Journal of European Integration History

Revue d'Histoire de l'Intégration Européenne
Zeitschrift für Geschichte der europäischen Integration

JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION HISTORY

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Nomos

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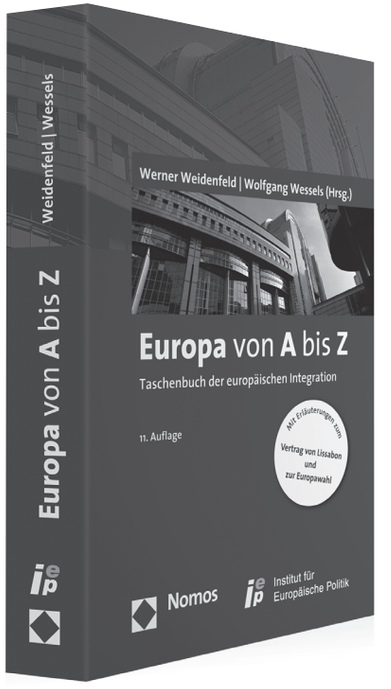

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The Federal Republic of Germany and the Portuguese Transition to Democracy (1974-1976)

Ana Monica FONSECA

The Portuguese transition to democracy was the first in the third wave of democratization, which would reach not only Greece and Spain (in 1974 and 1975), but also Latin America (in the mid-1980s) and Eastern Europe (at the beginning of the 1990s).[1] Because of its unexpectedness, the Portuguese democratization caught the attention of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Bonn's foreign policy in this period was focused on détente, as a way of achieving the unification of the country. The main concern regarding the Western bloc was the stability, reinforcement and future enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC). The expected scenario for the Iberian Peninsula was the future democratization of Spain (as general Franco was ill), which was expected to "contaminate" the Portuguese dictatorship. However, the Portuguese revolution inverted this prediction.

As the Portuguese transition went towards the empowerment of Communist forces, the Federal Republic developed a wide strategy of engagement in order to keep the country within the Western alliance. This policy was pursued at different levels, both on the formal and informal stages.[2] At the government level, the formal arena, the main strategy was to pressure Portuguese authorities towards the establishment of a pluralist democracy; at the same time, both the United States and the Soviet Union were pressured to avoid the escalation of Cold War competition in Portugal. The informal level consisted of the action of the political parties and the foundations associated to them. At the party level, the Federal Republic developed a tactic in which the German political parties should establish strong contacts with the Portuguese political organizations. The most active was the German Social-democratic Party (SPD), which established a close relation with the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) and used the influence of its leader, Willy Brandt, to congregate the support of the European government and party leaders through the Socialist International. Finally, on the ground, the political foundations, in particular the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (associated with the SPD), organized the party structures and the trade unions. Although these three levels of action were combined, in this article we will present a general overview of the West German attitude focusing mainly on the government and party level.

1. S. HUNTINGTON, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
2. This way of acting was a particularity of the German political system. See F. PFETSCH, *West Germany: Internal structures and external relations. Foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany*, Praeger, New York, 1988; M.P. DUSCHINSKY, *The rise of 'political aid'*, in: L. DIAMOND, (ed.), *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies. Themes and Perspectives*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997.

West Germany's Foreign Policy in the Brandt chancellorship

In October 1969, the political situation in the Federal Republic changed considerably. For the first time since the Republic of Weimar, the Social-democrats elected a chancellor, Willy Brandt, and formed government in a coalition with the Liberals (Freie Demokratische Partei – FDP). The SPD-FDP government brought high expectations to the German society, pursuing changes in all areas of government, in particular in foreign policy.[3] Quoting Walter Scheel, the minister of Foreign affairs between 1969 and 1974, the objective of the new international posture of the Federal Republic was "altering the *status quo* by recognizing that same *status quo*".[4] This meant a totally new approach to the German question. During the Christian-democrat governments of Adenauer and Erhard, Bonn's foreign policy could be characterized by the refusal to recognize the existence of the "other" German state and by the belief that the Federal Republic of Germany was the sole representative of the German people.[5] The government of the Great Coalition, between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, had already begun to change its posture towards the Eastern bloc, with a slow approach to the establishment of contacts. However, the differences of opinion between the two coalition parties made it difficult to the new Ostpolitik to go further. Only after the Fall of 1969, with the constitution of the social-liberal government could the Ostpolitik be definitively embraced. Encouraged by the American steps towards détente, Willy Brandt decided to establish contacts not only with the German Democratic Republic, but also with the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In three years, through different agreements signed with these countries, Brandt obtained the recognition of the territorial status quo in Europe and solved the problem of Germany's Eastern border.[6]

These treaties represented the "first demonstration of West German autonomy in international affairs",[7] although they fit organically in the changes occurring in

3. U. LAPPENKÜPER, *Die Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Oldenburg Verlag, Munich, 2008, p.28; C. HACKE, *Die Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Von Konrad Adenauer bis Gerhard Schröder*, Ullstein Verlag, Dusseldorf, 2003.
4. E. BAHR, *Willy Brandts europäische Aussenpolitik*, Schriftenreihe der Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung – vol.3, Berlin, 1999, p.7.
5. H.-P. SCHWARZ, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, vol.3: *Die Ära Adenauer*, Deutsche-Verlags Anstallt, Stuttgart, 1983.
6. K.-D. BRACHER, T. ESCHENBURG, J. FEST, E. JÄCKEL (ed.), *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Republik im Wandel*, vol.1: *Die Ära Brandt*, Brockhaus, Mannheim, 1986.
7. C. GASPAR, *International Dimensions of the Portuguese Transition*, paper presented at the conference «The transition to democracy in Spain, Portugal and Greece: Thirty years after», Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Foundation, Greece, 22 May 2005, http://www.ipri.pt/investigadores/artigo.php?idi=3&ida=130.

