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PORTUGAL

With the first glow of revolutionary triumph fading fast, Portugal's new leaders have come up sharply against the harsh realities of government. Their task—which is nothing less than the conversion of Portugal into a modern State—carries with it a formidable degree of urgency.

IF PORTUGAL'S experience is anything to go by, it is remarkably easy to mount a successful coup against a rotten régime, but remarkably difficult to manage a successful revolution. It is even more difficult if the authors of the coup and fathers of the revolution come to power with only the most rudimentary idea of the kind of revolution they want, let alone how to engineer it.

To-day, 14 months after the April 25 coup, there may be a slightly more informed consensus among the leaders of the Armed Forces Movement of the desirable parameters of the revolution, or at least a greater awareness that some of the competing sub-revolutions which have spontaneously erupted in the intervening months militate against any kind of coherent government. But there is still very little evidence that the military have developed ideas or institutions which can deal with Portugal's social, political and economic problems.

The problem is that the motor power for the coup came primarily from professional resentment among army officers at the role assigned to them by the Salazar-Caetano régime, and at the consequent decline in the prestige of the uniform, rather than from a coherent alternative political philosophy. For a long time, indeed, the left-wing navy officers stood aside from army plottings, because of the lack of political thrust. The question of what the revolution was supposed to achieve apart from the overthrow of the

months before the coup, and the programme drafted by Major Melo Antunes (now Foreign Minister) was not submitted to the political committee of the Armed Forces Movement until April 24, and it was not finalised until the small hours of April 26.

Small wonder, then, that the Armed Forces Movement took power with seriously divergent views, or that these divergencies are still apparent in the internal contradictions inherent in the arrangements that they have made since April 25 last year. It is even less surprising that in the process of trying to deal with the consequences of their revolution, and learning, as it were, on the job some of the real problems of revolutionary change, some of the leaders of the coup should have changed their minds. Whereas Melo Antunes first appeared as a left-winger, he is now widely regarded not merely as a moderate but also as one of the shrewdest members of the military élite. When Vasco Gonçalves (now Prime Minister) first emerged, he was thought to be a moderate; now he is regarded not merely as a firm ally of the Communist Party, but also somewhat unstable—which is not to suggest that Communists are unstable.

Idealists

The corollary of the political innocence of the authors of the coup is that the revolution started out with, and to an astonishing degree still main-

Armed Forces Movement includes a quota of straight-forward opportunists, the more so because of the important role played by considerations of professional status in launching the movement. Inevitably, too, there is an element of a power

struggle between the divergent factions in the Supreme Revolutionary Council, and the steady deterioration of the economic situation is bound to make this power struggle more intense. But the collective impression of the military leadership so far, as conditioned by the partial democracy which operates inside the Armed Forces Movement, is of naive and inexperienced idealists, groping for some kind of socialism as if they had invented the word, but not of blood-red revolutionaries. The coup was carried out, and the revolution has stumbled on, with far less political bloodshed than is current in Spain or Italy, to say nothing of Northern Ireland.

One reason for the lack of political violence may lie in the natural peacefulness of the national character, as many

has been followed by the of revolutionary disruption to crumbling of virtually all both management and production. In an attempt to counter the sharp deterioration in the trade deficit, the Government has imposed import surcharges which affect about half the country's

The peacefulness, and the atmosphere of well-meaning improvisation, must be set against the absence of any effective government. Dependable statistics are even more difficult to come by than they used to be; as one leading businessman put it, "our statistics were poor, now they are lousy."

But it is abundantly clear that the Portuguese economic situation is grim and is getting grimmer every day. Inflation is as high as in the U.K. Companies are faced with a critical cash squeeze, partly because of increased wages, partly because

of revolutionary disruption to both management and production. In an attempt to counter the sharp deterioration in the trade deficit, the Government has imposed import surcharges which affect about half the country's

wards, the leaders of the revolution have precipitated an exodus among the bourgeois élite. No doubt doctors, engineers, managers can be replaced, but not overnight. Some of the workers who have been precipitated into positions of power are trying to take sensible, methodical decisions, and a few of them are intellectually equipped for their new responsibilities.

But whatever the arguments for or against workers' control, nationalisation, and the restructuring of the economy, the price of rapid and ill-prepared action on all fronts simultaneously is likely to be more confusion than socialism. The confusion has been intensified by the mutual intoxication of revolutionary fervour in the early months after the coup, and while this fervour is now waning in the face of day-to-

ment in the security situation in Angola, there may well be a massive reflux of settlers.

No doubt all these problems are soluble in time but time is not on Portugal's side. In their determination to shift the country several notches left-

The key question facing Portugal to-day is, which of

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect is that too many of the revolutionaries have an imperfect grasp of the economic mechanisms which they are attempting to change, and that too many of them believe that Portugal's economic troubles are not the fault of the Portuguese but of a malicious political boycott by foreign customers and suppliers.

