and so forth were all solidified in this way. The PCP understands these

demands imposed by the mass movement necessitated modifications to some parts of the document and the implementation of the remaining sections. Ibid., p.61.

²⁶ Ibid., p.64.

²⁷ Ibid., p.64.

²⁸ Ibid., p.64.

liberties not as having been simply proclaimed by the MFA, but as being attained and consolidated through their exercise. Therefore, "democratic liberties" are understood as deriving their legitimacy not from any concrete form of political power, but from the will of the masses. A change of regime does not, and by definition cannot, invalidate any of these freedoms.

By way of example, the PCP points to the existence of the political parties following the April coup. According to Cunhal, the freedom of the political parties was de facto realized in the first few days of the Revolution.²⁹ The Secretary-General of the PCP is correct in asserting that a dynamic was created that made the existence of political parties irreversible. Again, the legitimacy of political parties, at least those of the left, was derived from the people and not any one government. The problem for the PCP, when it approaches the matter from this perspective, is one of coherence. If legitimacy is accorded to the parties of the left by popular will, this is certainly no less true for those parties whose ideology placed them on the opposite side of the spectrum. While these questions of consistency may not have been particularly important to the Portuguese communists, their positions did have practical consequences. While the PCP could have seized power by itself, it could never exercise it legitimately without other political

²⁹ Ibid., P.65.

parties in a broad front.³⁰

If the right to assemble and demonstrate was the one most important freedom for the Party, followed by the right of political parties to exist, the rights of trade unions followed in this hierarchy. It is interesting to note that Intersindical simply imposed itself upon the trade union scene as a reality immediately following the collapse of the authoritarian regime. However, the PCP's conception of trade union freedom was rather peculiar. Genuine freedom was dependent upon the maintenance of a united trade union movement. This meant that the existence of one, and only one, trade union confederation was considered the concrete expression of this notion of freedom.³¹ While this is not in itself a surprising position for a communist party to adopt, the PCP took this rationale a few steps beyond. The Party opposed the creation of an alternative confederation because it would mean that such a body would come under the control of either a political party, the government, or the employers. The communists realized that other political influences existed and competed with the PCP for the leadership of the various unions. To meet this challenge the

³⁰ As this chapter will illustrate this was indeed the PCP's vision. The political model for the Party was the people's democracies and their use of fronts. More precisely, East Germany was the model par excellence as far as the Portuguese Communist Party was concerned. There is no doubt that the GDR's experience with "anti-fascist fronts" and "multiparty socialism" was seen as an appropriate model for Portugal.

³¹ Cunhal, Op. Cit., P.66.

PCP suggested that any such changes in the political orientation of the syndicates should transpire within the "democratic procedure" of the one unitary confederation - Intersindical. Given the PCP's organizational strength and influence in the Portuguese trade union movement, all unions would become bound by a confederation controlled, in its totality, by the Communist Party.

It was this communist objective that became one of the principal issues that set the stage for a battle whose outcome would be fundamental in determining what type of political model Portugal was to eventually adopt.

Freedom of the press, and of the other information organs, was one of the most bitterly-fought battles of the revolutionary process. Under the authoritarian regime the media was not only tightly regulated, it was also the property of many of those interests that controlled the national economy. The overwhelming majority of the country's most important newspapers were owned by the monopolists. It was therefore essential, from the PCP's perspective, to remove the newspapers from this monopolist control. This was done through the saneamento (purging) of editors and other individuals responsible for the orientation of the media. The establishment of commissions and councils to operate and, more importantly, control the editorial policies of the newspapers was the preferred method of affecting the desired changes in the media. Much of the country's national media

came under the control or influence of the PCP in this manner. Just as the issue of unificacao became a major issue of contention during this period, so did the control and manipulation of the mass media by the PCP. In a country where newspapers and other media play such an important role in the political process, any political party that could exercise hegemony over the organs of information was greatly benefitted.³²

By 1976 the PCP claimed that two reasons accounted for the difficulties encountered in establishing a "free" media. First, "reactionary" circles attempted to maintain or, in other cases, regain control of the organs of information. The second reason for the irregular process was due to the positions adopted by the extreme left. The political actions of the right, including the PS, are not to be understood independently of the broad political aims of these parties. The political activity of the radical left created, through its provocations, the necessary preconditions that the right utilized to recuperate its former positions in the media. The communists justified their attempts to monopolize the free flow of information on the grounds that only their version of political reality was genuinely revolutionary. Non-revolutionary positions could therefore be suppressed

³² For a different perspective on this matter see Ben Pimlott and Jean Seaton, "Political Power and the Portuguese Media", in Lawrence S. Graham and Douglas L. Wheeler, In Search of Modern Portugal: The Revolution and its Consequences. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983. pp. 43-57.

under the pretext of genuine freedom of the press. The self-justification provided by the PCP was that in a revolution, "no norm can oblige collaboration with the voice of the counter-revolution."³³ It was this type of logic that led to the confrontation over the socialist newspaper ³⁴

Another "freedom" that the PCP actively advocated and attempted to implement was the "democratization" of local government. Such a process was understood as an essential element in the overall democratization of the state. This concern with local government was not new to the Party; it had long advocated the penetration of local administration as a means of increasing its presence at that level of society. In the months following the coup the MDP/CDE was the preferred vehicle for the PCP's penetration of the said administrations.

The implementation of the above-mentioned freedoms was not to be free of several contradictions. Inherent to the popular and democratic movement were not only the PCP's "correct" conceptions, but also those opportunist conceptions of both right and left. Rightist opportunism, understood to be the Socialist Party, claimed that the formal freedoms established were in themselves sufficient to characterize the new regime as democratic. As a result, radical modifications to the social and economic structures

³³ Cunhal Op. Cit., p.69.

³⁴ Republica. Refer to Appendix A for the details of this incident and the Eurocommunist response to it.

of the country were unnecessary. Leftist opportunism outrightly rejected the idea that these freedoms were in any way significant. The radical left argued that as long as capitalism remained the dominant mode of production the defense of democratic liberties was an inconsequential matter. The PCP held these two positions responsible for the divergences and contradictions experienced by the popular movement.³⁵

It is quite natural to expect a communist party to battle both of these positions and take an intermediary position between them. The PCP maintained that the democratic freedoms were, in themselves, a positive development. As such they should not only be defended, but consolidated. However, unlike the socialists, the communists were adamant in claiming that the defense and consolidation of the said freedoms must be strengthened by radical socio-economic changes. The democratic liberties were the precondition for a greater aim - the completion of the "democratic and national revolution" and the eventual construction of socialism. In themselves these freedoms were a positive factor since they weakened the power of the monopolists and latifundists by disrooting their political power. In summing up this position Cunhal writes,

The revolutionary process came to demonstrate that the liberties are defended by the destruction of the dominion and power of the monopolists and latifundists; and democracy is constructed not only in the political realm, but also in the

³⁵ Ibid., p.71.

social and economic realms.³⁶

While the destruction of the political power of the monopolists was underway, the revolutionary mass movement undertook a series of actions designed to improve living conditions in Portugal. This aspect of the revolutionary struggle was an inseparable component of the ongoing political struggle directed against the capitalist groups. The struggle for better living conditions served two cardinal purposes. First, demands for a better standard of living, often manifest in the form of increased wages, diminished the level of exploitation that the working-classes was subjected to. Consequently, capitalist domination was weakened proportionately to the success of demands for a better standard of living. The second purpose was one of increased political pressure upon the dominant political forces. The problem for the PCP, which presented itself quite early on in the PREC, was one of balancing its responsibilities in government and its obligation toward an increasingly forceful working-class intent upon maximizing their economic well-being.

The PCP claims that the working-classes managed to secure a better standard of living in the period following the April coup. To a large degree these gains were the direct outcome of the Party's control of the Ministry of Labour in the first five Provisional Governments.³⁷ Notwithstanding,

³⁶ Ibid., p.72.

it is more accurate to suggest that the benefits obtained by the working-classes were acquired not as a result of the PCP's co-operation, but despite it. Throughout the first five Provisional Governments the PCP clearly attempted to impede the militancy of the trade union movement for its own specific political reasons. The communists allowed Intersindical to act only in those instances where political considerations dictated the prudence of such a course. Any other attitude would have been a negation of the PCP's Leninist conception of the trade union movement as a "transmission belt".

Throughout the PREC many of Portugal's political forces were surprised by the level of union militancy generated outside the orbit of the main political parties. One result of this militancy was the process that concluded with the establishment of worker's control over numerous enterprises. Never an articulately preconceived PCP plan of action, worker's control developed either as a spontaneous response to a given problem or under the guidance of the radical left. Only when the occupations appeared to achieve some degree of implementation did the PCP penetrate and influence this process. As the PCP would later claim,

³⁷ The communist Avelino Goncalves was Minister of Labour in the First Provisional Government. Major Costa Martins, who was very close to the PCP, occupied the post from the start of the Second until the collapse of the Fifth Provisional Government. Carlos Carvalhas, a PCP member, occupied the position of Secretary of State in the same Ministry during this period.

Worker's control appeared, in the Portuguese revolutionary process, not so much as the application of a plan or political program, but as an imperious necessity for the defence of democracy, of economic activity, and employment³⁸

The saneamentos (cleansings) gave rise to the worker's control movement. The cleansing of various enterprises was aimed at removing "fascists" from positions of economic activity. Not only did the purges accomplish this aim, but many managers and employers whose connections to the authoritarian regime did not extend beyond passive acceptance were removed from their posts. In effect, the saneamentos removed an entire body of managers whose expertise was desperately needed to confront the economic problems faced by Portugal at the time. In order to fill this vacuum the exponents of the saneamentos proposed a system of worker's control and management. The same political considerations that dictated the purging of management logically led to this conclusion.

For the PCP, the saneamentos "constituted indispensable measures for the defence of the Revolution."³⁹ Faced with a fait accompli, the PCP adopted worker's control as its own. Regardless, the saneamentos were certainly a mixed blessing for the Portuguese communists. The expulsion of "fascist" managers demonstrated that the working-class possessed an exceptional level of militancy that could prove to be an

³⁸ itself. Ibid., p.77. Cunhal's emphasis.

³⁹ Ibid., p.77.

important reservoir for the PCP's total assault on power. The saneamentos also reduced the influence of the monopolists in the economic life of the nation. However, the inherent danger, from the communist perspective, was that the movement was surpassing its vanguard in the realm of practical revolutionary activity. Paradoxically, the working-classes' radicalism, and the PCP's seeming inability to prevent its momentum, provided the Party with a certain margin of manoeuvrability in its attempts to pressure the government and other political forces. In Leninist terms, the working-class movement deepened the crisis leading to a more pronounced revolutionary situation that could be favourably exploited by the vanguard party.

By 1976 the PCP contended that the saneamentos had been an important aspect of the mass revolutionary movement. They served as an offensive means of weakening capitalism's hold over the economy. Having achieved this end, worker militancy became an essential element in the defence of the democratic situation and later, the democratic regime. Yet, despite the contribution of the purges to the revolutionary process, the communists recognized that the question of economic management remained unresolved. It was the attempt to resolve this matter, while preventing the return of capitalist managers to positions of authority, that led to the establishment of worker's control in large sectors of the economy.

Worker's control was established in the wake of the abandonment of industries by their former owners and managers.⁴⁰ Within the PCP's perspective, worker's control was the result of the worker's vigilant attempts to terminate fraud and economic sabotage in the private sector. It is therefore to be considered a genuinely democratic and patriotic process that made an essential contribution to the country's economic stabilization. Worker's control was substituted by worker's management, or co-management with the state, as the objective situation demanded. At any rate, this form of intervention was presented by the Portuguese Communist Party not as a universal solution, but as "an emergency solution."⁴¹

These events constitute the background that led to the institution of worker's control and management within the framework of the Worker's Commissions. The role of the CT's was therefore varied dependent upon the concrete conditions of the particular enterprise where they functioned. Since the Commissions were an objective response to economic sabotage and did not function in accordance with any pre-defined political project, their scope needed to be defined. This attempt to define these organisms was addressed by the Encontros das Comissoes de

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.78. Many owners did desert their enterprises. However, these did so after the revolutionary climate made normal business operations difficult to continue. Transfers of currency outside the country and a host of other measures were also common.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.81.

Trabalhadores/Sindicais in 1975. Theoretically, the Encontros were an attempt to have the workers analyze the experiences of the movement and define it.⁴² In reality the movement came under the influence of the PCP and its syndical organization. The main proponent of the worker's control movement, the radical left, was quickly marginalized, but did manage to retain some influence at the organizational level.

There is no doubt that these concrete expressions of class solidarity and unity were important political victories for the PCP. Perhaps just as important was the symbolic value found in the aforementioned form of organization. Worker's control appeared as "an integral element of a new dynamic of production."⁴³ Active involvement of the workers in the production process demonstrated that economic activity could be undertaken without capitalists. In short, worker's control and worker's management offered the possibility of economic activity outside the realm of capitalist relations of production. This fact was a positive contribution in the development of increased class consciousness and militancy. These organizations were a form of political education for the working-classes. Simultaneously, the working-class movement was part of the onslaught against "monopolist property and

⁴² The PCP would later claim that there was the "mechanical copying" of these experiences. Ibid., p.81.

⁴³ Ibid., p.84.

capitalist management of the basic sectors of the Portuguese economy."⁴⁴

Much more important than worker's control, from the PCP's perspective, were the nationalizations. In the aftermath of March 11, 1975 large sectors of the Portuguese economy were nationalized. This was a tremendous political victory for Portugal's communists since the collectivization of the means of production was a primary objective of the "democratic and national revolution". The nationalizations were understood by the PCP as the logical result of the intensification "of the class struggle that opposed the monopolists groups, big capital, to the Portuguese Revolution."⁴⁵ The large banks and industrial groups had been the backbone of reaction prior to March 11. As the Revolution proceeded these economic interests went from passive opposition to frontal conflict with the PREC. March 11 was seen as the culmination of a series of class struggles which led to the defeat of large sectors of monopoly capital.

According to Cunhal, the monopolists committed three fundamental errors that led to their defeat. The first of these was not believing in the credibility of Portuguese democracy and, consequently, attempting to liquidate it through economic sabotage. Their second error was in

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.85.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.85.

actively supporting the "counter-revolutionaries" and, in some cases, becoming counter-revolutionaries themselves. Thirdly, the monopolists continued to live as before as if nothing had changed; in other words, they had ignored the progress of the revolutionary situation. These three errors led these interests to their defeat.⁴⁶

Three banks had been nationalized prior to the events of March 11, 1975.⁴⁷ However, it was the monopolists' active involvement in the violent actions of March 11 that brought the conflict between monopoly capital and the revolutionary process to its conclusion. In the days following March 11, the Council of the Revolution decided to nationalize the banks and the domestic insurance companies.⁴⁸ This step was soon followed by the nationalization of petroleum companies, steel companies, electricity companies, public transport companies, the conglomerate CUF, and so forth.⁴⁹ However, it was the short-lived Fifth Provisional Government that

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.85-86.

⁴⁷ These were the Bank of Portugal, Nacional Ultramarino, and the Bank of Angola. All were nationalized on September 15, 1974. This measure was, however, related to the process of decolonization.

⁴⁸ The banks were nationalized on March 13, 1975. However, the Decree-Law of the Council of the Revolution was dated March 14.

⁴⁹ The PCP's figures indicate that until the end of the IV Provisional Government (August 8, 1975) 150 companies were nationalized. Of these, 19 were banks and other financial institutions, 36 insurance companies, 61 transport companies, and 5 tobacco companies. See Cunhal, Op. Cit., p.87.

accelerated the pace of the nationalizations.⁵⁰ The Sixth Provisional Government also undertook some nationalizations, but the pace and number were drastically reduced. The policy of nationalization, especially under the Goncalves-led Fifth Provisional Government, succeeded in placing large sectors of the economy under state control. At the PCP's Sixth Congress Cunhal suggested that the destruction of the political power of the monopolies had to be followed by their economic defeat. By the Eighth Congress the PCP's General-Secretary could claim that,

If the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and the new democratic situation liquidated state-monopoly capitalism and the political power of the monopolies, this series of nationalizations liquidated the economic power of the monopolist groups as well as the monopolist groups themselves.⁵¹

This great political victory was even more impressive since the workers "had the decisive role"⁵² in the process of nationalization. This was true not only in the sense that the proletariat objectively fought the monopolists and supported the nationalizations; it was also true in the sense that the working-class was directly involved in the nationalizations in certain individual sectors. Indeed, without the participation of the working-class in the anti-monopolist mass movement it would have been extremely

⁵⁰ Again using the PCP figures, during the Fifth Provisional Government, from August 8, 1975 to September 12, 1975, 54 companies were nationalized. Ibid., p.87.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.88.