Europe during this period.[8] Indeed, aware of the significance of its initiative, Bonn sought to assure the Western Allies that its compromise was with them. In this sense, parallel to the *Ostpolitik,* we assist, in the beginning of the 1970s, to the reinforcement of a German *Westpolitik*, namely by the strengthening of the European construction (reflected in the admission of Great-Britain and Denmark in 1973 and the institutionalization of the European Economic Community) and by keeping the Allies, especially the US, Great-Britain and France, constantly informed of the initiatives towards the Eastern Bloc.[9] Behind this attitude there was also the intention of bringing the European countries into the process of détente and the goal of providing the EEC with a political unity that could transform it into an economic and political model, attractive to the Eastern European countries. Using the words of Willy Brandt, the politics towards Eastern and Western Europe of the Federal Republic formed "a whole: they both strive for European pacification and unity".[10]

Inserted in the German *Westpolitik* was also the support for the democratization of the Iberian countries, ruled by right-wing authoritarian regimes since the 1930s.[11] Bonn's relations with the Portuguese *Estado Novo* had been mostly military and they faded when the SPD arrived in power.[12] In 1968, Oliveira Salazar, the Portuguese Prime minister since 1932, was replaced by Marcelo Caetano, someone who the German diplomats had always seen as a reformist.[13] The first years of Caetano's government were a period of relative liberalization, leading Bonn to believe that the regime would reform from the inside towards democracy, in particular when Spain initiated its democratization after Franco's death. In this sense, it seemed premature to establish contacts with the Portuguese opposition. But when this period of liberalization ended, the German Social-Democrats understood that the *Estado Novo* would not reform itself and they began to act in Portugal in the same way they had been acting in Spain since the end of

8. Since the end of the 1960s, both the United States and the Western European countries initiated a strategy of rapprochement towards the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union, namely taking advantage of the receptivity of the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, who argued for a "peaceful coexistence". See O. BANGE (ed.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, Berghan Books, New York, 2008.
9. U. LAPPENKÜPER, op.cit., p.28; C. HACKE, op.cit., pp.192-194.
10. Quoted in J. LODGE, *The European policy of the SPD*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, 1976, p. 68.
11. For the relations between Spain and the Federal Republic see, B. ASCHMANN, "*Treue Freunde...*"*? Westdeutschland und Spanien, 1945-1963*, Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, 1999; C. SANZ DIAS, *España y la República Federal de Alemania (1949-1966). Política, economía y emigración, entre la guerra fría y la distensión*, PhD. Thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005; A.M. SANCHÉZ, *Aportacion al estudio de la influencia de los factores internacionales en la transición democratica española*, in: *Memorana*, 3(1998), pp.55-67.
12. A.M. FONSECA, *Dez Anos de Relações Luso-alemãs 1958-1968*, in: *Relações Internacionais*, 11, September 2006, pp.47-60.
13. For the impressions of the German embassy in Lisbon on Marcelo Caetano, see A.M. FONSECA, *A Força das Armas: o apoio da República Federal da Alemanha ao Estado Novo (1958-1968)*, Instituto Diplomático, Lisbon, 2007.

the 1960s: contacting and supporting the democratic opposition, namely the one that was ideologically closer to the SPD, that is, the Socialist group headed by Mario Soares.[14]

The Portuguese Socialist Action (*Acção Socialista Portuguesa* – ASP) had also believed in the liberalization promised by Marcelo Caetano. Indeed, they even participated in the legislative elections of 1969, hoping to be part of the internal transformation of the regime. However, confronted with the unfeasibility of such a reform, the ASP returned to a strategy of "full confrontation" with *Estado Novo*.[15] The leaders of the ASP, including Mario Soares, went back to exile in France, where they sought to obtain the support of the West European fraternal parties, in particular with those which were in government, in order to fight the Portuguese dictatorship. One of the most influential social-democratic parties in Europe was precisely the SPD. In this sense, from 1969 onwards, some contacts were established through the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and in 1972 the ASP was admitted to the Socialist International (SI). From this moment on, the Portuguese Socialists began to receive some organizational and financial support from the Socialist and Social-democratic parties of the SI and, one year latter, the ASP was transformed into the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS), at a meeting held at the Academy of the Ebert Foundation in Bad Münstereifel.[16]

Because of its contacts with Mario Soares, the German SPD had already been informed of the likelihood of a coup d'État in Lisbon. During conversations held with Soares between March and April 1974, representatives of the SPD were told that there was a group inside the Armed Forces, led by general António de Spínola, ready to overthrow the regime and with who Soares had been in touch "for over a year". Their plan was to constitute a democratic regime in Portugal, where the priority was to end the colonial wars. The formation of parties and the realization of free elections would only come at a later stage.[17] Despite the contacts of Mario Soares with the *Movimento dos Capitães*, not even he could guess what was going to happen in the morning of 25 April 1974. On this day he was in Bonn, precisely to meet personally, for the first time, the German chancellor Willy Brandt. However, due to the coup, the first encounter between the two men would take place a week later, under very different circumstances.

14. A.M. SANCHÉZ, *La social-democracia alemana y el Estado Novo (1961-1974*, in: *Portuguese Studies Review*, 13(2005), pp.477-503.
15. A.M. SANCHÉZ, Aportacion …, op.cit., pp.55-67.
16. There were already some contacts since mid-1960s, but they were never very strong or frequent because of the lack of organizational capacity of the Portuguese socialists. See P. VON ZUR MÜHLEN, *Die internationale Arbeit der Friedrich-Ebert-Stifung. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts*, Dietz Verlag, Bonn, 2007, pp.201 f.
17. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie (AdsD), Willy Brandt Archiv (WBA), A 8, 29, Letter from Hans Eberhard Dingels to the office of the chancellor (Dieter Schilling), 09.04.1974.

