

PCP is Back on the Offensive; Agents Still Active

by Robert Bourne

Sept. 14 (IPS)—The Portuguese Communist Party has gone back on the offensive with a broad organizing drive among both industrial and agricultural workers and the ruling Armed Forces Movement. While PCP-led resistance to the counterrevolutionary mobilization of NATO-controlled right-wing military officers continues to grow, these officers have stepped up their own offensive with the highly provocative ouster of pro-Communist northern regional commander Gen. Corvacho.

Last Friday Communist Party head Alvaro Cunhal told a metalworkers' assembly in the Lisbon suburb of Amadora, "The PCP is also against the formation of a government that is incapable of guaranteeing the achievements of the working class, achieved through the revolution, especially the nationalizations and agrarian reform."

As another condition for his party's participation in the new government, Cunhal demanded a commitment to the defense of the legal rights of working-class organizations, their members and offices. Cunhal also stressed the strengthening of "the alliance between the working class and progressive officers," in reply to right-wing attempts to isolate and destroy the MFA as a mass-based formation.

Cunhal's statement, backed by the Communists' organizing drive throughout the country, is intended to place the country's new, still-to-be-formed governing coalition under heavy pressure to uphold the legally enacted program of the revolution if it wants to remain in office for very long. Latest reports are that the new government will be announced shortly.

Coup Plans Halted

The working class' mobilization has ground to a halt the mootings and plans for a right-wing coup, at least temporarily. Gen. Spínola, former president of Portugal and veteran of two unsuccessful coup attempts in the last year, left Paris unexpectedly early yesterday to return to his exile haven in Brazil. Fascist Spínola had been greeted with an unrelenting campaign by the French Communist Party to get him thrown out of the country, part of the international communist mobilization to defend the Portuguese revolution.

In the same vein, anti-communist Gen. Carvalho has been prevented by splits within his COPCON security forces from carrying out any sort of

coup attempt, as was mooted last week by U.S. State Department and CIA think-tank sources. Carvalho has turned to his allies in the notoriously ultrareactionary Maoist MRPP, with whose leader, the London Economist reports, Carvalho has recently had several "long heart-to-heart sessions."

But NATO continues to plot against the PCP and the revolution. The Atlantic Assembly, NATO's parliamentary group, will be meeting Sept. 21-26 to "discuss Portugal." This makes the international mobilization in defense of the Portuguese revolution and against the blockade of Portugal more crucial than ever.

Right Provocation

On the same day as Cunhal's speech, pro-Communist Brig. Gen. Corvacho was replaced as commander of the country's northern region by Brig. Gen. Veloso, reported to be a "strong anti-communist." With this move, the NATO officers now in control of the MFA leadership have succeeded in turning all four of the country's regional commandships over to anti-communist officers.

This provocation followed a mass anti-fascist demonstration in the northern city of Porto, headquarters of the region's military command, against Corvacho's removal. On Sept. 10 thousands of soldiers from 33 military units around the country marched alongside tens of thousands of militants from workers and neighborhood commissions in a rally called by the semi-clandestine "United Soldiers Will Win" (SUV) progressive military group. The anti-communist army boss Gen. Fabaio, who had done his utmost to prevent the rally from taking place, was jeered with shouts of, "Down with Fabaio, apprentice of Pinochet!"

Under the slogans "Reactionaries out of the barracks" and "Portugal will not be the Chile of Europe," the SUV announced its intention to extend its organizing to barracks everywhere in Portugal and construct soviet-style "popular assemblies" in conjunction with local mass-based organizations. The launching of the SUV as a national formation is in accordance with marching orders issued by Communist leader Cunhal to "rebuild the MFA as a revolutionary force in the spirit of April 25," referring to the original overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship.

Working-Class Offensive

Also on Sept. 10, workers from Port-

ugal's largest industrial concern, CUF, met in assembly with pro-Communist military officers to coordinate their offensive. At the assembly, Marine Commandant Albuquerque stated that "the workers have the right to complain about the men who made April 25, but another April 25 will reappear and lead the people to victory." A representative of Portugal's PCP-controlled national trade union federation, Intersindical, called for the ouster of fascist officers and added, "We are on the side of the progressive military, those who are going to give us arms to fight on their side."

At another meeting the Intersindical executive body condemned the "massive economic boycott started against Portugal by the imperialist states of Western Europe and the U.S. with the support of the international Social Democracy," pointing out that Portugal "could strongly rely on the solidarity of the socialist countries."

The thrust into the MFA was taken up by farmworkers' unions in the southern regions of Santarem, Evora, Beja, Portalegre, Faro, and Lisbon. The unions called for a meeting in the city of Santarem "to strengthen unity in the MFA and ensure progress along the revolutionary path." The farmworkers are also calling for the stepped-up actualization of agrarian reform measures. In the southern city of Beja, meanwhile, farmworkers and metalworkers met Sept. 10 to voice similar demands, including a call for credits to buy machinery.