⁵² Ibid., p.88.

difficult, if not impossible, for the MFA to implement its "anti-monopolist strategy." In this way the proletariat not only acted to protect the democratic situation, but also consolidated that situation.⁵³ Consequently, the proletariat was instrumental in creating and defending the preconditions of the "democratic regime".

It was not by chance that the banks were the primary target of the nationalizations. The nature of Portuguese monopoly capitalism was characterized by an extreme interdependence of financial and industrial capital. The PCP had pointed out this feature in 1965. The growing centralization of capital had created a situation where the banks were owned by, or closely associated with, the industrial interests. The nationalization of the banks meant that a large portion of industry would also come under state control. It is a small wonder that the PCP would describe the nationalization of the banking sector as the turning point of Portuguese democracy opening the road to socialism.⁵⁴ The scope of the nationalizations was so extensive that the entire economy was indirectly placed in the hands of the state. Light industry and the remaining private sector had to respond, and abide by, the policies set out by the state sectors. Through the control of credit and heavy industry the state was able to exercise such an extensive amount of control over the economy that very few

⁵³ Ibid., p.88.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.90.

enterprises remained outside of its tentacles.⁵⁵

In addition to the nationalized sectors, the co-operatives established after March 11 also contributed to the reconstruction of the Portuguese economy along non-capitalist lines. Herein lies the significance of the nationalizations for the PCP. On the one hand, the symbolic value is similar to that of worker's control and management. More concretely, by placing a large part of the economy in the hands of the state, capitalism was dealt a deadly blow. On the other hand, the nationalizations created the possibility of the development of a non-capitalist dynamic. As Cunhal writes,

Portuguese capitalism suffered radical alterations. The capitalist dynamic could definitely cease being determinant in the Portuguese economy if these revolutionary conquests are consolidated and developed in a progressive perspective, the perspective of socialism.⁵⁶

The nationalizations were, in the communist lexicon, one of the most important, and one of the irreversible, "conquests" of the revolution. However, Agrarian Reform was "one of the major conquests, if not the most important, of the Portuguese Revolution."⁵⁷ Part of this claim is based on the PCP's assertion that Agrarian Reform was led by the Party in collaboration with the workers organized in their

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.92.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.93.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.93.

rural unions. The process was essentially conducted by the southern rural proletariat; Agrarian Reform never did prove to be a popular concept north of the Tagus river.

The PCP claimed that Agrarian Reform in the Alentejo and Ribatejo provinces was inevitable due to two main reasons. First, the rural proletariat had developed a high level of class consciousness and was determined to execute the Agrarian Reform. Moreover, it was the consciousness of the rural proletariat that was the determining factor in the realization of the process. It was as a result of the rural workers' leading role that Agrarian Reform manifested itself as a profoundly revolutionary process demonstrating an elevated degree of advanced characteristics. Portuguese Agrarian Reform was conceptualized not as a bourgeois reform designed to preserve capitalist relations of production in the fields, but as a socialist option.⁵⁸

Although Agrarian Reform was inevitable given the rural proletariat's advanced level of class consciousness, it was not a spontaneous process. The PCP saw itself as the prime force that fought for the realization of the reform. Cunhal claimed that, "(T)here would have been no Agrarian Reform without the PCP."⁵⁹ As for the participation of the MFA, it was characterized by the communists as "important" and even "decisive" in some cases. Nonetheless, the role of the MFA

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.94.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.94.

was not that of a motivator; the support of the MFA resulted from the general political conditions that the Armed Forces Movement had created as well as its concrete intervention in some cases. Despite this positive aspect, the contribution of the armed forces was "irregular, reflecting internal contradictions."⁶⁰ Even COPCON often intervened on the side of agrarian interests, not on the side of the workers.

Agrarian Reform is then be understood by the communists as a product of the rural proletariat's historical struggle. In effect, Agrarian Reform "liberated" large expanses of Portugal's territory from the grip of capitalist domination. This fact becomes even more relevant since Agrarian Reform was carried out under exceptional circumstances. The exceptionality is derived from the fact that during the reform process there did not exist in Portugal a revolutionary government nor an established form of revolutionary power. The government and other centers of political power in 1975 Portugal were internally divided.⁶¹ This is not to suggest that there were no sectors of the MFA or the Provisional Governments involved in the process, but that there existed no cohesive policy determined by a centralized governmental body enjoying sufficient authority to execute such a policy.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.94.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.96.

⁶² The Secretaries of State for Agrarian Restructuring in the Fourth and Fifth Provisional Governments, the period when Agrarian Reform was at its peak, were both

The PCP justified the occupation of the large southern estates on the grounds that these were not being cultivated. Having no other means of subsistence, the proletariat of the Alentejo and Ribatejo occupied the land in order to ensure their continued survival. Agrarian Reform was initiated when the "workers took the historic decision to advance into the lands, occupy them and cultivate them."⁶³ The defeats that the mass movement inflicted on the right during the revolutionary process created the necessary preconditions for the proletariat to initiate its action. Agrarian Reform was then seen not only as a program of action or as desire to establish social justice, but as an "objective necessity to resolve the problems of employment and production."⁶⁴

The Portuguese Communist Party attempted to defend this notion at its Eighth Congress by forwarding a periodization of the Agrarian Reform.⁶⁵ The first period was characterized by the proletariat's takeover of abandoned and uncultivated lands.⁶⁶ This first period, which witnessed a limited number of actions, ended with the events of March 11. Within the

communists. Antonio Bica held the post in the Fourth Provisional Government; Vitor Louro in the Fifth.

⁶³ Ibid., p.97.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.97.

⁶⁵ Prior to March 11, 1975; from March 11 to the publication of the Agrarian Reform Law on July 29, 1975; from the publication of the Agrarian Reform Law to the downfall of the Fifth Provisional Government; and from the formation of the VI Provisional Government onward. See Ibid., p.97.

⁶⁶ The first actions were in the district of Beja.

perspective of the PCP, the defeat of the reactionaries on March 11 created the necessary conditions to accelerate the Agrarian Reform process. Whereas the PCP claimed that only approximately 9,000 hectares had been occupied prior to March 11, when the Agrarian Reform Law was published on July 29, 1975, 500,000 hectares were in the hands of the workers. The publication of the aforementioned law allowed for the confiscation of a further half million hectares by October 1975.⁶⁷ Although the rate of the occupations under the VI Provisional Government was drastically reduced, the existing state of affairs proved difficult to reverse.

The Portuguese Agrarian Reform created two types of enterprises: Co-operatives and Collective Unities of Production (UCPs). The former were defined as being "fundamentally instituted by rural proletarians, even though in many cases they included small and medium agriculturalists."⁶⁸ These are not state controlled and the workers select their own managers. Perhaps more importantly, salary levels were established by the workers themselves. This characteristic, however, led to "egalitarian" conceptions often responsible for removing incentive from the process of production.⁶⁹ The organization of these co-operatives was distinctly dissimilar from the

⁶⁷ The PCP figures can be found on page 98 of Cunhal's report to the Eighth Congress.

⁶⁸ Cunhal, Op. Cit., p.102.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.101.

organization of co-operatives in socialist or capitalist countries. The nature of Portuguese co-operatives was unique because they were formed by the rural proletariat. Perhaps due to this fact, one of the fundamental errors committed by a number of co-operatives was the rapid assimilation of small and medium agriculturalists without considering the consequences of such an assimilation. The incorporation of these elements, with their sense of independence and property, had a negative effect upon the cohesion of the co-operatives.⁷⁰

Agrarian Reform was restricted to the south of Portugal where latifundist holdings predominated. The "other" Agrarian Reform that the PCP had outlined for the north of Portugal at its Kiev Congress would have to wait for the development of more opportune conditions. The Revolution had obviously failed in establishing that objective of the PCP's program. Nonetheless, the Agrarian Reform carried out in southern Portugal, although regional, had to be defended because it

signifies a radical and irreversible transformation of agrarian structures in a large expanse of the territory, and the beginning of a new agriculture, liberated from the exploitation of the agrarians and capitalists, in the service of the workers and the country.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.103.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.104.

Another of the PCP's "conquests of April" and perhaps the only one that is truly irreversible was decolonization. The termination of the colonial war and the granting of independence to the former colonies was, for the PCP, "one of the great progressive realizations of the Portuguese Revolution."⁷² The last chapter analyzed the theoretical position of the PCP in relation to the colonial question and the relative importance that the Party assigned to its completion. The independence of the ex-colonies was seen not only as a contribution to the solidarity between the Portuguese people and the people of the newly-independent states, but also as corresponding to the aspiration of the Portuguese people to obtain their national independence. Since the colonial war had contributed to Portugal's dependence upon foreign imperialism, the struggle for national independence was "inseparable" from the recognition of the right to immediate independence for the colonies.⁷³

It must be clarified that for the PCP the process of decolonization was much more than the formal granting of independence to the overseas possessions. The PCP's understanding of decolonization included all of the "positive" aspects of the process; namely, the recognition of the Marxist-Leninist liberation movements as the

⁷² Ibid., p.104.

⁷³ Ibid., p.105. Cunhal writes that the recognition of the right to independence had a great historical significance. "For our own people it was a dignifying and redemptive attitude."

legitimate representatives of those peoples. Domestically, one of the distinctive traits of the said process was the struggle of the Portuguese people and the revolutionary soldiers to end the war and grant immediate independence. It was significant for the PCP that the forces of "colonialism", "neo-colonialism" and "imperialism" inside Portugal were defeated even though they permeated the military and government apparatus.⁷⁴

The PCP is certainly correct in emphasizing the importance of the colonial issue during the PREC. It was this question that became one of the most problematic for the different currents within the MFA. Many sectors within the MFA supported independence, but favored a gradualist solution.⁷⁵ General Spínola, who initially favored a plebiscite to determine the future of the colonies, would be pressured by other MFA elements to declare support for the right of independence to the colonies.⁷⁶ Since the MFA Program was extremely vague in this respect, the issue did not facilitate the development of a cohesive MFA.

The conviction of the Portuguese communists was that immediate independence had to be extended to the colonies. In retrospect the PCP was to claim that events overtook

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.106.

⁷⁵ Indeed, this was even the position of Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho before his more radical transformation.

⁷⁶ This he did in a televised speech delivered on July 27, 1974.

those elements in the armed forces who proposed a neo-colonial solution. As events overtook these elements, the more radical MFA members were able to proceed with their plans for decolonization.⁷⁷ It was the appointment of Admiral Rosa Coutinho and other leftist officers that facilitated the recognition of the MPLA, FRELIMO, and PAIGC as the legitimate representatives of their people. In this sense "the Portuguese Revolution was also present in Africa."⁷⁸

For the PCP, the "conquests of April" delineated above are all essential elements for the creation of a country characterized by democracy and national independence. April 25 was itself an act of national independence and, as such, a provocation to foreign imperialism. The military uprising, combined with the popular uprising, generated a uniquely Portuguese revolutionary process. According to the Portuguese communists, the natural reaction of foreign, primarily American, imperialism was to utilize all means available to it in order to prevent the PREC from continuing. Thus, Cunhal writes that

imperialism insisted with particular vigor that Portugal, a NATO country, should not pursue a path that would remove it from the domination of monopoly capitalism, whose defence is the reason being for the existence of the Atlantic Alliance

⁷⁷ Perhaps the most notorious example of this was the appointment of Admiral Rosa Coutinho as Governor-General of Angola in July 1974. He replaced the more moderate General Silvino Silverio Marques who himself had been appointed in June of the same year.

⁷⁸ Cunhal, Ibid., p.109.

itself.⁷⁹

This position was designed to prevent Portugal from liberating itself from imperialist dependency, to prevent it from seeking to establish a policy of peace and co-operation with the peoples of the colonies and of the socialist countries.⁸⁰ It was the defeat of the right on September 28, 1974 that eliminated the main obstacles to the pursuit of such a policy. A month later, on October 29, 1974, a governmental mission, headed by Cunhal, visited the USSR in order to set the groundwork for the strengthening of relations.⁸¹ Portugal's participation at the Helsinki Conference and the country's foreign policy were also concrete manifestations of the state's national independence. However, as far as Cunhal and his Party were concerned, it was the continued presence of the Portuguese Communist Party in the nation's governments during the revolutionary process that was the surest demonstration of national independence.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.113.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.114. The exception being Cuba, with whom Portugal had diplomatic relations.

⁸¹ Diplomatic relations with the USSR had been established in July of 1974, the same month as Poland. Relations with Czechoslovakia, GDR and Bulgaria were established in August. A month later Portuguese-Hungarian diplomatic relations were established. Relations with Romania had been in force since June of the same year.

⁸² Cunhal, Ibid., p.115.

Despite the advances discussed above, the PCP maintained that the weakest aspect of the Portuguese Revolution was the anti-imperialist struggle. In fact, the PREC enjoyed very little success in this respect; a matter that had to be successfully confronted in order to realize genuine national independence.⁸³ While the communists belatedly recognized that it would have been impossible to directly confront the imperialist countries, measures could have been implemented during the revolutionary process that were not. In fact, the PCP goes so far as to suggest that:

In the political realm, the international situation favored the Portuguese Revolution, limiting the possibilities of open intervention.⁸⁴

It can therefore be concluded that the Portuguese communists were not only willing, but also believed that the Party could assume state power and maintain it. The reason for the failure of a solid anti-imperialist policy is said by the PCP to have been the collaboration of the political forces to its right with imperialism. In this way, the Portuguese communists condemned Mario Soares' Socialist Party for the limited successes of the revolutionary process.

On balance the Portuguese Communist Party adheres to the position that the Portuguese Revolution was globally positive, despite the drawbacks listed above. Not only was

⁸³ Ibid., p.117.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.117.

"fascism" destroyed and a "democratic regime" established, but the events in Portugal weakened imperialism and, consequently, shifted the correlation of forces further in favor of the USSR and the international working-class movement. What accounts for the drawbacks and limitations of the Portuguese Revolution is the fact that a revolutionary government did not exist in Portugal during the PREC. In other words, the absence of a centralized revolutionary power, with the capacity to enforce decisions, was the main obstacle confronting the Revolution. What characterized the Portuguese process was "power divided between very diverse political and military forces" with multiple decision-making centers.⁸⁵ The PCP is correct on this point, but if multipolar centers of authority did not exist the transition from authoritarian regime to communist dictatorship would have been swift indeed.

Portugal's revolutionary transformations developed in a setting where revolutionary measures were implemented haphazardly and with little direction from the top. It was this type of development, and the PCP's attempt to guide it, that defines much of the Party's activity during the PREC. While the communists were at times to play a predominant role in the events of the day, they were never able to consolidate this leading role during the Revolution. The PCP implicitly recognized that it was not successful in becoming the vanguard when Cunhal acknowledged that revolutionary

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.119.

measures were "imposed by the revolutionary struggle of the popular masses and soldiers, responding to concrete situations."⁸⁶ This response to events accounted for the irregular nature of the PREC and, ultimately, its failure.

The PCP's failure to fully ripen the revolutionary situation existent in Portugal was criticized at the Party's 1976 Congress. The PCP's appreciation of its failure becomes evident when one considers the Emergency Platform adopted at the PCP's Seventh (Extraordinary) Congress. While retaining the demand for nationalizations and an Agrarian Reform in its Program, the Party did not include these measures in the Emergency Platform elaborated at that Extraordinary Congress. Even the nationalization of the banks was not included in the above document. Given the analysis of the "democratic and national revolution", and the prominent place reserved for the banks in that analysis, the absence of this measure is quite unbelievable. Furthermore, the nationalization of the economy's basic sectors was also not included in the Emergency Platform. Yet, barely two months following the Seventh Congress, these measures were undertaken. While the PCP would claim that these measures were adopted because of the moderate line adopted by the Party at its Seventh Congress, such a position was little

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.119. Theoretically, if the PCP was the vanguard then any revolutionary measure undertaken by the masses was, in reality, credited to the Party. However, this theoretical position was confronted by a very different reality. Instead of leading the masses the PCP often found itself outdistanced by them.

more than a faint self-justification.

