

Special Report-- Portugal

State Department Plans Carvalho Coup in Portugal

by Richard Schulman

Sept. 9 (IPS)—A NATO coup d'etat under the leadership of the Maoist General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho is being readied against the Portuguese working class, IPS learned today from three different sources.

Two of these sources indicated that the State Department is considering "running with" a Carvalho left-populist dictatorship to defuse the working-class rage building up both within Portugal and internationally at the destruction of the Portuguese economy and the destabilization of the pro-working class government—operations coordinated by the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal, Frankie Carlucci.

Under Carlucci's direction, pro-working-class soldiers and officers are being purged from the armed forces, while the previously defunct Revolutionary Council has unilaterally revived itself as a counter-revolutionary body controlled by a majority of social-democratic-oriented NATO officers. New press laws are specifically designed to muzzle the pro-Communist Lisbon press and suppress pro-communist views within the military.

But the Portuguese working class has not been so easy to defeat, and emerging signs of a Communist-led upsurge show that Carlucci and Co. moved too far, too fast in their attempts to depoliticize the army and cut the Communist Party (PCP) off from the ruling Armed Forces Movement. The most obvious effect of resistance to the State Department-led right wing is the unilateral decision by Premier Vasco Goncalves and his Communist-backed Fifth Provisional Government today to remain in power until the successor government is ready to come in. Goncalves and his cabinet were scheduled to resign yesterday.

While the Portuguese working class organizes for a comeback under the slogan: "Counter-revolutionaries out of the military!" the NATO forces are at least momentarily stalled, leaving the political situation in Portugal temporarily stalemated.

Softening Tactic

Henry Kissinger's State Department planners, however otherwise clinically insane, know that if they move now with their cherished dream of a fascist bloodbath led by former Portuguese President Gen. Antonio de Spino-la, they themselves run the risk of being smashed or losing the rest of Western

Europe, including Spain, to an enraged working class.

Hence the serious contingency plans for a left-populist counterinsurgency coup led by Carvalho's COPCON security troops, with the behind-the-scenes backing of the "moderate" generals of the Revolutionary Council—a tactic to soften workers up for the Chilean kill by means of a brief but heavy dose of peasant and worker "local control."

"One way it might go is for a left-wing Carvalho takeover," a Portugal think-tanker at the Foreign Policy Research Institute confided to a free-lance journalist over the phone recently. "It would be strong along the lines of what Peru was originally," he continued. The FPRI is widely known as a NATO think-tank. The Portugal specialist boasted that he had just completed a contract for the government in which he had specifically investigated the "possibility" of a Carvalho coup. "We did some work in-house here and what I said was that a juncture would come at a critical point, and the critical point has just about been reached."

The State Department is hoping that through such an option they can play on what they imagine to be a Portuguese Communist Party weakness in the face of civil war threats, and coordinated CIA "wearing down" operation.

The Carvalho "left coup" scenario was mooted by another CIA think-tanker on the other side of the country. Peter Witenki of the notorious Rockefeller-linked Hoover Institute for War and Peace at Stanford University in response to questions from another free-lance reporter said, "We are going to see a rightist government or a left-wing Peronist type government ruled by somebody like Carvalho." Witenki went on to stress how easy it would be in either case to manipulate peasant ideology through populist promises of providing small plots of land. "The peasants believe in property . . . They have small farms, really primitive."

Today's Italian newspaper Il Globo, which is partly owned by the industrialist Eugenio Cefis, also reports a crescendo of rumors regarding a Carvalho coup.

The working class is also on the move. Once the Fifth Provisional Government reinstated itself, the "socialist" countergangs quickly changed their tune. Previously the Portuguese Socialist Party and its ally, the PPD, were deliberately sabotaging the nego-

tiations for a new ruling coalition, so as to leave Portugal with no government at all. The PPD had declared that it would not take part in the government unless the PCP were totally excluded and the Armed Forces Movement dissolved—demands it knew to be politically impossible. But now the political climate is such that the PPD has had to soften its line toward the PCP. The Communists have affirmed that they, however, will sit in no government with the fascist PPD.

Today the Fifth Provisional government is issuing a call for workers to elect factory and regional delegations to join with it in planning a development policy for the economy. Military confrontation is unlikely to be far away.

The State Department hopes that the PCP will be fooled into thinking that a Carvalho-led "Peruvianist" coup would be preferable to a government coalition with "Socialist" chief agent Mario Soares or the now-NATO-controlled Revolutionary Council.

Hence international working class mobilization in defense of Portugal throwing out gorilla Carlucci along with his Portuguese military agents is more urgent than ever, together with support for Portugal's immediate entry into the growing Third World bloc of nations in favor of industrial development based on ruble-financed expanded East-West trade. This is the only basis, in the face of CIA economic blockade and sabotage, for providing credits such as those requested from the government by a recent farm and metalworkers' conference in Portugal's South.

Against this, the Second International, General Spino-la, Maoist General Carvalho, and the majority now controlling Portugal's Revolutionary Council are deploying as one U.S. State Department orchestrated movement. The pro-Communist Portuguese press on Monday ran an expose authored by the pro-working-class Fifth Division and suppressed two weeks ago by Portugal's President, General Costa Gomes, on orders from Carlucci. The expose reveals that PSP leader Mario Soares and his Second International cohorts were working hand-in-glove with the fascist General Spino-la in organizing the latter's abortive March 11 coup. Soares is also widely known to have been crestfallen at the failure of Spino-la's earlier unsuccessful September 1974 "silent majority" coup attempt. Both coups were defeated by a PCP-led worker-soldier mobilization.