

Portuguese CP Defeats Fascist 'March on Lisbon'

July 20 (IPS) — A Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)-initiated mobilization of the working class and its armed forces allies has defeated a right-wing coup attempt in Portugal this weekend. Mobilization leaflets issued by the PCP described the coup attempt as deliberately modeled after the 1926 fascist "March on Lisbon" which installed the detested Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

The coup drive was to have culminated on Saturday night in a march on the government palace in Lisbon by a fascist mob led by the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP). The rally drew a poor 50,000, despite the fact that this was a national mobilization of reactionary forces.

The PCP, the single Portuguese trade union confederation, Intersindical, and pro-working class military units had established barricades and checkpoints at all the entrance roads to the city to prevent fascist weapons and propaganda materials from being brought into the city. Saturday, the PCP issued a communiqué which stated starkly: "The reaction will not pass."

Also in Lisbon over the weekend to help coordinate the coup were a host of social democratic CIA agents, including Gian Carlo Pajetta of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and Santiago Carrillo of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), both longtime supporters of the PSP. The agents arrived for the intended coup under the cover of attending a PSP conference, "The Problems of Socialism," funded in part by the Swedish Social Democracy of agent Olof Palme.

Surrounded by armed worker and soldier detachments, and with military helicopters swooping low overhead, the fascists had to confine themselves to a small Lisbon park where they gave themselves over to three hours of howling which even drove away a number of their own, according to East German radio reports.

Within hours, it was learned that the PSP had not even won its "minimum demand": the ouster of Portugal's pro-

PCP Prime Minister General Vasco Gonçalves from the government. Instead, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) — the pro-socialist officers and non-commissioned officer delegates who are Portugal's nominal government — issued a sharply worded communiqué denouncing the PSP attack on Gonçalves. The communiqué described Gonçalves as a "symbol of national unity" and a "guarantor of the continued progress of the revolution." The MFA communiqué was issued following an all day session of the MFA's executive organ, the Revolutionary Council of 30.

It is widely believed that the MFA's strong defense of Gonçalves is also an implicit MFA endorsement for a document written by the Prime Minister for the MFA and made public earlier in the day. The Gonçalves document proposes the next step for the 15-month old Portuguese democratic revolution, stating that "Only the seizure of power by the workers will permit the establishment of a socialist society." This is the way out of Portugal's present economic and political difficulties, Gonçalves insists. The document is also noteworthy for its denunciation of "ultra-leftism" — a clear reference to the Maoist General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, leader of the remaining pro-NATO faction within the Revolutionary Council — and suggests that Carvalho's political life will be drawing to a close.

Over the weekend Carvalho was forced to reveal himself openly as a CIA agent in alliance with Mário Soares' Socialists. To aid Soares's coup mobilization, Carvalho on his own initiative released the imprisoned kidnappers and torturers of the Maoist MRPP, the "left" branch of Soares's fascist movement. At the same time, Carvalho denounced the PCP's Lisbon barricades, belittling the PSP's intentions to launch a fascist coup, and contradictorily, promising that his own COPCON (internal security police) would man the barricades if any such were necessary.

Carvalho's released Maoists were immediately shipped out to beef up the

PSP's attempt to provoke the PCP into a showdown battle in the less-favorable terrain of Portugal's backward north. The PSP deliberately scheduled provocative demonstrations in pro-PCP working class districts in northern cities where PCP locals are small and surrounded by rural towns. The PSP led fascist landlords, businessmen, and Catholic peasants into mob attacks on PCP and trade union offices, resulting in a number being destroyed and several workers injured. One soldier in the northern town of Aveiro was shot during a PSP attack on Friday. Now, both COPCON and the heavily pro-PCP 5th Division of the army have issued communiqués warning that further attacks on persons or property will lead to military retaliation — a sharp warning to the PSP and reactionary allies to stop the attacks in the north. Meanwhile, the PCP-organized Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) are engaged in joint military training with MFA units. East German television yesterday ran coverage on one such joint CDR-MFA grouping based on a CDR of some 240 workers in a machine tool factory near Lisbon.

Only Carvalho's partial sabotage of the PCP Lisbon mobilization prevented ultimate settling of accounts with the "social democrats" on Saturday evening.

There is ample ammunition to remove the Maoist Carvalho from any responsible position before he tries more sabotage. The most recent was inadvertently provided by "Struve" in today's Swedish daily, Aftonbladet. "Struve" (a pen name) reveals that Olof Palme, Sweden's Prime Minister and himself a notorious Second International agent, returned a number of months ago from an assignment in Portugal and spoke "with enthusiasm about the good Social Democrat Otelo Carvalho." True, Maoist-Social Democrat Carvalho then went and spoiled it all with talk of lining counter-revolutionaries up against the wall, "Struve" continues, but "Carvalho changed his mind recently, saying he was drunk."