By early February 1975, the Party would assert that Agrarian Reform was an immediate possibility.⁸⁷ However, it was March 11 that came to act as the "gigantic accelerator" in the revolutionary process. The alliance of the people and soldiers that had prevented the "Spinola coup" then proceeded in the offensive against the right. It is in the aftermath of March 11 that the revolutionary mass movement and the revolutionary sectors of the armed forces intersected, thus responding to a political and economic imperative that demanded the radical measures adopted. If these measures had not been adopted "the Portuguese economy would have suffered a complete collapse and the freedoms would have been liquidated within a short space of time."⁸⁸

It is this emergency situation that lends the post-March 11 transformations their dual nature - they are both offensive and defensive. The revolutionary transformations are defensive in the sense that they serve to protect the economy and the freedoms established in the aftermath of the April coup. Inversely, they are offensive since the transformations not only seek to solidify the freedoms, but expand these in both the political and economic realms. This offensive character acts as a direct onslaught against the

⁸⁷ For example, the First Conference of Southern Agricultural Workers, controlled by the PCP, came to this conclusion in early February 1975 in Evora. The occupations had begun in October of the preceeding year.

⁸⁸ Cunhal, Ibid., p.120.

structures of capitalist society and opens the horizon to a socialist society. The PCP is not unassuming in congratulating itself for this development:

In a capitalist Europe, accustomed to superficial political changes, moving merely around electoral results, it appeared to some a heresy that a small people, barely out of the half-century nightmare of fascism, could have dared to make a revolution.⁸⁹

This Revolution not only profoundly altered the structures of political power, it also altered the social and economic structures of the country.

In addition to the abovementioned freedoms, the Revolution effectively undertook a number of fundamental transformations. State monopoly capitalism was liquidated. This is perhaps the single most significant of all of the revolutionary transformations. Following the April coup, but prior to the widespread nationalizations, the fusion of state and monopoly capital had ceased to serve the interests of the monopolists. The momentousness of the nationalizations, in the PCP's view, rested with the fact that they eradicated the basis for a monopolist recuperation. Therefore, this aspect of the Revolution serves to radically distinguish the Portuguese economy from that of the remaining European states. Although foreign monopolies were left relatively intact, domestic monopoly capitalism "suffered mortal wounds."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.121.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.121.

In conjunction with the destruction of the power of the monopolists, the latifundist property of the South was expropriated. The establishment of the co-operatives and UCPs in the Agrarian Reform zone radically altered the relations of production in that part of the country. The defeat of the monopolists and latifundists gave ascent to the origination of a large sector of the economy that could no longer be described as being under the regiment of capitalism. In turn this fashions the basis for a "completely new way, outside of the capitalist dynamic"⁹¹ of economic development.

The loss of the Portuguese overseas possessions also profoundly altered the essence of the country. Deprived of the African colonies, Portugal was led to develop economic structures based upon its own resources. The loss of the possessions was also a major defeat for monopoly power. Yet, reducing Portugal's borders to Europe called into existence, according to the PCP, an immense opportunity for the country's independent development.

These new circumstances presented a series of problems that bore upon the nature of the new regime. The PCP repudiated social democracy since it allowed the monopolists to retain their dominance through a parliamentary regime. Cunhal claimed that in Portugal "such a regime cannot be the successor of the existing situation."⁹² At its Eighth

⁹¹ Ibid., p.122.

Congress, Cunhal suggested that there would surge a certain amount of capitalist recuperation in the new situation, but the "conquered freedoms", including Agrarian Reform and the nationalizations, could not be abrogated. Even a coup, and the subsequent dictatorship, would not forestall grave economic crises, as well as social and political conflicts if capitalist recuperation threatened the "conquests of April". Such a dictatorship would be unable to revive the type of system existent prior to April 25, 1974. As a result of this posture, the PCP asserted that the "revolutionary transformations and conquests achieved by the Revolution are irreversible."⁹³ It was this irreversibility that pointed Portugal squarely on the path of social progress and socialism.

The 1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic institutionalized the aforementioned "conquests" of the Revolution. The 1976 Constitution holds a special significance for the PCP that is not shared by the political parties to its right. Partially, it is so because the PCP sees the 1976 Constitution, and the regime outlined in that document, as the logical and legitimate outcome of the revolutionary process. The PCP's position is summed up in the following manner:

⁹² Ibid., p.123

⁹³ Ibid., p.123. Cunhal's emphasis. These conquests would later cease being irreversible and would become merely "historical".

The democratic regime resulted from the democratic situation created and defended by the struggle of the revolutionary forces. One cannot oppose, as some have, the constitutional regime to the previously existing democratic situation; it is its continuation. The government formed after the elections and with the Constitution in force is not more legitimate than the Provisional Governments that preceded it, nor is it more legitimate than the politico-military power of the MFA.⁹⁴

The PCP reasoned that since without the Revolution there would have been no democracy, then the post-Constitution democracy is inseparable from the revolutionary process. Thus, the new constitutional democracy must sustain the impression of the said process. It is this claim that leads the Party to presume that

the fundamental characteristics of Portuguese democracy became irreversible realities before having been consecrated in the Constitution.⁹⁵

Having reached this stage one could wonder what the significance the PCP ascribes to the 1976 Constitution. On the one hand, the process leading to the promulgation of the Constitution is, in itself, a victory of the progressive forces and a defeat of the reactionary forces. The "biggest merit" of the 1976 document is that it institutionalized the struggle of the revolutionary forces.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.183. The emphasis is mine. The Government that Cunhal refers to is Mario Soares' First Constitutional Government.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.183. The emphasis is mine. We can see here the PCP's disdain for the rules of liberal democracy.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.184.

One should not be inattentive to the role of the Constituent Assembly in this process. The elections of 1975 for the Constituent Assembly were held in order to select deputies whose sole duty was to prepare the document. Yet, the radicalization of the Portuguese process manifested itself at the same time that the Assembly was entangled in its work. Hence, the Assembly necessarily had to reflect upon the changing realities of Portuguese society during this period. According to the Portuguese Communist Party, the deputies elected to the Constituent Assembly did so. Accordingly, the document "ended by being the consecration of the victories of the Portuguese Revolution and reflecting the state of development of the revolutionary process."⁹⁷ Although the Assembly did not resolve issues such as Agrarian Reform, it did recognize and formalize this and other "conquests" in the Constitution.

This is not to suggest that the elaboration of the document was free of ambiguities and contradictions. The communists always emphasized that the end product of the Assembly's work reflected the political composition of the parties represented in it. And while the 1976 Constitution was the consequence of numerous compromises, it was not the outcome of a compromise of equals. The combined representation of the political left was evident. Indeed, the Constitution is correctly described by the PCP as the product of a socialist-communist Constituent majority,

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.184.

augmented by the compulsion of the extra-parliamentary revolutionary movement.

The Portuguese communists did not, however, always measure the work of the Constituent Assembly with favor. The PCP went so far as to posit, under the pretext that the spirit of April 25 had not reached the entire country, that the elections for the Constituent Assembly should be postponed. In truth, the bid to postpone the election was motivated by political considerations. The Party realized that it was still handicapped by a relatively weak popular base of support when the elections were called. When the substantive strength of the PCP was made evident by the electoral results, its efforts to monopolize political power were met with a popular backlash. Furthermore, since the combined MDP-PCP forces had failed to acquire control of many local governments, especially in the north of the country, it was impossible to hold "genuinely free" elections. These pretexts were not sufficient to inhibit the elections, whose results were to prove devastating for the Party. Having failed in its venture to prevent the elections, the PCP simply altered tactics.

The tactical shift occurred on two fronts. Firstly, the Party accelerated the revolutionary process in order to further cement its presence in the political life in the country. With respect to the Assembly itself, the PCP adopted a critical, often extremely hostile, position

towards its work. Essentially, the PCP was apprehensive that the Assembly would convert itself into a rival center of power competing with the revolutionary organs; an especially sensitive matter since the Constituent Assembly was the only popularly elected organ. The PCP then censured the Assembly for endeavoring to establish itself as a rival center of power seeking to restore the might of the monopolists. In short, the communists were critical of the Assembly because the formulation of the Constitution was not as rapid a process as they desired. Believing that a delay in the process created favourable opportunities for the right, "the PCP, many times practically alone, fought vigorously so that it (the Constitution) could be quickly promulgated and implemented".⁹⁸

The framing of the Constitution was of such importance that President Costa Gomes went to the Assembly on April 2, 1976 to immediately promulgate the document after that body approved it. The new Constitution was characterized by the PCP in the following terms:

The Constitution, essentially, is democratic, is progressive and institutes a regime in which are inherent, in terms provided by the Constitution itself, the great revolutionary transformations and realizations of the Portuguese people after April 25.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.185.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.187.

Since it was the content of this Constitution that defined the democratic regime, it is worthwhile to ponder the said content. It is not necessary to go beyond the preamble of the 1976 Constitution to realize why the PCP judged the document so favorably. The preamble is an exaltation of the MFA's defeat of the authoritarian regime. The MFA's overthrow of "fascism" was described in the preamble as an interpretation of the Portuguese people's profound sentiments.¹⁰⁰ More importantly, the preamble sets the tone for the document when it asserts that Portugal has opened the road to socialism.

The preamble would signify very little if the remaining articles of the 1976 Constitution did not seek to consolidate the road to socialism. In the Fundamental Law, the elimination of the monopolists and latifundists is declared to be irreversible.¹⁰¹ In order to assure the transition to socialism, the Constitution pronounced all of the post-25 April nationalizations to be "irreversible conquests of the working-classes."¹⁰² In addition to other limitations placed upon non-nationalized enterprises,¹⁰³ the Constitution declares that the State must implement the

¹⁰⁰ The relevant section of the preamble reads: "On April 25, 1974, the Armed Forces Movement, setting the seal on the Portuguese people's long resistance and interpreting its deep-seated feelings, overthrew the Fascist regime".

¹⁰¹ Article 290, f.

¹⁰² Article 83, no.1.

¹⁰³ For example see Article 83, no.2.

realization of Agrarian Reform as a full priority.¹⁰⁴ Agrarian Reform itself is defined as a "fundamental instrument for the construction of a socialist society."¹⁰⁵ The 1976 fundamental law also concedes a series of "workers rights",¹⁰⁶ trade union rights,¹⁰⁷ the right to strike,¹⁰⁸ the prohibition of lock-out,¹⁰⁹ the CTs and other such measures that attempt to ensure the socialist nature of the regime.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Constitution, the Portuguese communists insisted that the document had consecrated the principle that the existing Portuguese democracy was an inherent component of the road to socialism.¹¹⁰ Basing itself upon the preamble's statement that Portugal was in the process of transforming into a classless society, the PCP, again citing the Constitution, alleged that the regime outlined in the Constitution was

¹⁰⁴ Article 81, h.

¹⁰⁵ Article 96.

¹⁰⁶ Article 51 in its entirety.

¹⁰⁷ Article 57. The Constitution did not recognize unicidade.

¹⁰⁸ Article 54.

¹⁰⁹ Article 60.

¹¹⁰ For this discussion, see Cunhal, Op. Cit., p.189-190. This position is informed by the Party's understanding of the Constitution. In part, the document reads: "During the transition to socialism there shall be three sectors of property in the means of production; lands and natural resources, determined by their ownership and the socialist form of management".

transitory.¹¹¹ In other words, the "democratic regime" is a phase of the "democratic and national revolution" transcendable once the construction of socialism is underway.

The political bias of the 1976 Fundamental Law certainly lends itself to this type of interpretation. Perhaps more alarming from a liberal democratic perspective, was the fact that this political bias was supported by the collectivist socio-economic model outlined in the document. The organizational framework providing for the Republic's socio-economic development, as well as the responsibility of the state, were designed to develop socialist relations of production. Various articles of the Constitution specifically referred to the establishment of collective means of production.

Given this understanding of the Constitution, the PCP came to regard its adoption as an essential political task. Not only was it important from a theoretical perspective, it was also necessary from an instrumental point of view. The communists were adamant in claiming that the content of the Constitution was responsible for the aggressive response of the reactionaries to the document. Its adoption served to "demoralize the revolutionary forces" as well as "halt the counter-revolutionary conspiracy." Moreover, the retention of the military as a political actor was fundamental to the

¹¹¹ Article 89.

preservation of the Revolution's "conquests" outlined in the document.

The PCP's conception of the democratic regime was not merely restricted to the above perspective. The upholding of the Constitution was to be ensured by the creation of a number of governmental organs. There was no question that the organs of traditional liberal parliamentary and presidential political systems should be recognized in one form or another. However, it was the question of the military, and specifically the MFA, that proved to be the most contentious of issues. As was noted above, the MFA curbed the work of the Constituent Assembly and consolidated its own power by imposing both MFA-Parties Pacts. As the political situation stabilized in the aftermath of November 25, the civilian demands for a return of the military to the barracks became more audible. Nonetheless, the armed forces continued to wield sufficient power to prevent their rapid exodus from the political life of the country.

The notoriety of the 1976 Constitution did not rest solely with the socialist option that it prescribed; it also rested with the unique system of power distribution contained therein. Since one of the defining characteristics of the Portuguese Revolution had been the People-MFA alliance, the Constitution had to formalize this fact. The dual nature of the process, the popular and military components, could not be ignored in any formal delineation

of power. Since the new regime was the practical expression of the spirit of April 25 and the revolutionary process, the MFA was constitutionally preserved as an organ of power so as to assure the maintenance of that spirit.¹¹² The new regime could not, according to the PCP, be divorced from the revolutionary process. The maintenance of the MFA in the political arena legitimized the revolutionary process, the "conquests" of that process and, most importantly, the privileged role of the Portuguese Communist Party in both the political system and the society. The "democratic regime" outlined in 1976 was, to a very large extent, the regime of Portugal's Communist Party. Such a situation was hitherto unheard of in Western Europe.¹¹³

Despite the attempt of the non-communist parties to limit the role of the military in political matters, the Constitution recognized the MFA's Council of the Revolution as an independent political organ.¹¹⁴ In spite of the

¹¹² Cunhal, Op. Cit., p.190.

¹¹³ The fact that the Italian Communist Party, for example, was instrumental in drawing up the Italian Constitution of 1948 does not negate this statement. No other communist party had ever claimed, as the PCP did, that their nation's respective Constitutions outlined the framework for an "advanced" non-bourgeois democracy. Theoretically, Portuguese democracy was worlds away from European liberal democracy.

¹¹⁴ On August 11, 1976 the Council decided that until the revision of the Constitution the representatives of the various services of the armed forces could only be replaced in case of death, resignation, or permanent inability to carry out these functions. The left-wing orientation of the Council was thus preserved. Not surprisingly the PCP described this measure as a stabilizing agent for the regime. The revised 1982

reversals that the military left had been subject to since the summer of 1975, the PCP was elated by the establishment of the Council of the Revolution. The communists believed that if the military was excluded from power it would mean "an open door for the rapid conquest of power by the forces of the right" and the subsequent "liquidation of the revolutionary conquests of the Portuguese people."¹¹⁵ While the Party suggested that the permanence of the Council would prevent the establishment of a new dictatorship, its absence from Portuguese political life would certainly have the opposite consequence. Although the second MFA-Parties Pact was not as encompassing as the first, it allowed for the maintenance of the Council of the Revolution - an organ that gave expression to the People-MFA alliance.¹¹⁶ This factor proved to be pivotal in the PCP's analysis of, and support for, the Portuguese regime.