The Carnation coup in Portugal: the reaction of FRG

Despite these contacts, the FRG's embassy in Lisbon was caught by surprise by the events of 25 April 1974. The first in-depth report on the Portuguese situation was sent to Bonn on 28 April, three days after the revolution. The "unexpectedness" of the coup might have been, according to the German ambassador in Lisbon, the reason for its success, which revealed "how disintegrating and without support" among the population the Estado Novo was. The ambassador considered the leaders of the Junta de Salvação National (JSN), generals António de Spínola and Francisco da Costa Gomes, as "trustworthy". The Junta ruled the country, exercising both the legislative and executive powers, until the government and the president of the Republic were nominated. Spínola was described as someone who had earned respect more for his "charismatic personality" than by the important offices he had held. Costa Gomes, on the other hand, was someone who would not "steal the stage" from Spínola, but he would be important to moderate him, as a "backstage" character. Regarding the JSN program for the "new Portugal", the ambassador thought it should be supported by the Federal Republic, although it could also be considered "ambitious". Its major goals were: the decolonization, which included the immediate end of the colonial wars and the beginning of negotiations for the future self-determination of the colonies; the democratization, namely through elections that should be held in 1975 for a Constituent Assembly, which then had twelve months to prepare a new constitution; and the establishment of relations with all the countries of the world, at the same time that it defended the maintenance of the traditional alliances of Portugal with NATO and the Western bloc.[18]

In order to tranquilize the Western allies and to gain their support of the new regime, general Spínola chose Mario Soares to travel to the main European capitals as the representative of the new Portuguese authorities. Its main objective was to express the commitment of the new regime to democratic principles and the maintenance of the Portuguese international agreements. The German chancellor, Willy Brandt, received Mario Soares in Bonn on 3 May 1974.[19] Besides travelling as an envoy of general Spínola, Soares was seen mainly as the leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party. In the conversations he had with Brandt and with members of the Foreign affairs ministry, Soares explained how his party saw the situation in Portugal. The PS supported Spínola, but recognized that there were some divergences regarding decolonization. The Socialists wanted an immediate independence of the colonies, whereas the general considered that the future evolution of the colonies was to be decided through a referendum by the population

18. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt (PAAA), 101436, Report from the German embassy in Lisbon to the German Foreign ministry, 28.04.1974.
19. W. BRANDT, *People and Politics. The Years 1960-1975*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1978, p. 488. Brandt resigned from the chancellery because of a spy-scandal in its personal staff. Günther Guillaume, one of his closest assistants, was a spy for the German Democratic Republic. Helmut Schmidt, his successor, took office on 16 May 1974.

of these territories. Nevertheless, these differences "were minimal and would eventually disappear as the revolutionary process would progress".

Soares was obviously interested in explaining the Portuguese reality to the German leaders, but always having in mind the possibility of gaining support for his own party. In this sense, he carefully explained to the German leader the real weight of the Communists in Portugal. The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) was the eldest opposition party in Portugal. Orthodox and strongly connected to Moscow, its leader, Alvaro Cunhal, became one of the leading figures of the Portuguese revolution. The Socialists and Communists would become two opposite forces in Portugal. We can say that both represented the different sides of the Cold War, the PS representing the West, defending the establishment of a pluralist democracy, and the PCP representing the East, leaning towards the Soviet Union. However, Soares made it clear to Brandt that he believed the Communists ought to be in the provisional government in order to "share the responsibility for its successes and failures", thus avoiding its constitution as an opposition force. The Socialists were presented to the German chancellor as the "best positioned party" to lead the country towards a democratic regime. The chancellor replied that the Federal Republic was "very interested in and very worried about" the developments in Portugal, especially with the economic difficulties the country would feel in the near future. In this sense, Brandt suggested the creation of a bilateral experts' commission to define the future cooperation at the economic and financial level between Portugal and the FRG. Finally, he also talked with Soares on the possibilities of cooperation between the PS and the other West European social-democratic parties, in particular the SPD.[20] The conditions were thus created for a closer cooperation between the two countries and the two parties.

The German overview of the Portuguese political situation, either through the contacts at the party level – there were almost constant contacts between the PS and the SPD and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation – or through the reports of the embassy, allowed it to have a very accurate understanding of the real distribution of power within the new Portuguese regime. According to the German Foreign ministry, four different groups were struggling for the political power in Portugal. The *Military Junta* – whose leader was the president, general Spínola – had high popularity and was strongly supported by the Armed Forces; it had the conditions to cooperate with all the political forces, from the left as well as from the right. If necessary, it could also "play" these forces "against each other". The *Armed Forces Movement* (MFA) was characterized by the lack of organization and political identity, both nationally and internationally. It was still an "anonymous" movement. The *Left parties* (which included the Socialists, the Social-Democrats, the Communists and the Left-socialists) seemed to be united about the colonial issue – the only disparity being the deadline of independence. Regarding the internal policy, their rivalry was profound, but they were the only political forces

20. PAAA, 101437, Report from the Federal chancellery on the chancellor's meeting with Mario Soares, 03.05.1974.

that were organized and identified as such by the population. The *right* was controlling the economy from "behind the scenes" but its political influence was almost "zero". Having this in mind, Bonn's Foreign ministry saw the developments in Portugal with "sympathy". The major concern for the German government was that Portugal respected the right to self-determination in the overseas territories, as long as associated with a peaceful evolution and the beginning of negotiations towards independence. As a member of the Atlantic Alliance and as part of the European family of states, the Federal government would "support Portugal", as long as it respected the above stated principles.[21]

The West German government decided to outline a strategy of support to the Portuguese democratization. This support had to be discrete, as any "clear interference" on the Portuguese political development could be "dangerous and should be avoided". Publicly, the West German cabinet had already shown "sympathy" to the Portuguese leaders for the political developments in Portugal and, when the German Foreign minister was acting as president of the EEC, he exerted some pressure for the EEC's declaration "complimenting and supporting the democratization and resolution of the colonial question" by the Portuguese government. The future strategy of the German government towards Portugal involved the "maintenance and strengthening" of the support to the democratic forces in Portugal through the West German "unofficial authorities (Parties and Foundations)" and the expansion of the existing contacts. The use of the political parties and their foundations meant that the West German government had a variety of instruments to deal with the Portuguese situation: the chancellor and the ministers, through which it could exert political and economic pressure, both in Portugal and internationally, and the German parties and foundations, through which it could cooperate on the construction of the bases of the future Portuguese democratic system.[22] On a European level, the relations of Portugal with the EEC constituted a major concern for Bonn. For the moment, Portugal could "only" be an associate member. However, the Portuguese government showed "no hurry" in the subject of a future accession to the Community, which worried the Federal government.[23] This strategy was immediately put into practice. The German political parties began to strengthen their presence in Lisbon and there was a constant exchange of visitors between the two countries.

