

a general) had so effectively immobilized the army by last November that the Government was unable to break a strikers' day-and-a-half siege of the Prime Minister's residence. To this radical left group, too, there were some fairly senior converts. One would have to include General Otelo Savaira de Carvalho, a member of last year's ruling triumvirate, and a gay and popular posturer of the left, who seemed often bored by the stolid orthodoxies of the Communist Party. (Since then Carvalho has been removed from all offices, demoted to major; jailed, released — and, after all that, was a candidate for the Presidency in the June election, in which he ran second. Where will he turn up next?)

Drift resisted

This jerky but persistent leftward drift was noticed and resisted by President Spínola before he was toppled in September 1974 (and, more notoriously, afterwards by the United States and by NATO). It had been resisted also by the middle parties, most notably the Socialists, by many officers, and by those "Paleo-capitalists" who emerged after the revolution to see what they could pick up. Now a new President, General Antonio Ramalho Eanes, has completed the containment of the left. This leaves the Portuguese wondering: "Who will then contain the right?"

In the two-and-a-third years since the revolution Portugal has had seven Governments, four Prime Ministers, three Presidents, three elections (and, it is to be noted, a small fraction of the number of deaths that occur in Lebanon in one day of that national disputation). That is a lot of politics in a short time, but circumstances are unlikely to permit any let-up. Those circumstances recently have included: the dissolution of the Portuguese empire; the reception of some half-million *Retornados*, destitute refugees from the colonies (primarily from Angola), mostly white; the reduction of the armed forces from 200,000 to about 30,000; the near disappearance of the tourist trade, of foreign investment, of emigrant remittances, and of foreign-exchange reserves; huge trade deficits; unemployment, by some estimates as high as 20 per cent; inflation at more than 25 per cent; and a perilous housing shortage.

The refugees account for the pressure on housing and employment, and for the first racial problems for European Portugal. These miserable homeless ones create all the social problems of a sudden, large, unwelcome and idle group in the heart of Lisbon, where they spill out of their Government-provided, laundry-trimmed

luxury hotels every day into Rossio Square, there to curse the Government and to hate the leftists. This is the nastiest element in Portugal's present and future. The spawning of reactionary parties, of para-military police and "justice brigades", of street gangs and crime, give the promise of much future unpleasantness.

Short of an uprising, however, the political institutions should remain fixed for the next few years. Two elections in 1976 have returned a National Assembly and a directly-elected President. Neither election contained surprises. In the Assembly voting, the Socialist Party maintained its position as the most popular, with a slight decline to 35 per cent of the popular vote. The Popular Democrats (liberal) gained slightly, to 26 per cent. The Centre Democrats (conservative) doubled their percentage to 16 and replaced the Communists in third place. The Communist Party increased its percentage by two points, to 14.5, dropping to fourth position. Mario Soares, the Socialist leader, has refused to head a coalition, and has been allowed by the President to form a minority Government, which needs the support of only one of the other three major parties on any issue.

In the Presidential election in June, General Ramalho Eanes, former Army Chief of Staff, was supported by the three non-Communist parties and won an easy victory, with 62 per cent of the vote. Non-party candidates Major Carvalho and the stricken outgoing Premier, José Pinheiro de Azevedo, ran a poor second and third, with the Communist candidate Octavio Pato trailing in fourth place with only 7.5 per cent, half that party's share of the earlier Assembly vote.

Return of discipline

President Eanes (The Enforcer?) has declared his determination to bring back discipline. That is an ominous promise if it means the breaking of heads and the recommissioning of the political prisons (which even now are said to hold between 1,000 and 2,000 persons — mostly losers from the old regime).

One is entitled to be more hopeful. President Eanes is a professional soldier of excellent reputation, and is unlikely to make himself the tool of the vengeful right or of the adventuring left. This should mean that those flirtations are over for the MFA too, giving Mario Soares and his Socialist minority Government a chance to treat the economic wounds, while the social ones wait to scab over on their own — perhaps to be picked another day.

*Two elections
without
surprises*

*New President
has excellent
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