Constitutionally, the Portuguese armed forces were attributed the role of guaranteeing the transition to socialism. Article 273,4 of the Constitution stated that the armed forces' mission was to "guarantee the conditions which would permit the peaceful and pluralist transition of Portuguese society to democracy and socialism." If this was

Constitution eliminated the Council of the Revolution. The revised Fundamental Law did create a Council of State that acts as an advisory body to the President of the Republic.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.194.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.194.

the general aim of the armed forces as an institution, the MFA was privileged with a specific role in the new regime. The preamble recognized the significance of the MFA's action against the authoritarian regime, thus giving it the status of founders of the new regime. Such a status logically led to the precept that the MFA should become a distinct organ of sovereignty. This was implemented in the 1976 document with, however, one caveat; the MFA's exercise of sovereignty would be in alliance with the political parties and democratic organizations.¹¹⁷ Perhaps more importantly, the MFA was to be trusted as the guarantor of the "democratic conquests and the revolutionary process."¹¹⁸ The all-military Council of the Revolution, in its capacity as a distinct organ, was to "guarantee the regular functioning of the democratic institutions."¹¹⁹ This arrangement was to constitutionally endure for a minimum of four years.

Recognizing that the revolutionary process had been interwoven with contradictions, Cunhal acknowledged that these same contradictions were present in the relationship between the organs of political power. What was important to the PCP was that the Council of the Revolution retained the power to declare laws unconstitutional if these were not within the "spirit of April 25". As long as the MFA and the

¹¹⁷ Article 10, no.1.

¹¹⁸ Article 4.

¹¹⁹ Article 142.

Council retained that spirit, the "conquests" of the Revolution were relatively safe. At any rate, the Council offered a firmer guarantee of the preservation of these measures than did the universally elected bodies. The communists attempted to justify their distrust of the Assembly with the absurd proposition that in "vast zones of the territory democratic liberties have not yet been genuinely established and where the rights of citizens are not assured or respected."¹²⁰ Consequently, the regime required both the unfolding of a democratic life and the existence of the Council in order to be protected from the attempts of the right to subvert it.

It was during the legislative and presidential elections of 1976 that the PCP unveiled the strategy that continues to guide it, with slight variations, to this day.¹²¹ The Portuguese Communist Party posited that the first legislative election under the new Constitution was an important political act contributing to the defense of the democratic regime. That election would formalize the passage of the polity from a revolutionary (democratic) situation to a democratic regime. The elections, whatever their outcome, would serve to legitimize a regime that the PCP had zealously endeavored to create.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.196.

¹²¹ At this writing the PCP is in a state of crisis. The December 1988 Congress may prove to be a watershed for the Party. On the present crisis of the PCP see my "PCP: anatomia de um crise." Risco. No.9, Spring 1988.

The PCP's objectives for the legislative election were defined by the PCP's Central Committee on January 14, 1976. The Party's campaign was to act as a means of educating the masses and endeavor to prevent a legislative majority of the reactionary right - understood as all of those parties to the right of the Socialist Party. The PCP expected that such a campaign, combined with an advantageous electoral result for the Party, would make a parliamentary alliance between the PS and the parties to its right extremely difficult. The Party hoped that its representation in the Assembly would increase to such a degree that it would be impossible for the PS to refuse the creation of a left-wing majority government. Therefore, the logic of a left-wing government, with PCP representation, would force itself upon the socialists as a popular demand.

The result of this internal decision was then presented to the Party's National Conference on March 14, 1976.¹²² Naturally enough, the National Conference accepted the objectives of the Central Committee and defined the orientation for the elections. Recognizing that the reactionaries had recuperated some of their former ground, the PCP opposed any attempt to boycott or abstain from the electoral act since such conduct could only benefit the political right.¹²³

¹²² The Party printed for distribution 300,000 copies of the electoral program adopted at the National Conference, as well as 1.5 million copies of its Electoral Proclamation.

The first Constitutional elections were indeed a victory of sorts for the PCP. The defeat of the right, what the communists considered to be the practical result of the legislative elections, was to be reinforced in the upcoming presidential elections. Again, regarding the presidential elections, the stated objective of the Party was to ensure that the right did not capture the office. However, the overall implications of this electoral act were much more complicated than the Assembly of the Republic elections.

In their approach to the presidential elections the dominant political consideration for the Portuguese communists was the military factor. The Constitution assigned to the President of the Republic the chairmanship of the Council of the Revolution as well as the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. However, it was the role of the armed forces in Portugal, described by the PCP as often being decisive, that seems to have weighed considerably in the Party's strategy.¹²⁴ The concern that the Party repeatedly voiced was that the newly-elected President had to be acceptable to the armed forces in order to prevent military action from being taken against him. The Party realized that this observation applied to its candidate as well as, more importantly, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. It was this apprehension that led the PCP to

¹²³ Partido Comunista Portugues, Conferencia Nacional do PCP: As eleicoes para a Assembleia da Republica. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1976. pp. 29-31.

¹²⁴ Cunhal, Revolution, Op. Cit., p.204.

propose that a military candidate be fielded by the Council of the Revolution itself. Such a consensus candidate should not only have the support of the armed forces, but also the PCP and the PS. Faced with the fact that more than one military candidate belonging to the Council declared candidacies, the PCP decided neither to support nor to oppose any of these military candidates. Instead, the PCP presented the colorless party apparatchik Octavio Pato.

The presentation its own candidate was not a particularly gratifying prospect for the PCP. The leadership claimed that it was only by way of such a measure that the communists could continue to ensure the role of the armed forces in the new democratic regime. The overriding consideration for the communists was not to antagonize the military in general and the Council of the Revolution in particular. Alienating the Party from the military would have been a serious political drawback as far as the PCP was concerned. Such a development would increase the influence and manoeuverability of the right in relation to, as well as within, the military.

There was, however, one military candidate that the PCP was more than willing to confront: Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Not only was Otelo undesirable given his tremendous responsibility for the defeat of the military left, he was also undesirable because he threatened the PCP's base of electoral support. For this reason the Party claimed that the launching of the Otelo candidacy was

"directed fundamentally against the PCP."¹²⁵ Moreover, the candidacy was considered to be an "adventurist" one whose sole objective was to extend the strength of the radical left at the expense of Cunhal's party.

One could speculate that if Otelo had not entered the presidential race the PCP may not have presented its own candidate.¹²⁶ What the Otelo candidacy could not be allowed to accomplish was to present itself as the only alternative on the political left of the Socialist Party. The PCP was fully cognizant that with Otelo as the lone candidate representing the Portuguese left, the PCP vote would be difficult to transfer to a consensus candidate supported by the Party. An electoral outcome favourable to Otelo would politically weaken the PCP and provide Otelo a new legitimacy. Strong electoral support for Otelo and the subsequent "confusion of the masses", would not only jeopardize the viability of the democratic regime, but the authority of Cunhal and his party. The ideological and political battle hitherto fought against the radical left had to be actively continued if the PCP was not to be weakened.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.205.

¹²⁶ While this is a possibility, it is much more probable that the Party would have fielded a candidate in order to obtain the free publicity granted to the candidate. This has been the tactic in the last two presidential elections.

These considerations led the Portuguese Communist Party to present the grey Pato to the public. It was not necessary to present a charismatic or even a good candidate since the logic of the situation dictated that the Party would succumb to an embarrassing political defeat. A PCP candidacy could only expect to capture the vote of the most dedicated militants and supporters whose vote would otherwise be cast for Otelo. Having bitterly fought on its left flank since the early 1960s the Party could not simply lose by default. To allow the popular and workers movement to be led by the "petit-bourgeois radicals" must be the end of the movement, as well as of the PCP, as autonomous movements. Therefore, Pato's candidacy was not aimed at winning the election, but at preserving the PCP's position and manoeuvrability for future activity.¹²⁷ The campaign was then deemed to be

a great political battle of enlightenment with the end of mobilizing the masses in defense of the conquests of the Revolution and maintaining the proletarian movement in the just perspective of consolidation and continuation of Portuguese democracy.¹²⁸

The preservation of the status quo was the motivation and the main objective of the Communist Party during this period.

The outcome of the aforementioned electoral act profoundly affected the outlook of the Portuguese Communist Party. Pato's weak showing was ample proof that the Party

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.206.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.206-207.

had to maintain its position as defender of the "democratic regime". The potential strength of the radical left, amply demonstrated by Otelo's popular vote, confirmed that the PCP could not accompany the Eurocommunists on their road. Any attempt to do so would probably lead to a mass hemorrhage in its ranks. Faced with a viable political force on its left that could outflank the PCP if the latter attempted to moderate its position, the Party fortified its defense of the "democratic regime".

The PCP drew its political conclusions from the results of the presidential elections at a reunion of the Party's Central Committee on July 5, 1976. The Central Committee maintained that the transference of the PCP vote to Otelo could be ascribed to a number of erroneous perceptions on the part of the electorate. One of these impressions was that a Eanes victory would return the country to fascism; therefore, only another military officer - Otelo - could prevent the armed forces from turning back the clock. The PCP also suggested that much of the voter transference could be explained by the misconception that Pato, a civilian and a communist, was unelectable and, therefore, a "useful vote" was a vote for Otelo. Finally, the communists conceded that due to Otelo's intimate identification with the April coup, there existed a widespread belief that only a vote for that candidate could ensure the continuation of the process initiated by the events of April. All of these factors

contributed to the PCP's disastrous showing; or so the Central Committee reasoned.

The communists were genuinely concerned by the sheer number of their electorate that defected to Otelo.¹²⁹ Although the defections to Otelo were nation-wide, particularly ominous was the crossover vote in the traditional PCP strongholds in the south and the Lisbon "red belt". Despite the electoral outcome, the PCP insisted that it had adopted the correct strategy in the matter. As alluded to previously, an abstention by the Party in the electoral process would have led to "disorientations" and a reduced margin for action in the future. A non-communist, anti-fascist candidacy supported by the Party would not have allowed the PCP to express its positions before the electorate.¹³⁰ The presence of Otelo in the race also meant that the PCP could not desist in the last few days and incite its militants to cast their vote for Eanes. The latter course could not only weaken the Party in the aftermath of the elections; it would also mean that Otelo's

¹²⁹ In his report to the Eighth Congress Cunhal is very candid on this point. He writes that the Party leadership realized that many votes would be transferred to Otelo, but the number was indeed greater than expected. In addition, especially during the last days of the campaign "the information, opinions and predictions of a large part of the Party's responsible organisms, by being overly optimistic, presented a deficient evaluation of the masses' disposition and accentuated subjectivism." See Cunhal, A Revolucao Portuguesa: O passado e o futuro, p.208.

¹³⁰ This option was seriously considered by the Central Committee. Ibid., p.208.

percentage of the vote would increase and thereby give credence to the "divisionist groups who supported him and appear to want to lead the popular movement."¹³¹ Once again, the spectre of the radical left haunted Cunhal and his party.

The dislocations to Otelo demonstrated that the "positions of the parties are relatively fragile"¹³² and easily influenced. Yet, the PCP suggested that the communists could recuperate their losses if correct attitudes were adopted. Cunhal writes,

However, that question needs a profound examination by all the (Party's) organizations. Experience shows that there are many deficiencies in understanding the state of spirit of the masses.¹³³

If the percentage obtained by Pato was any indication of the Party's success in diffusing its message, the PCP certainly failed in strengthening its bargaining position in relation to the formation of a ruling alliance with the PS. Objectively, so went the PCP's rationale, it was the reactionary right that had benefitted from Otelo's excellent showing at the polls.

The political context of 1976 effectively prevented the Portuguese Communist Party from supporting General Eanes. Yet, the Party's campaign, while severely critical of Otelo

¹³¹ Ibid., p.209.

¹³² Ibid., p.209.

¹³³ Ibid., p.209.

and the other candidates, was unquestionably not overly critical of Eanes. Next to an outright Pato victory, the electoral triumph of Eanes was the best possible result for Cunhal. The consensus of the Eanes candidacy, both civilian and military, ensured the continued presence of the military in Portuguese politics. Eanes' declarations that he would respect the Constitution also assured the communists that under his Presidency the "democratic regime" would be preserved. It was this factor that accounted for the Party's often enthusiastic support of General Eanes over his two terms as President of the Republic.

The PCP's optimism about Eanes was tempered by its concerns about Soares and his Socialist Party. The years following 1976 provided even more reasons for the PCP to concern itself with Mario Soares.¹³⁴

The 1976 Presidential elections effectively ended the revolutionary chaos initiated with April 25. For the communists, the "democratic regime" was implemented and only needed to be consolidated. This consolidation would be consummated by a defence of the "conquests of April" against the pretensions of the right. It was this duality that the PCP presented to the population - there existed only one option in Portugal: socialism or a new "fascist" regime much more repressive than the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

¹³⁴ At its Tenth Congress the PCP would declare Mario Soares the principal enemy.

The dichotomy was informed by the Portuguese Communist Party's conception of the democratic regime and the struggle against capitalism. Portugal had been so profoundly transformed by the revolutionary process that the reactionary forces were unable to liquidate the "conquests of April". Post-revolutionary Portugal was democratic, progressive and free of the monopolists and latifundists. The only path to be followed was one of defending and consolidating the "conquests of April" and the progression towards socialism.

This conclusion was reached by the Portuguese communists through an analysis of post-revolutionary Portugal's socio-economic character. The Party posited that the capitalist structures existent prior to April 25, 1974 had been eliminated. While state monopoly capitalism had been destroyed, monopoly capital had only received, to use the PCP's expression, "mortal wounds", but it was not dead. With respect to the latifundists, Agrarian Reform not only eliminated their power, it also introduced non-capitalist relations of production to the southern fields of Portugal. Given that these sectors are the most important to the nation's economy, their elimination means that the character of the society is greatly altered. In short, "capitalist relations of production are still predominant, but not determinant."¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.275.

Part of the criteria for this characterization was based on the fact that the state controlled the principal sectors of the national economy in post-April 25 Portugal. If these sectors were to be administered by the progressive forces, the way was opened to non-capitalist accumulation and socialist development. Objectively, the conditions would then be created for the initiation of socialist development. This process was clearly strengthened by the fact that the profit motive had ceased to have universal application in Portugal. Moreover, capitalist accumulation was no longer a valid option in the collectivized sectors. As a result, the fundamental contradiction of capitalism - that between capital and labour - ceased to have meaning in large sectors of the Portuguese economy. Quite simply, Portugal no longer had, in general, a capitalist economy.¹³⁶

The Party's analysis of the economy concluded that the economy was in an "intermediary and transitory state between a capitalist and a socialist economy. Although closer in nature to the former, it was moving towards the latter".¹³⁷ If the political direction of the nationalized sectors is conducted by the revolutionary forces, that part of the economy is potentially a sector of socialist transformation. This natural evolution towards socialism could be peaceful

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.277.

¹³⁷ This was meant to be an objective analysis only of the economy. The class nature of political power was removed from this equation.

if political factors did not intervene to alter it.¹³⁸

While the path to socialism could be peaceful, any attempt to halt it would necessarily be violent. And it would be so because it meant a return to a form of development that was abolished by the revolutionary process. Such a return to monopoly capitalism and latifundism could not be anything but violent because of the advanced degree of class struggle in the society. In short, a return to the predominance of capitalist relations of production would be a genuine counter-revolutionary process.¹³⁹ The defense and consolidation of Portuguese democracy could only be accomplished by pursuing the non-capitalist option.

This analysis leads the PCP to present a dichotomy for Portugal. The logic of the PCP's theoretical formula points to the presence of two antagonistic dynamics - capitalism and socialism. Since these two forms of development are mutually exclusive, Portugal had to opt for only one. The restoration of capitalist relations of production could only be realized in the "conquests" of the revolution were eliminated. Such a restoration of monopoly capitalism would be accomplished through repressive means and, inevitably, the "effective liquidation of democracy."¹⁴⁰ Such a process would lead to an aggravation of both economic and social

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.277.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.278.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.278.

conflicts. Confronted with a powerful communist party, the bourgeoisie had no option but to implement a repressive dictatorship if it gained political power; what could never develop in Portugal was a bourgeois democracy on the Western liberal model. The alternative dynamic would be the non-capitalist path. The preconditions for such a dynamic were created by the Revolution. If the correct approach was followed, and if the PCP continued as the vanguard of the revolutionary process, the preconditions would eventually be transformed into a socialist orientation. However, the non-capitalist dynamic need not exclude sectors of the capitalist economy such as private initiative.