Nevertheless, the evolution of the internal situation in Portugal would lead to a radicalization of the political life. At the center of this radicalization was the attempt by Spínola to increase the political power of the president of the Republic. The first step towards this was given in July, when Prime minister Palma Carlos, supported by Spínola, presented a proposal for immediately calling presidential

21. PAAA, 101435, Report on the Situation on Portugal, 17.05.1974.
22. Although not particularly analyzed in this article, the role of the political foundations (and, in particular, the role of the social-democrat Friedrich Ebert Foundation) was determinant on the financial, organizational and moral support provided to the PS, the PPD and the CDS.
23. PAAA, 101436, Report of the political department of the German Foreign ministry on the relations with Portugal, 15.06.1974.

elections. This move would suspend the democratic normalization of the new Portuguese regime, which was based on the promise of the election of a Constituent Assembly. The refusal of this project by the Council of State[24] led to the resignation of Carlos and the ministers of the PPD from the government, allowing the MFA to nominate the next Prime minister, Vasco Gonçalves. At the end of September, with the objective of defeating the MFA and the left-wing, Spínola tried to force Gonçalves to resign and the MFA to go back to the barracks. The population, with the encouragement of the PCP and other extreme-left organizations, raised barricades around Lisbon on 28 September and on 30 September 1974 Spínola announced his resignation from the presidency.

Bonn considered that the events of the end of September had definitely shown that the "progressive forces" were the "winners" in the struggle with Spínola. The nomination of general Francisco da Costa Gomes to the presidency, who immediately re-conducted Gonçalves as Prime minister, made clear that the political developments in Portugal were towards a "progressive objective". But regarding the total dimension of this objective and how far it would go "only time would say".[25]

According to the West German Foreign ministry, the crisis of September-October had as main result a "more evident distribution of the political forces" and an obvious weakening of Spínola.[26] However, the political forces in Germany were becoming somehow apprehensive with the increase of power of the Communists and Left-wing groups, and the Portuguese situation was discussed at a meeting of the parliamentary Commission on Foreign affairs. The situation in Portugal was presented as "tense", but an escalation of the conflicts was not expected, because "the winners, with the support of the PCP and its trade-unions, already controlled the streets". The balance of power favored now the left and extreme-left, both "inside the MFA and on the whole of the political system". But the Communist Party, which presented itself as a "factor of stability", had "no interest" in carrying the political fight to the extreme. The role of the new president would be to secure the stability of the government, at the same time that the Prime minister saw his powers reinforced, as he was now the head of the Coordinating Commission of the MFA, which "held the real power" in Portugal. According to the German Foreign ministry, the events in Portugal represented a "backlash for the establishment of a West European democratic regime", especially as the conservative forces were being repressed. On the other hand, despite the social unrest, it was expected that the government would now have "better conditions" to establish a "long term definition for its economic and social policies", particularly regarding the future relations with the EEC. In addition, the decolonization policy

24. The Council of State consisted of the seven members of the JSN, seven members of the Coordinating commission of the MFA and seven other personalities nominated by the president Spínola.
25. PAAA, 101434, Telegram 244 from the embassy of the FRG in Lisbon, 30.09.1974.
26. PAAA, 101435, Information on the situation in Portugal to the secretary of State of the German Foreign ministry, 30.09.1974.

was, with the resignation of Spínola, more defined on what was called in Bonn the "Soares line", that is, the delivery of power to the nationalist movements.[27] As we can see, the reaction of the German government to Spínola's dismissal was very cautious, and led to a somehow negative evaluation of the situation in Portugal.

The debate in the Bundestag's Commission for Foreign affairs was heated. On the one hand, the social-democrat representatives argued that this was a much more pessimist description than the reality in Portugal. They considered "expectable" that after forty years of dictatorship the population expressed its opinion freely, which would "obviously" lead to "some confrontation and radicalization" of the political situation. However, referring to their contacts with Mario Soares, the Social-democrats declared that the situation in Portugal was "under control". On the other hand, the representatives of the CDU/CSU were not convinced of the possibility of a successful democratization in Portugal and insisted on the need for the emergence of a more conservative party, to create a "real democratic system" in Portugal. Once again, the general strategy of Bonn regarding the Portuguese situation was reinforced, at the highest level, by the secretary of State for Parliamentary affairs of the Foreign ministry, Karl Moersch. Moersch, who represented the government at this meeting, argued that in Portugal there was "the strongest possibility of the establishment of a democracy". In order to achieve the Portuguese democratization, the political parties in West Germany "must find partners" in the existing Portuguese democratic organizations and "lead them to the desired level of development". In this sense, the situation in Portugal was not a negative one; it "had only changed in its appearance".[28]

As part of this strategy to support the Portuguese democratic forces, the leader of the SPD and former chancellor Brandt visited Portugal at the end of October, 1974. Brandt went to Portugal after an invitation from the secretary general of the Socialist Party (and minister of Foreign affairs), Mario Soares, to participate in a PS meeting in Porto and to contact leading figures of Portuguese political life. This visit, within the framework of the Portugal-policy of the federal government, was considered by the Foreign ministry as "a very important contribution" to the consolidation of the democratic forces in Portugal. This was even more important having in mind the "growing weight" of the Communist Party, which was "much better organized and financially supported" than the PS.[29]