The weakness of the revolution, and its great strength, is that the Armed Forces Movement has, so far, consistently endorsed its support for a pluralistic democratic system, despite the pressure of factions within the movement for more authoritarian forms of government. It is a weakness, because there is an ineluctable, and possibly fatal, contradiction between military rule and democracy; yet the Armed Forces Movement continues to assert both its ultimate authority in the political structure of the country for at least the next three years, and the development of a civilian system based on competing political parties and free elections. It is a strength, because the first elections (to the Constituent Assembly) have already demonstrated, through the high turnout, massive popular support for a civilian pluralistic system, and, through the distribution of votes, that while a large majority of the Portuguese may be happy to vote for left-wing parties, only a very small minority supports the Communists or the parties further left.

cratic—will prove more resilient in the face of economic disintegration. In principle, general elections to a fully fledged parliament are not scheduled to be held until the end of the year, after the drafting of a constitution. But on the basis of the Constituent Assembly elections, Dr. Mario Soares could reasonably claim to be in a position to form a coalition government with his own Socialists and the Popular Democrats, who together secured 63 per cent. of the vote.

Free debate

The Armed Forces Movement, for its part, is almost inevitably hobbled in facing up to the pressing problems of government by its laudable determination to maintain democratic processes within its own ranks. The option of asserting more authoritarian rule, which is favoured by some in the Supreme Revolutionary Council, can only be achieved by suppressing or least severely curbing civil and military democracy. But it remains open to question whether, after the release of free political debate within the services, the authoritarian option is really viable except through a new, and quite possibly bloody coup led by a centurion-figure. What the armed forces must know only too clearly, is that the prestige so gloriously won by the overthrow of the Caetano régime is fast being eroded by their failure to arrest the deterioration in the economy, and that the time remaining for this particular

PORTUGAL II

Who's who: military ...



Gen. Francisco da Costa Gomes

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President of Portugal and member of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

After a distinction in maths at Oporto University he entered the army and served as cavalry officer in Portugal and later in Macau, Mozambique. Promoted to General while second-in-command Portuguese forces in Mozambique where he played a leading role fighting Frelimo's liberation army. As Army Chief of Staff under Caetano, he joined Spino-la in refusing to swear the oath of

allegiance to the Premier in March, 1974. Both were then sacked. The original candidate of the Armed Forces Movement for the post-April 25 presidency, he agreed with MFA officers that Spino-la should be appointed since in the eyes of the people Spino-la held more authority. Nicknamed "The Cork" for his ability to weather successive storms since taking the presidency in September 1974 the President is regarded as a conciliator among the various factions of the MFA, an astute politician rather than a military strong man though as President he is also Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

"Our revolution aims for pluralistic socialism through the fertile cross-breeding of revolution and elections."

General Vasco Goncalves

Prime Minister and member of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

An army engineer, General Goncalves avoided the messier side of the colonial wars though he served in Goa, Mozambique and Angola. An intellectual, he is often considered "the father of the revolution" for his long time interest in and study of politics and Marxism. Active in opposition to the Fascist regime from within the military

ranks, he took part in the 1961 abortive military uprising in Beja. His close links with the Portuguese Communist Party date back to such anti-fascist opposition. Appointed Prime Minister after the fall of the Palma Carlos first provisional Government, he has a reputation for fiery public speaking and fierier irritation in Cabinet. An intense and uncompromising ideologue he is impatient with those who stand in the path of the revolution. However, his political beliefs are to-day blended with realism, or at least co-exist alongside realism.

"We are not a Trojan horse in NATO. In Portugal we must choose between revolution and reaction."



General Vasco Goncalves

General Carlos Fabiao

Member of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

Spent over ten years of his army career in Guinea Bissau where he became a close friend of ex-General Spino-la. A late comer to the ranks of the Armed Forces Movement, to the surprise of MFA officers in Guinea Bissau he was nominated governor there after the revolution. However, under the influence of young MFA officers in Bissau he led the decolonisation process and began withdrawing

troops in direct disobedience of Spino-la's orders in Lisbon. Having thus earned his revolutionary credentials he returned to Portugal in October and was made Army Chief of Staff. Like many other former Spino-list officers he broke with the General and followed the leftwards swing in the MFA. Not a radical nor a Marxist, a quiet shy man, without apparent interest in politics, he is a follower rather than a leader in politics, but as Army Chief of Staff clearly is an important part of any equation. A soldier above all he is intent on rebuilding the armed forces into an effective and disciplined army. "Democracy must not be confused with anarchy."

Rear Admiral Jose Baptista Pinheiro de Azevedo

Vice-President, member of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

Born in Luanda, he entered the Navy, was assistant naval attache in London from 1968-71 and Marines commander from 1972-74. An original member of the first post-April 25 Junta of National Salvation he is also Naval Chief of Staff.

"NATO's nuclear planning group will continue to meet without Portuguese participation. We understand the reasons given us for this decision a year ago and we are not going to create difficulties about this delicate problem. I believe our position is correct."

Captain Vasco Lourenco

Member and spokesman of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

Captain of Rangers in Guinea Bissau where he quarrelled with Spino-la. Regarded as founder of Armed Forces Movement. His links with anti-fascist resistance and with the birth of the captains' movement were discovered and Caetano ordered him overseas after he took part in the March 1974 abortive Caldas da Rainha military coup. On his way to the Azores he spent some time in the Cape



Captain Vasco Lourenco

General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho

Member of the Supreme Revolutionary Council.

Born of an acting family in Mozambique, his army career included service in the Psychological Action Unit in Guinea Bissau under Spino-la. Commanded the April 25th military coup, and subsequently appointed deputy-commander under the President of COPCON security forces in Portugal. An ebullient mischievous man, with a flair for outrageous statements, his short stocky frame exudes command. Firmly dis-



Gen. Saraiva de Carvalho