It was the existence of the above dichotomy that created a reality where the class struggle had actually been expanded. The result of the intensification of the class struggle was evident from the political options available for the future. The political right naturally favored the restoration of monopoly capitalism. The socialists were, according to the PCP, attempting to follow a policy of class collaboration that could not solve the fundamental choice that needed to be made. Only Portugal's communists were steadfast in their defense of non-capitalist development.¹⁴¹ To this end, the communists proposed a "democratic alternative" as a means of consolidating the "democratic regime" and setting the stage for the brave new world.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.281.

The said "democratic alternative" was forwarded as an answer to the dilemma posed by the existence of Mario Soares' minority government. The obvious alternative proposed by the PCP was the formation of a left-wing-PCP-PS government. Soares and his socialists had adamantly rejected such a solution as long as the communists maintained their orthodox orientation. Yet, the PCP suggested that the socialists and communists had approximated their positions to such an extent that only such a solution could possibly meet with overwhelming popular support. Another option was the formation of a government comprised of independent personalities whose support was derived from the PS and the PCP. These solutions would necessarily have to be worked out in light of the concerns of the President and of the Council of the Revolution.¹⁴²

The PREC profoundly impacted upon the political climate of Europe in 1974-76. The events in Portugal not only influenced the orientation of the Portuguese Communist Party; they also influenced the orientation of the Eurocommunist parties. The intransigence of the PCP was a primary factor in the growing autonomist trends within the PCI, PCF, and PCE.

It is the contention of this author that the PCP could not have subscribed to the Eurocommunist positions in the aftermath of the promulgation of the Portuguese Constitution

¹⁴² Ibid., p.327-328.

of 1976. While it would appear reasonable to suppose that the adoption of parliamentary democracy would have encouraged the "eurocommunization" of the PCP, the logic of the communists' position within the Portuguese political system, and the lessons drawn from that position, effectively prevented the Party from following the example of the fraternal Latin European parties. It was the Party's analysis of the revolution, its conquests and the democratic regime created in their wake that solidified the PCP's orthodox perspective.

The abovementioned perspective placed the Communist Party in a privileged situation in Portuguese society vis-a-vis the other social and political forces. The "democratic regime" was, within the PCP's theoretical conceptions, a direct result of the Party's vanguard role in the revolutionary process. Therefore, the regime institutionalized the Party in the system and the society while opening the prospects for socialism. These accomplishments, and the potential accomplishments that could be attained, had been made possible by the Party's adherence to Marxism-Leninism. The Party's organization would need to be strengthened for the upcoming struggle. Eurocommunism, seen as an orientation that liberalized the organizational tenets of the communist parties, was not at all applicable to the immediate tasks.

No Eurocommunist party was in a situation remotely similar to that of the Portuguese communists. While these parties operated within the framework of liberal parliamentary democracies, the PCP did not consider that it functioned in similar circumstances. According to Cunhal and his Party, Portugal had unquestionably progressed beyond bourgeois democracy. The PCP could not adopt an attitude towards the parliamentary regime that the respective Eurocommunists adopted simply because that type of system was nonexistent in Portugal. How could one accept the rules of parliamentary democracy, and work within that system for the transition to socialism, if it no longer existed? Praxis demanded an attitude dissimilar, one could perhaps say opposite, to that of the Eurocommunists.

It was not only the political structures of Portugal that had advanced beyond the rest of the other European states. The PCP also claimed that the economic structures of Portuguese society were much more developed than anywhere else in the western half of the continent. While the Eurocommunists were attempting to eliminate state monopoly capitalism, this end had been attained in Portugal. Portugal's state monopoly capitalism was the product of fascism; Portugal's democracy the product of the revolutionary dynamic. The "advanced democracy" that the Eurocommunists prophetized had, according to the PCP, become a reality in Portugal.

What was in question for the Eurocommunists was the transition from bourgeois democracy to socialism. While in their respective countries the Eurocommunists benefitted from the existence of longstanding liberal democracies that had given rise to a polity that could accommodate the transition to socialism through democratic elections and within the framework of those regimes, Portugal's democracy was inherently a component of the path toward socialism. Parliamentary democracy in Portugal was not feasible given that the logic of the Portuguese Revolution had created two options - socialism or fascism.

Given that Eurocommunism was a strategy for the transition to socialism, the PCP did not need to adopt it because Portugal had progressed beyond the bourgeois stage of development. What was at stake for the PCP was not the transition to socialism, but its construction. Given this fact it was more appropriate to look for guidance where "really existing socialism" had been developed. Consequently, it was no surprise that the PCP supported the CPSU and its positions. This factor, combined with the PCP's understanding of the "democratic and national revolution" as well as the Party's historical experiences, did not allow the PCP to pursue the Eurocommunist option. The matter was not even on the agenda.

While the Portuguese Revolution proved to be essential in the Eurocommunist's self-definition, its results prevented

the PCP from adopting that position. Yet, the Party did adopt what has been characterized as a crypto-Eurocommunism.¹⁴³ On the surface the Party appeared to have moderated its behavior in the aftermath of the Revolution. However, this moderation was a defensive posture designed to preserve its privileged position in the Portuguese polity. The defense of the "conquests of April" epitomized this defensive position. Yet, it must be re-emphasized that this defensive position was, in good dialectical fashion, also offensive. By defending the "conquests" the PCP continued the consolidation of the non-capitalist dynamic on the path to socialism.

Any changes undertaken in Portuguese society that altered the nature of the political or socio-economic system were explained by the communists as attempts to restore capitalism. The revision of the Constitution of 1982 and Portugal's integration in the European Community were evidently seen as part of this process. Political life for the PCP became a highly antagonistic endeavor that continued to inspire its orthodox behavior and identity. Yet, it was this inability to change and develop any theoretical innovation that has led to its present crisis. The internal debate that is threatening to divide the PCP is the direct result of this conceptual archaism. With the advent of Gorbachev the PCP found itself defending positions developed

¹⁴³ See Pedro Santana Lopes and Jose Durao Barroso, Sistema de Governo e Sistema Partidario. Lisbon: Livraria Bertrand, 1980, pp. 123-125.

under the Brezhnev-Suslov leadership that are not even acceptable any longer in the CPSU. The derived party failed to accompany the ongoing changes in the center. The PCP's successes during the Portuguese Revolution may prove to be its undoing in the long term.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

This work proposed the development of a number of themes that could be instructive to our understanding of contemporary European communism. This thesis has concerned itself with analyzing the reasons that led to the Portuguese Communist Party's rejection of the Eurocommunist option in the mid and late 1970's. We have now arrived at a position to briefly summarize the results of this research.

Chapter Two concluded that the Eurocommunist phenomenon was part of an historical progression towards the attainment of autonomy by certain West European communist parties from the Soviet center. The tension between periphery and center is certainly not new in the annals of the international communist and worker's movement. What is specifically unique about Eurocommunism is that it was a concerted effort by more than one party to challenge the authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Although the roots of this tension between the CPSU and the fraternal parties have long historical precedence, it was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 that proved to be a watershed in their relations. It was virtually certain that the cohesion, as limited as it was, enjoyed by the international communist

movement could not be preserved after the suppression of the Prague Spring. Not only was the sight of Soviet tanks in Prague an ominous sign for such parties as the Italian Communist Party, the Soviet intervention raised questions about the relationship between democracy and socialism. Specifically, was the Soviet model the only viable form of organization that socialism could develop? This critique was, for the Soviets, perhaps the most difficult to accept.

The conflicts that characterized the stormy relationship between the CPSU and the fraternal parties reached a climax at the 1976 Berlin Conference. By the time that the Berlin Conference was held, seven years after the 1969 International Communist and Workers Conference, the Eurocommunist parties were firmly poised to challenge Soviet pretensions of ideological hegemony over the movement. The Soviets desired to continue their ideological tutelage for a number of reasons. On the one hand, the traditional support that the European communist parties provided for Soviet foreign policy was perhaps even more necessary in the complex setting of the 1970's. On the other hand, the solidarity shown by the communist parties towards the Soviet Union, the first socialist state, was a source of legitimation in that nation. Challenges to Soviet authority, especially the questioning of the socialist nature of the USSR, was certain to be met with hostile polemics and sanctions. Indeed, the Berlin Conference initiated such a process.

Eurocommunism is to be understood as an orientation that sought to break a number of its traditional bonds with the USSR and the CPSU. The reasoning behind these attempts were as varied as the parties themselves. There is, however, one common element that informed the decision of numerous parties to adopt the Eurocommunist stance. In the mid 1970's it appeared to many that a number of West European governments could soon come under the influence, if not the dominance, of these parties. The historical quest for autonomy, combined with the very real possibility of attaining political power, created the preconditions for the polemics of that decade. To a large extent, Eurocommunism was the logical conclusion to the de-radicalization of the Southern European parties.

If one is to develop an embracing framework to explain why the PCP did not opt for Eurocommunism, the search must begin with the historical evolution of the Party. It is not enough to merely suggest that the PCP's orthodoxy was the result of long years of clandestine work. While this experience certainly shaped the outlook of the Party, it did not determine it. The single most important formative experience of the PCP during its forty-eight years underground was the internal factionalism that nearly destroyed the organization on more than one occasion. In particular, it was the PCP's negative experience with rightist currents within the Party that determined its

attitude toward the Eurocommunist parties. One should recall that tensions between the PCE and the PCP had their origins in a fundamental disagreement over the question of "peaceful transition" to socialism. What the PCP perceived to be the direction of Eurocommunism in the 1970's was not very much different from what had transpired with the PCP's own "anarcho-liberal deviation".

It is of fundamental importance to consider the fact that the Portuguese communists were isolated from the international communist movement for a number of years following its expulsion from the Comintern in 1939. During that time a collective insecurity was rampant in the ranks and leadership of the Party. Isolation from the fraternal parties, for a party who valued internationalism as highly as did the PCP, could not but reinforce the desire for fraternal bonds with the sister parties. In this very simple fact lies part of the answer to the Portuguese communists' unswerving devotion to the Soviet center. Operating under harsh conditions at the Western extremity of Europe, solidarity with the outside world was perhaps more important to the PCP than to any other European party.

While the above may provide a limited answer to the research question we have posed, it is by no means sufficient. It was not mere contingency that led the PCP to strongly applaud the Warsaw Pact action in Czechoslovakia. Not only was the PCP one of the few communist parties to

support the invasion, Cunhal was the first leader of a European party to visit Prague after the "normalization" had begun. Cunhal assumed this posture for two reasons. He firmly adhered to the Soviet model of socialism and saw the Prague Spring as threatening to undermine that conception. In addition, the conception of proletarian internationalism shared by the PCP and the CPSU was an important element in the PCP's own struggle against the authoritarian regime.

Unquestionably, these historical factors contributed to the PCP's hostile reception of Eurocommunism. However, more importantly, the notion of the "democratic and national revolution", and all that it implies, impeded the PCP from questioning the tenets of Leninism. The Portuguese revolution, the only one in Europe that was to be realized through armed insurrection, presented the Portuguese Communist Party with unique tasks. Underlying Portugal's exploitation, in the communist's perspective, was the fact that the country was a colonial power while simultaneously a colony of imperialism - the dilemma of the "colonized colonizer". Paradoxically, it was the PCP's theoretical innovation that prevented it from accepting the Eurocommunist innovations of the 1970's.

History and ideological commitment intersected during the Portuguese Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC) of 1974-75. During this brief span of time the Portuguese Communist Party was successful in accomplishing numerous

transformations that continue to reverberate to this day. The PCP claims that while the Eurocommunists relinquished the "class content" from their perspective, Cunhal and his party steadfastly maintained the Leninist approach to politics. In short, Portugal's communists rejected the ballot box as a legitimate path to socialism. The aftermath of the Portuguese revolutionary process vindicated Cunhal's position. In less than two years, the PCP had gone further toward seizing state power than any other European communist party. Following the promulgation of the 1976 Constitution the PCP adopted the position that Portugal could only develop into a socialist society or revert to fascism. Such an unambiguous choice would not lend itself to the inherent ambivalence of Eurocommunism.

If there had been the slightest possibility of the PCP adopting a Eurocommunist position prior to the PREC, it was eliminated in the aftermath of the revolutionary process. The Eurocommunist criticisms levelled at the PCP's behavior during that period ensured that relations between the Portuguese communists and their foreign comrades could only deteriorate. At its Eighth Congress held in 1976, the PCP virtually accused the French, Italian, and Spanish communist parties of having betrayed the Portuguese revolution. Given this assertion it would only be natural for the PCP to continue developing its ties with the CPSU.

In short, this work has analyzed the historical, theoretical, and societal dimensions of the PCP's refusal to adopt Eurocommunism. Perhaps it is more accurate to suggest not that the PCP refused to follow the Eurocommunist path, but that it had no need to. After all, the PCP had become "institutionalized" in the Portuguese political system while the Eurocommunists searched for a strategy that would take them to power.

Appendix A

THE FOREIGN DIMENSION OF THE PCP

The purpose of this chapter is to undertake an analysis of the Portuguese Communist Party's foreign relations in general, and its relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in particular. The foreign relations of a communist party, especially its relationship with the CPSU, are a pivotal element in the study of these parties. The relations with the fraternal parties and the positions adopted by a communist party in matters pertaining to the international communist movement are as essential to the study of a particular communist party as are its domestic and ideological stances. Indeed, during the Comintern and Cominform periods these positions were often synonymous; since a communist party's relationship with its sister parties is a source of self-definition. This element is of prime relevance in the study of such a party.

Chapter Three of this work pointed to some of the difficulties encountered by the Portuguese Communist Party in its search for relevance. From its inception the PCP posed serious problems for the Third International; the presence of Jules Humbert-Droz in Portugal is one such example. With the PCP's expulsion from the Comintern, the

Party came to depend upon the Spanish Communist Party for external contacts and ideological guidance. Overshadowed by its sister Iberian communist party, the PCP was to remain a small, irrelevant party for decades. Indeed, prior to the ascension of Brezhnev to the leadership of the CPSU, the PCP was indistinguishable from any number of small communist parties. With the initiation of the Sino-Soviet dispute the prestige of the PCP was enhanced; a prestige that would develop following 1968 and deepen in the mid and late 1970s. The PCP became, in effect, the CPSU's staunchest ally in the former's dispute with the Eurocommunists.

The Portuguese Communist Party obediently pursued the foreign policy orientation outlined by the CPSU until and including the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. However, the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet party was to leave a profound impression upon the PCP as it did upon other western communist parties. The Fifth Congress of the PCP, held in 1957, implemented the positions of the CPSU adopted at the aforesaid Congress; including the critique of the personality cult, and the concepts of peaceful transition to socialism and peaceful co-existence.¹ Under the guiding influence of the PCE, the PCP adopted positions very similar to those previously defeated at the Party's Fourth Congress. While the positions that came to dominate the Party from 1955-59 (the "anarcho-liberal deviation") had domestic

¹ In effect the Fifth Congress merely reaffirmed these positions, which were adopted at the Sixth Enlarged Reunion of the Central Committee of the PCP.

precedents, it was their adoption at the CPSU's Twentieth Congress that legitimated them inside the PCP.²

The PCP adopted Khrushchev's notion that the correlation of forces had shifted to the side of socialism and the forces of peace. The application of the theses of the CPSU resulted in the adoption of domestic policies which were subsequently criticized at the Party's Sixth Congress. While some modifications to these policies were implemented by the PCP following the downfall of Khrushchev, one important stance adopted at the Fifth Congress could not be discarded - the immediate independence of the colonies. This demand, in conformity with Khrushchev's emphasis on the national-liberation movement as a component of the struggle for socialism, is the sole position adopted at the Fifth Congress that the PCP acknowledges as still relevant today.

Jaime Serra, under the pseudonym of Freitas, delivered the report on the colonial question to the PCP's Fifth Congress. While at the 1943 Congress the Party claimed that the "peoples of the Portuguese colonies, underdeveloped in all respects, cannot, by themselves, in the present circumstances, achieve their own independence", the Fifth Congress recognized the right to immediate, unconditional

² The PCP was not present at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. It was primarily through the PCE, Radio Moscow, and other official sources of information that the Portuguese communists came to learn the conclusions of this Congress. Khrushchev's secret speech was publicized by the regime's media and published in Portuguese in 1956 by anarchist elements. This state of affairs demonstrates the PCP's isolation from the communist movement during this period.

independence for those same colonies.³ Serra maintained that both domestic and external factors had dictated the new formulation. According to Serra, the global correlation of forces had made this new position possible. The prospects of the national-liberation movement would create conditions favourable to the anti-fascist movement in Portugal. Therefore, the PCP declared that an immediate task for the Party was the establishment of indigenous communist parties in the colonies which would fight for independence. This position would serve to influence Cunhal's report to the Sixth Congress and his conception of the "colonized colonizer".