In order to take even more advantage of such a visit, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the minister of Foreign affairs, contacted Brandt to explain him the government's objectives towards the Portuguese process of democratization. One of the minister's main concerns was to show the democratic forces in Portugal that the Federal government was "willing to support in their fight against the extremists,

27. PAAA, 101435, Report on the situation in Portugal for the discussion on the Bundestag's commission of Foreign affairs, 08.10.1974.
28. Parlamentsarchiv (PA)-Deutsche Bundestag (DBT) 3104 A7/3 – Prot. 34, Protocol of the 34th meeting of the commission of the Foreign affairs of the Bundestag, 09.10.1974.
29. PAAA, 101437, Note to the minister of Foreign affairs, 14.10.1974.

either from the left or the right". The minister requested Brandt to inform the Portuguese authorities that Germany was "willing to support the determination of Portugal" in maintaining its ties to the Atlantic Alliance and in coming closer to the European Community. The final suggestion of the minister was that Brandt should "insist on the importance of the elections", expected to take place in the spring of 1975. The declarations of Mario Soares to the German television at the beginning of October regarding the importance of the establishment of a pluralistic regime in Portugal had been very helpful in calling the attention of the West German civil society to the importance of the democratization of Portugal. The realization of the elections would be a sign that Portugal was "on the right path" towards a Western Europe-style democracy.[30]

The German SPD shared the objectives of the federal government regarding Portugal. The direction of the Party suggested that, during his talks with the leaders of the Portuguese government, Brandt should emphasize the importance of the development of a "free and democratic society" in Portugal and the "vital interest" of both the German government and the SPD the development of such a democratic process. The maintenance of Portugal in NATO was also a "vital issue", not only for collective security, but "essentially on what regarded the process of détente in Europe".[31] On the other hand, Willy Brandt should focus on party issues during his talks with the Portuguese socialists. The main concern of the Social-democrat leadership was the political definition of the PS, both at the internal party level and at the national level. Brandt should make a "friendly pressure" so that the Socialists clarify their differences with the Communists, in order to achieve better results in the upcoming elections.[32]

The contacts established during Brandt's visit allowed a deeper understanding of the Portuguese internal situation. The MFA was seen as the "decisive factor of power" in the country and, after the dismissal of general Spínola, the tension between the MFA and the other political authorities was diminishing. In that sense, the personality of president Costa Gomes was very important. He was seen as the "integrating element", accepted by all trends in the Armed Forces, including the conservatives. Politically, the MFA could be described as "mostly socialist or social-democrat". However, despite their relatively small size, there were a significant number of Communists and extreme-left sympathizers among the Movimento. The future of the MFA after the elections to the Constitutional Assembly was uncertain: they would probably want to continue as a political force and they saw themselves as the "guardians of democracy in Portugal". The PCP was still the best-organized party, particularly in Lisbon, but giving it the power to decide on the destiny of the country would be "overrating its influence". On the

30. PAAA, 101437, Letter from the German minister of Foreign affairs to Willy Brandt, 16.10.1974.
31. AdsD, SPD-PV (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands – Parteivorstand), 11484, Recommendations for the conversation with president Costa Gomes and Prime-minister Vasco Gonçalves, 18.10.1974.
32. AdsD, SPD-PV, 11484, Recommendations for the conversation with the Foreign minister Mario Soares and the direction of the PS, 18.10.1974.

other hand, the PS was fighting with organizational difficulties, but its popularity was growing swiftly. Its leader, Foreign minister Soares, was considered to be partly responsible for this increase of popularity.[33]

The Hot Summer of 1975 and the international concern about Portugal

The next months, however, were somehow more complicated than expected. The political situation in Portugal became dominated by the Communists after the attempt of a coup by a right wing group, led by Spínola, on 11 March 1975. This failed coup had as a major consequence the reaction and empowerment of the left wing groups, led by the Communist Party. Immediately on 12 March, an "impressive" demonstration of the PCP filled the streets of Lisbon, showing an "organizational strength" that only this party possessed.[34] The formation of the fourth Provisional government, headed by Vasco Gonçalves (who was becoming visibly closer to the Communists), represented a clear turn to the left. The Communists and the extreme-left had a total of four ministries, including the Internal affairs, and the Socialists had lost the Foreign affairs ministry. The Council of State and the JSN were abolished and replaced by the Revolutionary Council, which now "held the real political power in Portugal". The MFA was institutionalized, through the creation of the MFA's assembly. In the days immediately after the failed coup, the banks and the insurance companies were nationalized and some extreme-left and extreme-right parties were outlawed. Further demonstrations by the PCP and the *Intersindical* filled the streets of Lisbon. The parties, in order to be able to participate in the elections, had to sign a Pact with the MFA, on 11 April 1975, whereby they agreed that the results of the upcoming elections for the Constitutional Assembly would not lead to any change in the government, where the MFA was recognized as the "motor" of the revolution and that the future Constitution would be an expression of the program of the MFA. This pact signed between the parties and the MFA was a way of diminishing the importance of the upcoming elections, in order to keep the revolutionary legitimacy of the MFA, instead of recognizing the electoral legitimacy of such elections. The pact was signed by democratic parties (PS, PPD and CDS), as well as the PCP and the other extreme-left parties.[35]

Polarization of the political situation in Portugal was now evident and it was escalating. West Germany's initial reaction was to pressure, in a concerted action

33. AdsD, Helmut Schmidt Archiv (HSA), 1/HSAA009396, Memorandum from Hans Eberhard Dingels to chancellor Helmut Schmidt, 22.10.1974.
34. PAAA, 110241, Report by Dr. Günter Grunwald, director of the International department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, on the situation in Portugal, 13.03.1975.
35. M.I. REZOLA, *Os Militares na Revolução de Abril. O Conselho da Revolução e a Transição para a Democracia em Portugal (1974-1976)*, Campo da Comunicação, Lisbon, 2006.

with its allies, the Portuguese president Gomes.[36] In his meeting with the president, the German ambassador began by reinforcing "the sympathy and hope" that the events of 25 April 1974 had brought to the Federal Republic, as they represented an opportunity for an "honest integration" of Portugal into Europe and the "liberation" of the Portuguese people. Despite the recent developments, Bonn was somehow "reassured" by the safeguarding of the Portuguese membership to the Atlantic Alliance and by the establishment of a free pluralist democracy in Portugal. What worried the Federal government was the "threat" that, because of the "extremist agitation", the elections would be no longer "free and their results respected". In order to avoid any resentment from the Portuguese ally, the ambassador underlined that this was not an intromission into the Portuguese internal affairs. The "sympathy and concern" of the German government were only an evidence of its "solidarity and willingness" to help Portugal in establishing a "democratic society based on human dignity". The answer of the Portuguese president was clear: the Portuguese authorities would do "everything to assure the transparency of the elections", set for 25 April 1975.[37]

The elections were held in an environment of relative peace and their result was clear: the Portuguese population had chosen the democratic forces, namely the PS (with 38 %) and the PPD (with 27 %). Combined, the PCP and the MDP (which was in fact controlled by the Communists) had only 20 % of the votes. However, because of the pact signed between the Parties and the MFA, these results had little practical reflection. Nonetheless, the "moral impact" of the elections was enormous and showed the "compromise of the Portuguese society with the democratic forces". These parties, in particular the Socialists and PPD, had thus gained "electoral legitimacy", opposed to the revolutionary legitimacy of the MFA. Moreover, the elections of 25 April 1975 showed that the Communists and their allies were "far from being the strongest political force in Portugal", and consequently, the German authorities believed that there was "an unquestionable opportunity for the establishment of a free, pluralist democracy in Portugal".[38]

The events at the beginning of March and the electoral results forced the Federal Republic to intensify its policy towards Portugal, in order to take better advantage of this opportunity. The danger that Portugal would fall to the Communist side was a "menace for the security" of the Western block and would give a "wrong signal to Spain". Consequently, the situation posed an "enormous challenge" to the West and Bonn saw as a matter of its own "vital interest" the

36. In the last week of March the president met with the ambassadors of FRG, Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain and the United States. See L.N. RODRIGUES, *Marechal Costa Gomes. No Centro da Tempestade*, Esfera dos Livros, Lisbon, 2008, pp.232-235.
37. *Akten der Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (AABRD), vol.I, 1975, doc.60, Letter of the German Foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher to the American secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, 27.03.1975, pp.300-302.
38. PAAA, 110241, Memo on the situation in Portugal, 30.04.1975.

integration of Portugal into the free Western democracies.[39] The intensification of the German policy towards Portugal had several levels. The first was the exchange of visits, seen as one of the most important ways to bring the Portuguese closer to the Federal Republic, and therefore, closer to the Western block. The federal government would establish a "policy of cooperation instead of confrontation". In order to avoid that the MFA would "fall into the Communists' hands", all the support of the German parties to their Portuguese counterparts should abstain from deepening the existing tension between the parties and the MFA.[40] In this sense, there were several invitations to Portuguese ministers and officials to visit the Federal Republic, including the Foreign affairs minister, Melo Antunes, who was in Bonn from 19 to 21 May 1975, or admiral Rosa Coutinho, member of the Council of Revolution, in June.

The international circumstances in the summer of 1975 created an atmosphere favorable to a stronger intervention of the West European leaders, including chancellor Helmut Schmidt, in the Portuguese case. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), taking place at the beginning of August in Helsinki, had been one of the strongest stakes of the Soviet Union towards détente, seeing it as a way of keeping its authority within Eastern Europe. CSCE represented the culmination of détente, bringing together, for the first time, the majority of East and West European countries, plus the two superpowers. However, the dialogue between the two blocks was being menaced by the Portuguese case. The PCP, with the support of Moscow, was trying to take control over the country, both politically and economically. It seemed possible that a part of the Western Alliance could fall to the Communist side, thus unbalancing the forces in the Cold War. Because of the geographical position of Portugal, the Soviet Union would not militarily intervene in Portugal, but its financial support to the Moscow-loyal PCP could endanger the whole détente process in Europe. In order to avoid this, a series of initiatives were taken, both at the government and party levels, to pressure not only the Portuguese authorities but also the Soviet Union and the American leadership, so that a pluralist democracy could finally be established in Portugal. The danger that a Soviet interference on the events in Portugal represented is obvious. However, the United States had also shown some difficulties in adjusting themselves to the Portuguese revolution and its aftermath. The reaction of the Ford/Kissinger administration was to apply to Portugal the "Vaccine theory", where a Communist Portugal would serve as an example (a vaccine) to the other European countries that had very active Communist Parties,

39. PAAA, 110242, Draft of a plan for immediate support to Portugal, Federal Foreign ministry, 07.04.1975.
40. PAAA, 110242, Report on the visit to Portugal (22 to 24 April 1975) of a representative of the Federal Foreign ministry (VLR Laub), 28.04.1975.

such as France or Italy. The European allies, especially the Federal Republic, tried and eventually succeeded in changing this position.[41]

During the summit in Helsinki for the signature of the Final Act of the CSCE, the European leaders used the bilateral meetings to push the Portuguese president Gomes to moderate the political situation in Portugal and dismiss Prime minister Gonçalves, seen as a destabilizing element. All the European leaders insisted on the need for the establishment of a true pluralist democracy, with a government that reflected the electoral results of April 1975 and the freedom of press.[42] Most of the talks Gomes held during the Helsinki summit were very hard, not only with the Western leaders but also with some of the representatives of the Eastern block.[43] The whole détente process was endangered by the Portuguese political polarization between the Socialists and the Communists, and the Eastern leaders did not want to lose the opportunity that was presented to them in Helsinki.