In August 1963 the Central Committee of the PCP met to contend with the increasingly violent clashes between the Party's left and right wings. It is important to note that the conflict within the PCP was conducted within the context of a greater conflict within the international communist movement. Cunhal and his supporters had adopted a centrist line between the Khrushchevian positions expounded by the "anarcho-liberals" and the Maoist positions of PCP elements such as Fransisco Martins Rodrigues. The concept of the "democratic and national revolution", including the call for the violent overthrow of the regime, which was adopted at the Sixth Congress, was partly a response to pressure from

³ Quote from the report "Sobre o problema das colonias" (On the problem of the colonies) presented by Jaime Serra to the Fifth PCP Congress. Published in Estudos Sobre o Comunismo, Nos.2-3, May-December, 1984, p.69.

the PCP's left. However, while the domestic policies and theoretical formulations can be described as a centrist attempt to balance the left and right wings of the PCP, the Party's support for the CPSU became increasingly more pronounced. As the Chinese positions began to exert greater influence within the Portuguese Communist Party, the anti-Chinese positions became more definitive. The PCP had always maintained its fidelity to the Soviet Party, but the threat from the PCP's left further consolidated the relationship.⁴

Support for the CPSU in the conflict with the Chinese communists was evident during the PCP's 1965 Congress. To a large extent Cunhal identified the struggle against the PCP's own left with the positions of the Chinese. In fact, the Sino-Soviet dispute became equated with the ideological struggle within the PCP leadership. The leftist positions were deemed to be the domestic "reflexes" of petit-bourgeois radicalism that had penetrated the international communist movement under the guise of Marxism-Leninism.⁵

If there is one single event that can be said to have had the most impact upon the relationship between the CPSU and the PCP it would be the latter's attitude toward the 1968

⁴ This is not to suggest that this was the only reason - it was not - but it was the predominant one. Cunhal's stay in the USSR, the historical identification with the CPSU, and the October Revolution constituted powerful emotional and political bonds. Many cadres had also frequented courses in the Soviet Union.

⁵ Cunhal, Rumo A Vitoria, Op. Cit., p.314.

invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact. Unlike the PCI, PCE, PCF and almost every other Western European communist party, the Portuguese communists supported the suppression of the Prague Spring. Not content with this demonstration of solidarity, Cunhal became the first leader of a foreign communist party to visit Prague following the Soviet intervention.⁶ Alex McLeod, writing on this matter, suggests that the PCP demonstrated "guarded approval of Dubcek in May 1968" only to adopt a position of "total denunciation" in August of the same year⁷ from this he claims that the PCP leadership hesitated in its decision to support the Warsaw Pact in this regard.⁸

There is an alternative explanation that deserves consideration. The PCP derived a great deal of prestige and legitimacy within Portugal from its identification with the

⁶ The PCP delegation that visited Prague was composed of Cunhal, Jose Vitoriano, and Joaquim Gomes. Candida Ventura, the PCP's representative to Problems of Peace and Socialism, resided in that city. The text of the communique produced in the sequence of this visit appears in Avante, No.411, January 1970. The communique announced "identical points of view" in questions discussed, and the PCP's "solidarity" with the Czech leadership.

⁷ See Alex McLeod, "Portrait of a Model Ally: The Portuguese Communist Party and the International Communist Movement, 1968-1983". Studies in Comparative Communism, Vol.17, No.1, Spring 1984, p.42-43.

⁸ McLeod suggests that the PCP had backed a PCF proposal, made on July 17, 1968, for a general conference to discuss the Czech situation. As he points out, the PCP denied it. While it is true that PCP militants living in Prague wanted to condemn the invasion, Cunhal himself intervened to avoid such a condemnation. On this point see Candida Ventura, O "socialismo" que eu vivi. (Lisbon: Edicoes O Jornal, 1984), pp.152-155.

USSR and the "worker's paradise".⁹ As long as the Dubcek regime did not stray from the "general laws" guiding the construction of socialism there was no need to condemn the Czechs for their experiment. Since it is the CPSU that decides if the general laws are being violated the Soviet invasion meant that the Prague Spring had gone astray. Hence, it not only becomes possible, but essential, for the PCP to condemn the Czech experiment. Since Cunhal shared the conceptions of Ponomarev and Suslov regarding most, if not all, theoretical matters, hesitation was not possible. Indeed, a critical position on the part of the PCP leadership would have created numerous conflicts and "disorientations" within the ranks of the Party.¹⁰

⁹ McLeod is correct in labelling this a "Sorelian myth". McLeod, Op. Cit., p.32.

¹⁰ An interesting clue to this problem is provided by Candida Ventura. When the PCP delegation visited Prague at the end of 1969, Ventura claims that Cunhal demanded that her signature be on the Party communique supporting the normalization. Ventura, who opposed the invasion, was told by Cunhal that her signature would pacify "comrades that had doubts about the decision of the leadership". While some, especially the intellectuals, may have disagreed with the PCP's position, they could be pacified (Ventura, Op. Cit., p.166-167). A condemnation of the invasion may have caused much more disorientation for a small party operating in clandestine conditions. The PCE, while also operating underground, could much more easily condemn the invasion than the PCP, since it was not as isolated from the communist movement as the former. Cunhal had controlled the Portuguese party by criticizing the positions that still dominated the PCE in 1968 before attacking the left and their position in the Sino-Soviet dispute. While both the PCE and the PCP shared the same underground conditions, the orientation of the leadership was radically different.

There are other reasons to support the contention that the PCP could not but otherwise support the role of the USSR in Czechoslovakia. The Portuguese communists adhered to an orthodox conception of proletarian internationalism that placed a priority upon the unity of the communist movement. This was not merely a theoretical option; the PCP was adamant in claiming that the support of the CPSU and the international communist movement were essential elements for a successful overthrow of the fascist regime. Therefore, any weakening of the international communist movement would be detrimental to the revolutionary movement within Portugal. This simple proposition illustrates why the PCP supported the CPSU and its positions not only in Czechoslovakia, but also on all matters relating to the international communist movement.

The political and emotive significance of the PCP's relationship with the CPSU in particular, and the international communist movement in general, should not be underestimated. The PCP considered itself in a unique situation that necessitated a continued commitment to proletarian internationalism. Given that Portugal was a member of NATO, the UN and EFTA during this period, the PCP determined that it was operating in a hostile environment - the country was solidly allied with the West. The support for the USSR and the CPSU's support for the PCP integrated the PCP in the international Marxist-Leninist community.

This allowed the PCP to point to the USSR, and all the myths that accompanied socialism, as an alternative model to Portugal's authoritarian regime. Such a political claim created emotional bonds that strengthened the Party's rank and file in its struggle against the regime.

The example of the Great October Revolution was a motivating force in the PCP's quest for revolutionary change. If the October Revolution could not be repeated in Portugal, it certainly did contain enough lessons for the PCP to consider it a model for change in the country. A close examination of the documents produced at the PCP's Sixth Congress bears more than a passing similarity between 1960s Portugal and 1917 Russia. The socio-economic analysis of Portuguese reality undertaken by Cunhal had been greatly influenced by Lenin's analysis of Russia. The strategy for revolution was also not dissimilar from what had transpired in Russia. Certainly the 1917 Revolution was more appropriate as a model for revolution than any strategy of a "parliamentary path" to socialism in Portuguese conditions. For the PCP, the October Revolution was not merely one more mythical event in the history of communism, but also a very real model for change in domestic conditions.

It is evident, then, that all of the aforesaid factors contributed to the position adopted by the PCP in relation to the Czech question. The practical result of the PCP's support was twofold: its prestige in the international

communist movement was enhanced and, as a consequence, it became the major West European ally of the Soviet Union. An indication of this new-found prestige is that articles by Alvaro Cunhal were relatively scarce in the pages of World Marxist Review prior to 1968; following 1968 his articles became more plentiful. The official rank of the Portuguese Communist Party also received a boost at the CPSU's Congresses. Cunhal became an obligatory reference point in disputes within the movement for his support of the Soviet Party. His prestige and that of the PCP, was further enhanced following the Portuguese Revolution and the polemics generated by the PCP's behavior during that process.

The PCP's new-found stature in the international communist movement was further enhanced by the 1969 Conference of Communist Parties. The Conference, held from June 5 to 17, 1969, gathered together seventy-four parties. It was also at this Conference that the divergences that separated the CPSU from its allies, and the parties that came to be referred to as Eurocommunist, became manifest.

The 1960 Conference of Communist Parties had recognized the equality of all parties and respected their autonomy in relation to the Soviet center, at least theoretically. By 1960 the communist movement was guided by the Problems of Peace and Socialism review.¹¹ While this guidance was

¹¹ On how the CPSU utilized the editorial board for its purposes consult Ventura, Op. Cit., pp.172-74.

qualitatively different from either the Comintern or the Cominform, the CPSU continued to retain its position as first amongst equals. Following the abolition of the Cominform, the unity of the international communist movement was centered on the Problems of Peace and Socialism review and the party conferences sponsored by the Soviet communists.

The 1969 Moscow Conference was unable to realize the objectives of the CPSU. However, as the PCP pointed out, the fact that the Conference was even held was ample proof that "important steps have been taken towards the unity and cohesion of the international communist movement."¹² Furthermore, the PCP maintained that the results of the Conference demonstrated that the process towards unity and cohesion were proof of that development. While such a statement is true to a degree, the Conference was an overall disappointment for the CPSU. The only real victories that the Soviets and their allies secured were included in the Conference's vague final document condemning imperialism as well as the resolution supporting the struggle of the Vietnamese people. The Soviets obtained the concession that the communists and workers parties were determined to further their co-operation.

¹² The Resolution of the Central Committee of the PCP on the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties. Can be found in Partido Comunista Portugues, Documentos do Comite Central 1965/74, Op. Cit., pp.179-183.

In its defence of the 1969 Conference the PCP claimed that proletarian internationalism had been strengthened as a result of the meeting. Proletarian internationalism, as the basis for relations between communist parties, was the only means by which the communist movement could further its co-operation and unity. Having established this principle, the PCP went on to claim in its communique that a series of tendencies "gravely damage the cohesion between the various components of the communist movement and its common struggle against imperialism."¹³ These tendencies included nationalism, isolationism, affirmations of the incompatibility of national and international interests, and the conception that autonomy and internationalist responsibilities were mutually exclusive.

Having outlined the general tendencies that posed a danger to the cohesion of the international communist movement, the Portuguese communists proceeded to delineate specific orientations deemed suspect. The PCP criticized both the right and the left in the international communist movement, as it had earlier done in its internal conflict. On the right, Cunhal's party recognized that imperialism, combined with social-democratic and other bourgeois influences were pressuring individual parties to isolate these from the rest of the movement. On the left, "anti-Soviet forces" were attempting to drive a wedge between the movement and the CPSU. Of course, these

¹³ Ibid., p.180.

anti-Soviet positions were also common to the right and foresaw the same result. Needless to say, only through the support of the socialist system, with the USSR at the forefront, could the communist parties oppose imperialism and struggle for peace and progress.¹⁴

All of these positions were a prelude to the real question at hand - the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent "normalization" of that system. It was this question that proved to be the most difficult issue for the CPSU to confront. The PCP claimed that the battle against Maoism prevented certain parties from recognizing the danger on the right; hence, the critical posture adopted by some parties in regards to the USSR and the other Warsaw Pact members. The PCP supported the Czech party's position that the crushing of the Prague Spring was not a topic for discussion at the Conference for two reasons. First, the PCP abided by the wishes of the Czechs and, second, "given the position of some parties, the discussions would not be a positive contribution" in attempts to overcome the political crises in that nation.¹⁵

The PCP then proceeded to criticize severely the communist parties that had dared to question the Soviet intervention of 1968. Not content with merely stating that the PCI, the PCE, and the rest of the parties critical of

¹⁴ Ibid., p.180.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.184.

the USSR had contributed to the disunity of the movement, the Portuguese communists went further. Cunhal's party suggested that those parties had "objectively stimulated the anti-socialist forces in Czechoslovakia" and their continued critical posture hampered the Czech party's attempt to battle the remaining anti-socialist forces active in that country. The Portuguese Communist Party then reaffirmed its solidarity with the Czech Communist Party and the measures it had adopted to "normalize" the situation and construct a socialist society.¹⁶

However, the PCP clearly considered the Czech question as secondary; the major problem for the communist movement was China. In part, this concern was dictated by the Party's domestic considerations. The growing influence of Maoism in Portugal, especially in the universities, was threatening to usurp much of the PCP's influence. Yet, a rival center of communist authority threatened the overall cohesion of the movement. The PCP "considered it necessary and opportune to severely condemn the orientation and activity of Mao-Tse-tung's clan".¹⁷ Cunhal's ongoing feud with Maoism would prove to be a constant in the years to come.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.182. Ventura accurately points out that the question of China was not officially discussed at the Conference. Many parties, following the CPSU's example, engaged in verbal diatribes against the Chinese. However, the language of the PCP's communique is much harsher than the speech Cunhal delivered at the Conference. Ventura, Op. Cit., p.177. For the context of the Cunhal speech consult Avante, no.404, July 1969.

The communique issued by the PCP also focused on the question of autonomy within the movement. The PCP supported the right of every party to speak and adopt positions regarding the major issues of the movement; with one caveat.¹⁸ These discussions should be aimed at resolving problems. Attempts to impose the opinion of the minority upon the collective were detrimental; as was "the constant demand for unanimity regarding all of those problems under discussion and a subsequent right to veto."¹⁹ Given these problems, and the difficulties faced in executing international initiatives, the PCP proposed a permanent body that could ensure a more rapid exchange of information and experiences. Naturally, in accordance with the jargon of the day, such an international organization could not prejudge the independence of any party nor would it act as a guiding center.

The detailed examination of this document is imperative in order to properly contextualize the positions of the PCP in this matter. While the French, Italian, and Spanish parties were demanding more autonomy from the CPSU, the PCP demanded less. If there existed the possibility of the PCP adopting positions that later became understood as Eurocommunist before 1968, the Party's support for the Soviet invasion and the CPSU's positions at the Moscow Conference effectively terminated those hopes. The PCP, and

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Partido Comunista Portugues, Op. Cit., p.182.

Cunhal in particular, left this meeting as the foremost supporter of the CPSU in Western Europe. One assumes that with this status came a more significant role for the PCP in helping the CPSU's International Department formulate policy towards the European parties. One also accepts that loyalty brought with it financial gain for the Party coffers. Lastly, Cunhal's own position within the Portuguese Communist Party became unassailable. By so closely allying the PCP with the CPSU any attempt to remove Cunhal from the leadership of the Party would not be met with favor in Moscow, and neither would it find political or financial support from the Soviets.

The collapse of the Caetano government on April 24, 1974 was greeted with widespread enthusiasm by the communist parties of Western Europe. Perhaps this support was more pronounced in neighboring Spain than elsewhere on the continent. Although relations between the PCP and PCE remained strained for years, the Spanish communists could not but be encouraged by the downfall of a regime that had so often, and in so many respects, paralleled their own. At any rate, the collapse of the Portuguese authoritarian regime brought increased pressure to bear upon the Franco regime for a transition to democracy. The PCP developed a far warmer relationship with the PCF than it did with either the PCE or the PCI. A similar conception of the role of a communist party, personal ties between the leadership, a

large number of working-class Portuguese immigrants in France - all of these factors helped to solidify the ties between the two parties. The PCI saw the defeat of the Caetano government as a positive contribution to the development of Europe. If all three parties were in agreement over the downfall of authoritarianism in Portugal, each would express its ambivalence or criticism of the PCP over the next two years. In part, this critical posture towards the PCP helped to define each party's attitude towards Eurocommunism. Inversely, the PCP resisted the Eurocommunist orientation as the criticism of the fraternal parties became more pronounced.