The German chancellor was very clear while speaking to the Portuguese president. There had been "great sympathy for the initial impetus" of the Portuguese revolution, but since the events of 11 March, the "acceleration of the revolutionary pace" made it hard "not to be worried". The German government, as the French or the Dutch, was "ready to support, economically and in any other way, a democratic Portugal". Not only bilaterally but also in the framework of NATO and the European Community. The chancellor had some knowledge of economics, and he knew that Portugal had no economic or financial conditions to survive without foreign assistance. However, "no one" was willing to give such a support to the development of a "Southern American-style military dictatorship in Portugal" and he asked for a guarantee that such a regime would not exist in Portugal. Democracy "only worked" when the people could choose among several political parties, in free elections, when those parties formed a parliament, which then nominated the government. The chancellor warned that for the establishment of a new society, either "democratic or socialist", it was "necessary to give the people food and work", something that seemed to be missing to the Portuguese society. Schmidt ended the conversation with Gomes reinforcing the willingness of

41. For a description of the US position towards the Portuguese revolution, see T. MOREIRA DE SÁ, *Carlucci vs. Kissinger. Os EUA e a Revolução Portuguesa*, Dom Quixote, Lisbon, 2008.
42. During this «Hot Summer» in Portugal, the newspaper *República*, close to the Socialist party, had been closed by the Worker's Commission, that dismissed its direction. The case developed and transformed in the symbol for the struggle between the Communists and Socialists. Later, because of the *República-Affair*, the PS and the PPD left the government in July 1975, at a time the country lived almost in a civil war situation. For more details, see M.I. REZOLA, *Os Militares ...*, op.cit.
43. The Yugoslavian president, Joseph Tito, said to Costa Gomes that it was "wiser to first consolidate the achievements made so far", instead of "accelerating excessively" the revolutionary process. AHD-MNE, PEA, 1/75, Transcript of the bilateral conversations of president Costa Gomes in Helsinki, 06.08.1975.

the Federal Republic to support the democracy in Portugal: "help us to help your country".[44]

But the international activity of the SPD and, in particular of Brandt, was also very significant in this period. The Social-Democrat leader used his influence as former German chancellor to exert some pressure on the superpowers, regarding their position towards Portugal. In his own words, during a meeting with the US president, Gerald Ford, and with the secretary of State, Henry Kissinger at the end of March 1975, he showed his worries and "asked for a helpful openness" from the Americans. At the end of July, only a few days before the Helsinki summit, Brandt went to Moscow to meet Leonid Brejnev, to whom he delivered a letter from Mario Soares. In this letter, Soares said to the Soviet leader that the PS would refuse any kind of populist democracy, that, so it seemed, the PCP wished to impose in Portugal, being willing to denounce such an action internationally. At the same time, the former chancellor told the Soviets that the USSR leadership in the East-West relations "would be really undermined if Moscow believed that Soviet Union could gain ground in the Iberian Peninsula".[45] The reaction of the Soviet leader was of denying "any kind of direct influence or guidance over their political counterparts" in Portugal.[46]

Another action, very significant for the international pressure on the Portuguese authorities, but also on the Soviet leaders, was the creation of the "Committee of Support and Solidarity with Democracy and Socialism in Portugal". Created immediately after the Helsinki Summit during a meeting of the Social-Democratic leaders and heads of government of the Socialist International, in Stockholm, the Committee was a concrete realization of Brandt's idea.[47] The European leaders believed that the situation in Portugal required "concerted action" by the Socialists Parties of Western Europe to "prevent the country from being taken over by the Communists".[48] The other members of the Committee were the Austrian chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, the Dutch Prime minister, Joop den Uyl, the British Prime minister, Harold Wilson, the Swedish Prime minister, Olof Palme and the general secretary of the French Socialist Party, François Mitterrand. The Committee believed that the wave of "sympathy and good-will" that the events of 25 April 1974 created towards Portugal should not be dissipated by the "absolute disrespect to the will of the majority of the Portuguese people", reflected in the elections of April 1975. The main objectives of the Committee were to support the

44. AdsD, HAS, 1/HSA006605, Memo of conversation between the chancellor and the Portuguese president, Costa Gomes, 01.08.1975. The Portuguese transcript of the bilateral conversations Costa Gomes held in Helsinki is available in AHD-MNE, PEA, 1/75.
45. W. BRANDT, *Erinnerungen*, Ullstein Verlag, Cologne, 2003, p.349.
46. AdsD, WBA, A11.15, 18, Letter of Willy Brandt to Mario Soares, 25.07.1975.
47. AdsD, HSA, 1/HSAA006657, Report on the meeting of the Social-Democratic leaders and heads of government, Hans-Eberhard Dingels, 15.08.1975.
48. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington – http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=4073&cat=all&bc=sl, Telegram 15265 from the US embassy in Bonn to Washington, 17.09.1975.

establishment of a democratic regime, the pursuit of a free press, the construction of a free and democratic trade-union's association and the fight against the international isolation of Portugal.[49] These principles would be put into practice through some initiatives that were already taking place, such as the support to the organization of the Portuguese Socialist Party, but also by the implementation of new areas of action. The visitors' exchange, for example, should be enhanced with a focus on the Portuguese armed forces. At the same time, the public opinion in Portugal as well as in Western Europe should be better and constantly informed on the situation in Portugal. This was particularly important regarding the West European public opinion, where "much misunderstanding still existed".[50]

All these initiatives in the summer of 1975, both from the Federal government and the SPD, which conducted the other European social-democrats to a full support of the moderates in Portugal, had positive results. According to Willy Brandt, the pressure exerted on the Soviet Union by the Western powers had succeeded well. Brezhnev gave orders to the East German government to stop supporting the PCP, saying it was "important to give up any political activity in Portugal that could put at risk the Conference of the European States".[51] After the Helsinki summit, Moscow regretted publicly that the PCP under Cunhal "had pushed too hard and too fast" the situation in Portugal.[52]