The reaction of the communist parties of France, Italy, and Spain to the behavior of the Portuguese Communist Party during the PREC was informed by the former's domestic political postures. The Portuguese revolutionary process occurred within a particular political context that proved to be decisive for the Eurocommunist parties. In 1974-75 it appeared to many observers that the three South European communist parties were poised to share political power in their respective countries. However, for the communists to share power it was first necessary to convince their respective allies, as well as certain foreign governments, that they had accepted the rules of parliamentary democracy. The Portuguese Communist Party was the first party of its kind to participate in the government of a major European

state since the period immediately following World War II. The PCP was in a position to either help or hinder the prospects of its fraternal parties; depending upon how they conducted themselves in relation to the other political forces. As the revolutionary process intensified it became clear to the Eurocommunists that the PCP did not intend to support the creation of a liberal democratic regime in Portugal. As this began to have negative consequences for the fortunes of autonomist parties, their criticisms of the PCP became more frequent and more pronounced.

The attitude adopted by the Southern European communist parties towards the PCP varied in accordance with the various stages of the PREC. As the revolutionary process became more radicalized, the Eurocommunists became more critical of the PCP's attempts to exploit the process. The criticisms of the Southern European communists was accentuated in the aftermath of March 11, 1975. Underlying this conflict between the PCP and the other communist parties was the issue of proletarian internationalism and its correct application.

The Portuguese communists conceptualized proletarian internationalism both as a means of preserving communist solidarity and unity as well as a posture vis-a-vis the revolution. For Cunhal and his party proletarian internationalism meant an adherence to a movement led by the CPSU and its conceptions of revolution. Solidarity with the

fraternal parties was the only means by which the working-class could preserve its international character. This position was informed by the consequences of the Second International's disunity preceding World War I. Therefore, the establishment of revolutionary regimes, where the working-class ruled, was dependent upon the solidarity of the workers' movement. Disunity would weaken the favourable correlation of forces and, consequently, strengthen imperialism. For a revolution to succeed, and the Portuguese revolution was no exception, solidarity was an essential ingredient. Disunity, in the form of criticism of the actions of one or another communist party, objectively served the interests of the class enemy. In short, proletarian internationalism outlined the framework for the conduct of relations among communists.

Proletarian internationalism also incorporated a conception of revolutionary change that the PCP tenaciously adhered to. In respect to this matter, the Portuguese communists unconditionally supported the positions forwarded by the CPSU. Since the Soviet Union was the first socialist state, its experiences in the construction of socialism were seen as exemplary as well as universally applicable. In other words, the PCP was unswerving in its support of Soviet conceptions regarding the "general laws of revolutionary development". For the PCP this was not merely a theoretical issue; it was an immediate problem given Portuguese

conditions. While suggesting that a Portuguese road to socialism was unquestionable, the PCP conceived such a path as being similar to the creation of East European-type regimes. A national path to socialism was understood by the PCP in the same manner that it was understood by the CPSU. The "general laws", and the socialist society, would be similar to that of East Europe; regardless of the path adopted to attain that end.

As this work has demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the PCP pursued a Leninist approach to the seizure of state power. Moreover, this was to be followed by a Leninist approach to the maintenance and consolidation of that power. In short, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat would follow the seizure of power. Although the PCP had removed the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" from its Program at its Seventh Congress, it was done only for the sake of expediency. The phrase was removed simply because the word "dictatorship" carried with it negative connotations in post April 25 Portugal. In his opening speech to the Seventh Congress, Cunhal stated that

The dictatorship of the proletariat, where the proletariat and its allies hold power, may have different forms. It can be a multiparty system. The organization of the state may take numerous forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a more democratic regime than the most democratic of bourgeois democracies.²⁰

²⁰ Partido Comunista Portugues, O 7 Congresso
(Extraordinario) do PCP. Lisbon: Edicoes Avante, 1974,
p.46.

After explaining that the suppression of the phrase from the Party's Program was undertaken so as to avoid confusion, Cunhal stated that

Nothing has been altered in our doctrine and concepts. That should be clear so as to avoid errors.²¹

The PCP served notice at this Congress that its conception of state power was grounded in orthodox Marxism-Leninism; the autonomous parties should not be under any illusions.

At this same Congress the PCP also indicated that the Party would continue to be committed to an orthodox conception of proletarian internationalism. Although the Party's rules were amended on some matters, the self-definition that the PCP continued to adhere to did not. The Portuguese communists reaffirmed their belief that the Party was part of the international communist movement. As such, it was bound by the rules governing fraternal relations with like-minded parties; and it expected as much in return. In its rules the PCP claimed to "defend the unity of the international communist movement on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism".²² Such a reaffirmation of basic principles ensured that the PCP would enter into conflict with the South European communist parties.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p.375.

In Chapter Five a brief overview of the PREC, and its various stages, was presented. The periodization delineated in that chapter is an important factor in analyzing the response of the Eurocommunists to the PCP and its role during the revolutionary process. As important as it is, this factor should be understood in the context of the changes within the international communist movement. Specifically, the conflict between the PCP and the Eurocommunists, as well as the CPSU's position in the conflict, was played out with the forthcoming Berlin Conference as the backdrop.

We began this chapter by suggesting that the European communist parties welcomed the downfall of the Caetano regime. As the Portuguese revolutionary process intensified this support became increasingly critical. At the same time, the CPSU became a major player in the PCP-Eurocommunist conflict as it attempted to balance state interests and ideological guidance. In many ways the Portuguese crisis of 1974-75 served to highlight the growing tensions within the international communist movement.

The Portuguese Communist Party was brought into the First Provisional Government for a variety of reasons. As a result of its status as a governing party, the PCP was forced to adopt certain moderate positions that it could not have adopted had it remained outside of the Provisional Government. However, the Party's participation in the

government was seen by the PCP as a means by which it could use its position to further the democratic revolution; it was to be expected that the PCP would only continue its moderate posture for as long as it was necessary. Any possibility of advancing the "democratic and national revolution" would have to be weighed in accordance with the existing correlation of forces. Prior to September 28, 1974 the correlation of forces, from the PCP's perspective, dictated that the Party continue to pursue a moderate course designed not to antagonize the other allies. The intensification of the revolutionary process in the aftermath of September 28 effectively terminated the necessity for moderation.

It is important to note that the PCP's conceptions of "democracy" and "democratic freedoms" were loaded with an ideological content that attributed a very special meaning to these notions. Not only was the PCP's notion of "democracy" different from that of the non-communist political forces in Portugal, it was also different than that of the Eurocommunist parties. While the PCF, PCI, and PCE stated that the transition to socialism could be achieved through parliamentary democracy, the PCP supported the creation of a political order superior to that form of organization. It was primarily this question that separated the autonomist parties and the PCP during 1974-75.

During the crisis of 1974-75 the PCP adhered to the notion that the rules of proletarian internationalism dictated that the Portuguese party should obtain unconditional support in its struggle from the fraternal parties. The party that came closest to the PCP's expectations was the French Communist Party. The Italian and Spanish parties, concerned with domestic alliance policies, were seen as betraying the interests of the Portuguese working-class for opportunistic self-gain. Yet, the attitudes of these parties can be explained with relative facility.

The collapse of the Chilean Popular Unity experiment made it obvious to the PCI that the transition to socialism had to be supported by broad social sectors if it was to succeed. In the Italian context the "historical compromise" was designed to achieve this end. The potential success of a historical compromise with the Christian Democrats was only possible if the latter party, which remained suspicious of communist intent, was convinced that the PCI adhered to the rules of liberal democracy. The PCI had to be perceived as supporting pluralism not only in Italy, but throughout all of Europe. The Spanish communists, who carried with them the historical stigma of the Civil War, were involved in a process of transition in which they could not afford to be alienated from the other opposition forces. For this reason, and to secure for itself a prominent position in the

political life of post-Franco Spain, the PCE had to disavow the anti-democratic behavior of the PCP during the Portuguese Revolution. As well, PCP-PCE relations had been strained for years. As the conflict between the CPSU and Carrillo's party intensified so did the conflict between two different Iberian versions of communism, enforced by historical and personal animosity.²³

It is important to note that the PCI and the PCF adopted two rather different positions towards the PCP during the national crisis. The French communists were much more supportive of the PCP and its goals than was the PCI. While at times critical of the PCP, when the latter's acts appeared to compromise its domestic objectives, the PCF generally adhered to the rules of proletarian internationalism. Marchais' visit to Lisbon during the revolutionary process was never duplicated by Berlinguer. In addition, the PCF was a defender of the Portuguese Communist Party in France while the Italians refused to accept such a role in Italy. The PCI remained much more concerned about the implications of the Portuguese experience for the fortunes of the European communist parties and their prospects to attain power than did the PCF. These two distinct approaches demonstrated the different conceptions that these parties had in regard to a number of issues being debated in the midst of the

²³ The PCP and the PCE did maintain formal relations, but no high-level exchanges took place prior to July 1978. Relations continue to be strained to this day.

international communist movement.

As the Portuguese revolutionary process developed the Italian and French communists adopted very dissimilar attitudes towards the PCP. In the months following the April rupture the PCP intensified its relationship with the Armed Forces Movement. The PCP-MFA symbiosis was manifest in the former's emphasis on the People-MFA alliance. As the military became increasingly radicalized, the PCP seemed more unwilling to part company with the soldiers who began to conceive the MFA as a national liberation movement. The Italians were clearly uncomfortable with the close relationship that their Portuguese comrades had developed with the military. Perhaps influenced by the role of the Chilean military in the downfall of Allende, the PCI preferred a return to civilian rule under a communist-socialist alliance. The PCF was much more tolerant of the PCP-MFA alliance than its Italian counterpart.

It is worth noting that the domestic situation of the PCF and PCI played a significant role in their reaction to the PCP's alliance policy. The Italian communists were involved in an attempt to develop the historical compromise with the Christian Democrats. It was therefore natural to expect that they would favor a return to civilian rule and co-operation with the Portuguese socialists rather than with the military. On the other hand, the PCF was engaged in polemics with the French Socialist Party and had no reason to

criticize the PCP for not adopting a closer alliance with Portugal's Socialist Party.

The two positions became even clearer in the aftermath of March 11, 1975. The events of March 11 and the ensuing radicalization of the PREC could not have occurred at a worse time for the PCI. The PCI's Fourteenth Congress was scheduled to start one week after the Portuguese events were initiated. The historical compromise was to be ratified at this Congress and the events in Portugal could not be ignored. During the Congress the Council of the Revolution outlawed the MRPP, AOC, and the Christian Democratic Party for their alleged involvement in the events of March 11.²⁴ Given that the Italian communists did not immediately pronounce themselves on this matter, the Christian Democratic delegation withdrew from the Congress. The PCI's reaction was made public during Berlinguer's closing speech to the Fourteenth Congress; not only was the banning of the Portuguese political parties denounced but so was the general direction that the revolution was following. The French communists supported the PCP and criticized Berlinguer for his statements, claiming interference in the internal affairs of a fraternal party.

²⁴ The Movement for the Re-Organization of the Proletarian Party (MRPP) and the Worker-Peasant Alliance (AOC) were two Maoist parties.

The last chapter of this work discussed the posture adopted by the PCP towards the April 1975 elections for the Constituent Assembly. It must be remembered that the elections were constrained by the Parties-MFA Pact. One should also recall that the Pact acknowledged the MFA as the "motor of the revolution". Given the PCI position vis-a-vis the military, this Pact and the restrictions that it placed upon the political parties was not favourably received by the Italians. The Italian communists saw the Constituent Assembly from the same perspective as the Portuguese Socialist Party; the elections were seen as the first and necessary step in the transition to a parliamentary democracy. As has been pointed out above the PCP de-emphasized the elections and their result. For the PCP, and certain sectors of the MFA, the fact that the left-wing parties had obtained a plurality of the popular vote meant that the Portuguese people had chosen the path to socialism. The very different conceptions of socialism held by Cunhal and Soares were dismissed as meaningless, since the electorate had made no such distinction because of its inexperience with electoral politics. The French demonstrated modest approval of the PCP's position.

It was necessary for the autonomous parties to distance themselves from the PCP's blatant disregard for electoral politics. However, it was the Republica issue that came to crystallize the difference in approach between the PCP and

the fraternal parties. Regardless of the details of the Republica incident, the case was soon turned into one of freedom of the press. While many observers suggest that the Eurocommunist's pursuit of power through the ballot box was nothing more than a strategy for attaining political power, their "sincerity" in working within the framework of liberal democracy could only really be measured by the positions they adopted regarding basic democratic liberties; freedom of the press constituting one of the more significant of these freedoms. More than any other event the Republica affair served to distinguish the positions of the European communist parties.

The cause of the Portuguese Socialist Party was soon taken up all over the world, but nowhere did it reach the degree of immediacy that it did in Europe. The parties of the Second International brought this issue to the forefront of discussion in their respective countries. The Republica affair was utilized by the non-communist forces in France, Spain, and Italy to weaken the growing influence of these parties by questioning their commitment to democratic freedoms. Nowhere was this strategy more effective than in France. The PCF, as the PCP's closest ally, was suspect since its own commitment to democratic freedom was only recently found. The Republica incident could not have been more inopportune since the PCF had just published its "charter of liberties" outlining its commitment to, and

respect for, liberal democratic freedom.²⁵ The PCF, perhaps out of a sense of respect for proletarian internationalism, publicly supported the PCP's position and pointed to Soares' socialists as the cause of political instability in Portugal. Under attack from the French socialists, the PCF maintained that the Republica affair was merely a labour dispute. Even if the PCF was correct about the details of the matter, the incident had become a question of principle not addressed by the PCF.²⁶

If the PCF did not address the Republica affair as a question of fundamental principles, the PCI treated the incident in this manner from the start. Berlinguer and his party were careful not only to distinguish themselves from the PCP on this question, but also in their approach to the path to socialism. Cunhal's infamous interview with Fallaci, in which he stated that Portugal would never become a bourgeois democracy, further alienated the PCI from the positions of Cunhal's party. As Alex McLeod suggests,

The Italian Communist Party discussed the Portuguese revolution and the questions of principle that it raised partly because the democratic political scene prevented it from acting otherwise. In doing so it was able to clarify its positions on certain vital issues, and asserted the priority that it attached to its democratic interests over the restrictive demands of the international communist movement, as interpreted by the Communist Party of the Soviet

²⁵ See the chapter by Peter Morris entitled, "The French Communist Party and Eurocommunism" in David Childs (ed.) The Changing Face of Western Communism. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1980, p.161.

²⁶ This point is made by McLeod, Op. Cit., pp.308-310.

Union and its supporters.²⁷

While the democratic concerns of the French, Spanish, and Italian Communist Parties were an essential element in their response to the Portuguese crisis and the PCP's behavior, these events occurred in the context of a generalized debate within the international communist movement. Specifically, the 1976 Berlin Conference of Communist and Workers Parties was the general backdrop for these events.

The CPSU had accepted the notion that each communist party was responsible for outlining its own particular path to socialism. It was even willing to accept the most unorthodox of positions, as represented by the PCI, in order to preserve the cohesion of the international communist movement. Of course, the particular path adopted was dependent upon the analysis that each party made of capitalism in their respective countries. It is in dealing with the problem of revolution and the consequences of that revolution that the differences begin to manifest themselves. Although the revolution may take different forms the CPSU maintained that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the "general laws" governing the construction of socialism were not negotiable; neither was the nature of "really existing socialism" in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It is within this perspective that the Portuguese revolutionary process assumes a critical importance for the CPSU as well as for the derived parties.

²⁷ McLeod, Op. Cit., p.318.

The Portuguese Communist Party maintained that state monopoly capitalism no longer existed in Portugal by 1976, as it did in the rest of Europe. In its strategy the PCP attempted to conquer the apparatus of the state by a direct assault upon it. If we contrast this idea with the position of the PCI, it becomes clear that the Italians foresaw the seizure of state power through the institutions of the state. If Allende's failure had convinced the PCI that this was the correct approach, the PCP and the CPSU derived the opposite conclusion. Zaradov and Cunhal both agreed that the revolution could only be made with a "revolutionary" and not an "arithmetical majority."²⁸

In the aftermath of the revolution the CPSU clearly favoured the establishment of the "people's democracy" formula for Western Europe as it had been applied in Eastern Europe - without direct Soviet intervention. The "people's democracy" stage of the revolution was in full accordance with dominant Soviet conceptions of the "general laws" of socialist development. Under such an arrangement the Communist Party was to retain its vanguard role in the construction of socialism. Both the Spanish and Italian communists rejected this formula while the PCF often demonstrated an ambivalence in this matter. The Portuguese communists, in contrast to the aforesaid fraternal parties, regarded this formula, particularly in its East German

²⁸ Zaradov outlined his position in an article printed in Pravda, August 6, 1975.

variation, as the correct approach to the construction of a socialist society.

Obviously, the nature of the state structure in the process of constructing socialism would impart a certain character on the socialist society. It was the CPSU's contention that the USSR was the most advanced socialist society. To counter alternative models of socialist development, the Soviet theorists coined the phrase "really existing socialism". This expression was meant to equate socialism with the type of system established in the USSR. While it may have been pardonable for the Eurocommunists to criticize, however vocally, certain elements of socialist construction, the CPSU could not allow the entire edifice, the nature of socialism, to be questioned. In this respect the PCP was an erstwhile ally; never did the Portuguese communists question the socialist nature of the USSR and the desirability of adopting such a model in Western Europe.²⁹

By 1974 the CPSU deeply desired the realization of an international conference of the fraternal parties to reinforce its position in the international communist movement. While the PCP supported the Soviet position, the Eurocommunists would only agree to a conference congregating the European parties. Giving in to pressure, primarily from the Italian and Yugoslav communists, the CPSU accepted a

²⁹ A very different posture was adopted by Sergio Serge, the chief of the PCI Internal Affairs Committee, when he claimed that the Soviet model no longer had any validity for the West. Interview, New York Times, June 10, 1977.

regional conference. However, at the first preparatory meeting in October 1974, it became evident that the Soviets could no longer dominate the affair as they had done at the 1969 Conference. Perhaps the two most important concessions made by the Soviets were that no party would be criticized and that the 1976 Conference would not continue the work of any previous conference. However, the most substantial victory of the autonomous parties was the Soviet agreement to the principle of the unanimity of decisions.

These concessions relating to the work of the Conference itself were followed by other important policy concessions. National roads to socialism, a matter of grave importance to the Yugoslavs and Italians, were recognized as valid. Following from this position, it would then be inevitable that the fraternal parties could adopt postures that could place them in conflict with other parties. In order to preserve the manoeuverability of each party, proletarian internationalism, understood as Soviet dominance of the movement, had to be disregarded in favor of genuine autonomy. It was therefore important that no center of control, or dominant model, be formalized in the communist movement. Having attained agreement on these matters from the Soviets, who desperately wanted such a conference to be held, the next twenty-four months were spent in negotiating the issues separating the Eurocommunists and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its supporters.

It was during the negotiation of these issues that the Portuguese communists attempted to seize power. By late 1975 the PCF, for long the favorite of the CPSU, modified its positions and began to support the critics. Given these two important occurrences, the Berlin Conference of 1976 resulted in a clear defeat for Moscow's theses. The final declaration, unanimously accepted by all participants, was an unequivocal affirmation of each party's independence. In short, such a declaration refuted any CPSU claim to leadership, or privileged position, in the international communist movement. However, the CPSU did manage to secure support for its foreign policy objectives.

However, the most important issues in which the CPSU and the PCP capitulated on were those of a doctrinal nature. Dialogue with non-communists was accepted at the Conference. Yet, the major setbacks for the CPSU included the absence of a reference to proletarian internationalism in the declaration; a de facto rejection of the CPSU's position which saw this concept as the bedrock of its influence within the movement. A further setback for the CPSU, and the PCP as an active supporter of this line, was the lack of reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Furthermore, both the PCE and the PCI, under the leadership of Carrillo and Berlinguer respectively, made it clear that their parties would henceforth not take part in such a gathering of communist parties.

The results of the Berlin Conference were not greeted with widespread enthusiasm by the PCP. The Portuguese communists had been unwavering allies of the CPSU during the entire negotiation period preceding the Conference. In part this loyalty to the CPSU can be attributed as compensation for the Soviet party's support for the PCP during the Portuguese revolutionary process.³⁰ But there is clearly more to this relationship than an exchange of political support. The PCP was committed to the dominant principles of the communist movement for two main reasons. First, the Portuguese communists, because of their historical experience with dissent and because of the successes achieved during the revolutionary period, firmly believed that the construction of socialism in Portugal could only be accomplished within the ideological framework established by the CPSU. The aforesaid position of Portugal's communists was based on the presupposition that the interests of the working-class, in its struggle with the bourgeoisie, had an international character that continued to possess political and ideological validity.

³⁰ My position is not shared by a number of authors. One of the best exponents of the view that the USSR was ambivalent about the Portuguese Revolution is Joan Barth Urban. Her position is outlined in the following works: "Contemporary Soviet Perspectives on Revolution in the West", Orbis Vol.19, No.4, Winter 1976; and "The Soviets and the West European Communist Parties" in Herbert J. Ellison (ed.), Soviet Policy Toward Western Europe: Implications for the Atlantic Alliance. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983.

The official reaction of the Portuguese Communist Party to the autonomous parties, and their positions vis-a-vis the Portuguese revolutionary process were articulated at the Party's Eighth Congress. The positions of the PCP adopted at that Congress assume a special significance since they occurred after the Berlin Conference. The PCP acknowledged the positive contribution of certain parties - the CPSU, the East German Party, and the Bulgarian - through their solidarity. A clue to the PCP's isolation in Europe, as well as to its staunchest European ally, is provided by the PCP when it acknowledges only one European non-ruling party's solidarity - the German Communist Party. The Portuguese communists were correct in claiming that the experience of 1974-75 had created "profound interest" in the international communist movement. However, the profound interest was not generally translated into political support.

Addressing the autonomous parties, the PCP recognized the fact that certain parties "adopted a negative posture in relation to the Portuguese revolution and particularly in relation to our Party".³¹ The PCP clearly rejected the notion that their conduct during the process was in any way questionable. Instead, the fraternal parties had been critical of the PCP because they were "(I)ncapable of understanding a revolution that did not correspond to their domestic schemes regarding the revolutionary process".³²

³¹ Cunhal, A Revolucao Portuguesa: O Passado e O Futuro, Op. Cit., p.429.

Underlying this accusation of myopia is a fundamental ideological question. If the international communist movement was to be strengthened, the fraternal parties had to consider the experiences of fraternal parties and derive conclusions from these. It would presumably then be permissible to criticize a fraternal party, albeit in private, in a comradly fashion only after the fact. If the critics could not understand the Portuguese experience, they were no longer operating along the lines recommended by Lenin and recognized by the communist movement. One of the criticisms levelled at the PCP was that it did not understand that its conception of an assault on state power was outdated; in effect, the PCP was a dogmatic party displaced in modern Europe. By making the aforementioned assertion, the PCP was able to reverse this charge and claim that it was the critics of the Party that were held captive to their dogmas - their domestic strategies for the attainment of power.

The public criticism directed at the PCP during the Portuguese revolutionary process served, according to the PCP, to benefit the anti-communist objectives of the revolutionaries and social democrats. In other words, the charges of the PCI, PCF, and PCE were "objectively" favourable to the interests of the enemies of the revolution. As if this objective service to the counter-revolution was not sufficient, the PCP claimed that

³² Ibid.

if it had followed the advice of some fraternal parties the revolution would have been defeated and "fascism" would have returned to Portugal.³³ Not only had the Southern European communist parties failed to make their own revolution, but they had betrayed and almost destroyed the Portuguese one. The inherent dangers of abandoning proletarian internationalism were evident for those that chose to look.

Fundamentally, Cunhal suggested that there existed an irony, if not a contradiction, in the positions assumed by the critics of the PCP. The argument put forth by the Portuguese communist leader was that the parties who had been the most vocal in their assertion of the independence of each party, as well as the notion of non-interference in the domestic affairs of fraternal parties, had themselves practiced a naked interventionism. In this respect, the autonomists violated their own positions by de facto attempting to limit the PCP's ability to formulate its own tactics. The logical conclusion that is derived is that the CPSU had been correct in its struggle against these orientations. The PCP simply suggested that a more profound examination of the Portuguese experience, less influenced by immediate domestic considerations, would vindicate the PCP's actions during the period.³⁴

³³ Ibid., p.430.

³⁴ Ibid., p.430.

While a lack of understanding was the ostensible reason given for the critical attitude adopted by the Eurocommunists, this did not penetrate the heart of the matter. A correct understanding of the Portuguese situation presupposed a correct ideological perspective. The Italian, French, and Spanish communists misunderstood the Portuguese situation because they did not possess such a perspective, unlike the CPSU and the German Communist Party. The following statement is certainly one of the harshest postures ever adopted by Cunhal towards the Eurocommunist parties. He claimed that the attitudes of these parties were informed by

on the one hand, ideological positions and political conceptions that approximate those parties, in certain respects, to the reformist conceptions of social-democracy. They are stimulated, on the other hand, by advantages or disadvantages that our comrades believe they can attain in their domestic policies from the repercussions that the Portuguese Revolution and the activity of the PCP may have on their allies.³⁵

The shortcomings of the Second International, in their varied manifestations, appeared to be surfacing in the communist and workers' movement. The Portuguese revolution was, in essence, the acid test for the orientations that had manifested themselves for a number of years.

The erroneous conclusions reached by the autonomist parties was a result of their abandonment of the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Portugal's communists pointed to

³⁵ Ibid., p.430.

a number of particulars that demonstrated the abandonment by the PCI, PCF, and the PCE of class positions. It is illuminating at this juncture to list a number of these elements that the PCP considered to be part of the abandonment of class positions. First, the Eurocommunists abandoned their role as the vanguard of the proletariat as well as the vanguard role of the party during the revolution. In part, this negation of the party as the vanguard was a consequence of the adoption of alliance policies that resulted in the conciliation of classes which led these parties to compromise on essential ideological questions. These alliance policies had demanded that the autonomous parties exclude all other roads of achieving socialism except parliamentary democracy. This total dependence upon the framework of bourgeois democracy "emptied" the class content from their analysis of concepts such as democracy and freedom. The PCP also charged that the Eurocommunists overvalued the question of the state during the revolutionary process and assumed that the class enemy would surrender its power to the working-class without a ferocious struggle. In a broader sense, the autonomists understood peaceful co-existence as "the necessity to abandon revolutionary action in the capitalist countries".³⁶ The abandonment of proletarian internationalism, replaced by an internationalism without class roots, led these parties to support anti-working-class forces in Portugal and

³⁶ Ibid., p.431.

elsewhere.³⁷

The abandonment of these positions naturally led to conceptions and models of socialism that were deficient. Not only did these models of socialism not apply to Portuguese conditions, they were not even "realistic" for the countries whose parties proposed them. The PCP was not opposed to these parties making their own accords. However, since Portugal was also a "European country", the PCP had something to say about "European communism". Cunhal stated that

"European communism" is not adaptable to Portuguese conditions. It cannot be pretended, based upon an idealist conception, that schemes constructed in abstraction can be imposed upon the rich experience and lessons of a successful revolution or presently existing socialism.

The PCP was simply not willing to devote itself to ten or fifteen years of struggle so as to limit the power of the monopolists; they had been liquidated in less than two years of revolution in Portugal. The message being relayed by the PCP was crystal clear. The PCP had in two years achieved, through a Leninist conception of revolution, what the Eurocommunists had not in many more years.

The Portuguese Communist Party had clearly articulated its differences with the Eurocommunists and, as a consequence, believed that they had demonstrated the

³⁷ Ibid. These charges were all elaborated at the PCP's 1976 Congress. This section of Cunhal's report to the Eighth Congress is perhaps the best summary of all the disagreements that the PCP had with the autonomists.

superiority of their own approach. They pointed out that their approach had led to an advanced democracy that destroyed the power of the monopolists; the Eurocommunists could not equal that achievement. Cunhal and his party attributed this success to the PCP's faithful interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. One can then conclude that if the PCP had adopted a Eurocommunist orientation it too would have failed. This appears to be exactly what Cunhal meant when he stated that if the PCP had assumed an identical position to that of the PCE its fate would have been identical.

The PCP concluded its critique of the Eurocommunist orientation by reaffirming its international commitment. On the one hand, it reiterated its support for the Soviet Union and the CPSU. The Party also called for the unity of the communist movement based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. To that end the Portuguese Party strengthened its efforts to battle both leftist-Maoist conceptions and "right-wing opportunist tendencies".³⁸ Addressing itself to Eurocommunist attempts to forge links with non-communist parties throughout Europe, the PCP claimed that it would not undertake such action without consulting the fraternal parties concerned. Indeed, to privilege the relationship between communist and non-communist parties would be divisive for the movement.

³⁸ Ibid., p.432.

In the PCP's perspective, as well as in that of other communist parties, the Portuguese revolutionary experience proved a number of things. The Leninist strategy for assuming power in Western Europe continued to be viable. Indeed, not only was it viable, it had produced profound transformations in the society and had seriously weakened capitalism. Portugal, in the PCP's analysis, was characterized by an advanced democracy far superior to any other West European liberal democracy. By way of contrast, the Eurocommunists had failed to secure any meaningful change in their respective societies. If theory was informed by practice, as well as the inverse, the Portuguese experience should demonstrate plainly the superiority of revolutionary strategy.

The fragile nature of the Portuguese Communist Party's relations with the Eurocommunists was evident. Indeed, the PCP followed Moscow's lead in its positions on all matters of consequence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the suppression of Solidarity and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The return of the PCP to orthodoxy also seemed to vindicate Cunhal's criticism of Eurocommunism; as did the virtual disintegration of the Spanish Communist Party. The PCI, taking the Eurocommunist option to its logical conclusion, began to think of itself as a component of a broad European left. Yet, if relations with the Eurocommunists did not improve significantly for a number of

years neither did they degenerate to the antagonistic level so evident in 1976.

For the CPSU, the Portuguese communists continued to play the role of privileged allies until the ascension of Gorbachev to the leadership of the CPSU. From Moscow's perspective, the PCP defended the Soviet theses in Europe during a period of extreme difficulty. In fact, the polemics of the 1970s were the last chapter in the breakdown of the international communist movement. Prior to the rise of Gorbachev, the Portuguese Communist Party enjoyed a prestige in the international communist movement unmatched by any other West European party. The PCP could not claim for itself the status of a mass party as did the PCI. However, in Moscow's equation, the PCP's lack of numbers was compensated by its ideological rigidity.

Two interrelated elements account for the PCP's rejection of Eurocommunism. On the one hand, the Party's ideological self-conception made it an unquestioning adherent of proletarian internationalism and other tenets of Soviet Marxism-Leninism. The Party contended that it was the application of these principles that accounted for the "conquests of April". The Portuguese Revolution verified the feasible application of a Leninist strategy for assuming political power in Western Europe. The critical attitude assumed by the autonomist parties to the PCP's positions during the Portuguese Revolution ensured that the latter

would remain alien to that movement. With the triumph of the revolutionary process, with the financial, moral, and political support of the pro-Moscow parties, the PCP was reassured that its adhesion to proletarian internationalism was the correct line. If there were internal factions calling for the adoption of the autonomist positions prior to the Berlin Conference, that position was no longer on the agenda following the gathering.

The Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC) helped to define the issues that divided the international communist movement. For the Eurocommunists, the PCP's behavior demonstrated that antiquated forms of struggle could only be met with partial success. The Eurocommunists placed their hope in the future to vindicate their positions. Inversely, the substantial gains made by the Portuguese communists during the national crisis convinced many that the autonomists were doomed to fail. At any rate, the PREC forced the PCI, PCF, and PCE to clarify their attitudes in relation to bourgeois democracy and a host of other related issues. By doing so, the Portuguese experience intensified and polarized the positions of the European communist parties during the period prior to the 1976 Berlin Conference. Whatever else can be said about the PREC and its consequences, as well as the role of the PCP during those turbulent months, its impact upon the communist movement cannot be ignored. &publEnv

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