Consequently, the Portuguese internal situation also reflected this moderation from Moscow. At the beginning of September, Prime minister Gonçalves was dismissed and the Assembly of the MFA denied his nomination as supreme commander of the Armed Forces, thus withdrawing its political support. A new group of moderates appeared inside the MFA, congregated around the Foreign minister, Melo Antunes, who obtained the support of PS and PPD. The Communists' influence in the Armed Forces Movement seemed now to be diminishing. The composition of the VI Provisional government[53] was an expression of the new course of the Portuguese revolution. Reflecting for the first time the electoral results of April 1975, the PS had four portfolios, including the Finances and Foreign trade. The PPD had two portfolios and the PCP was only in charge of the Environment ministry. Regarding the military, the moderates had the majority of the portfolios, including the very important Foreign affairs ministry, under Antunes, and the Internal affairs. The Prime minister was vice-admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo, close to the moderates. This government seemed to be finally

49. AdsD, WBA, A 11.4, 127, Press Communication, 08.09.1975.
50. NARA, http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=4073&cat=all&bc=sl, Telegram 15265 from the US embassy in Bonn to Washington, 17.09.1975.
51. Report of Erich Honecker (18.06.1975), quoted by T. WAGNER, *Portugal and the German Democratic Republic during the Carnation Revolution*, in: *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 1(2008), p.43.
52. NARA, http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=4073&cat=all&bc=sl, Telegram 255055 from the US secretary of State to the US embassy in Lisbon, 20.09.1975.
53. The previous one, still with Vasco Gonçalves as Prime-minister, had a clear communist and leftist majority of ministers. It lasted little more than a month (from 8 August to 19 September 1975).

able to lead the country towards the implementation of the desired pluralist democracy. To testify their trust in the new cabinet, the European and American leaders announced at the beginning of October the concession of financial aid – promised since the first months after the coup in 1974.

From the 25 November to the elections of 25 April 1976: the end of the "Portuguese Revolutionary Process"

Nonetheless, the divergences between the moderates and the leftists (not only the PCP but also some revolutionary movements of the extreme-left) became unsurpassable, both politically and militarily, and the conflict happened in the last week of November 1975. This was the closest Portugal was to experience a civil war and Gomes was forced to declare the state of emergency in Lisbon. The country was divided and so were the military.[54] The conflict was settled by president Gomes and the moderate officials, namely Antunes and Ramalho Eanes (this one with the operational responsibility), and by 28 November the situation was already under control.[55]

To the West German Foreign ministry, the events of 25 November showed that, "for the first time in several months", the Portuguese government had "the possibility of standing up to chaos and anarchy". The government seemed to be willing to restructure the military organization, taking advantage of the "favorable hour", designating moderate officers to leading positions in the Armed Forces. The dissolution of certain organizations inside the military, such as the Copcon,[56] represented the loss of power of the extreme left. Having this in mind, the Azevedo government could now begin "realistic work", especially because the "eternal procrastinator", president Gomes, had finally decided to take a side, clearly supporting the moderates. His promise to realize legislative elections was a positive indication to the democratic parties, which should now support the government to the stabilization of Portugal.[57]

The Federal Republic did not understand the role of the PCP during the confrontation of 25 November. The Communists were mobilized to go out into the

54. In the case of the institution of a «*commune*» of Lisbon, the leaders of the democratic parties and the deputies to the Constitutional assembly were to escape to Porto, in northern Portugal.
55. For a more detailed version, see M.I. REZOLA, *25 de Abril. Mitos de uma Revolução*, Esfera dos Livros, Lisbon, 2007, pp.221-270.
56. The Operational Command of the Continent (Comando Operacional do Continente) was created in July 1974. Its territorial delimitation corresponded to the Military Command of Lisbon, and its forces were under the authority of the supreme chief of the Armed Forces. Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, its leader, was one of the leading figures of the Coup of 25 April 1974 but became one of the most radical characters of the «Hot Summer» of 1975. The Copcon was disintegrated in the aftermath of 25 November and Otelo S. Carvalho was arrested.
57. PAAA, 110241, Report on the situation in Portugal, 28.11.2975.

streets, in a big demonstration that combined the party, the trade union (Intersindical) and the other leftist organizations controlled by the PCP. However, this demonstration was called off at the last minute and the people were demobilized. The insistence on the maintenance of the Communists in the government immediately after the crisis, in particular acknowledged by Antunes and Soares, was something Bonn had some difficulties accepting. Most of all, West Germans did not understand how a party that had brought so much "chaos and instability" to the economic and political life of Portugal could be seen as "necessary" to this new phase of the Portuguese transition to democracy. Furthermore, the perpetuation of the Communist presence in the government represented to the Western countries, in particular within NATO, a motive of "uncertainty and distrust". This could reflect badly on the concession of economic aid to Portugal, both bilaterally and at the European level.[58] However, the main justification for the Communists' presence in the government was still the same that had been given in May 1974: it was necessary to keep the Communists responsible for the actions of the government and avoid excluding them from the democratic process. An excessive anti-communism could lead to the strengthening of the extreme-right and to more violence. This was personally explained by Soares to Genscher and to the SPD leader in mid-December.[59]

1976 represents the end of the "Portuguese Revolutionary Process" (PREC) and the beginning of the stabilization of the Portuguese political situation, including the relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. The first semester of this year brought the II Pact MFA-Parties, which had as major innovations the election of the president through direct vote of the population (instead of the nomination through an electoral college composed mainly of military officers) and the end of the political influence of the Revolutionary Council – it was now transformed into a consulting body to the president. At the beginning of April, the Constitution was approved. It was a major breakthrough for the country and it showed that Portugal was now ready for the consolidation of its young democracy.

Regarding the West German support to Portugal, the most important indication that the political situation was finally beginning to normalize was the visit of minister Genscher to Lisbon. Planned since December 1974, this visit had been constantly postponed because of the political instability in Portugal. During this visit, in February 1976, the minister met with the members of the cabinet and with the leaders of the main political parties, PS and PPD.

Being the first minister of Foreign affairs of a Western country to visit Portugal since the revolution, one of Genscher's objectives was "to prove to the Portuguese" that all the promises of help and support from Bonn were true. One of the

58. PAAA, 110243, Recommendations for the meeting of the ministers of Foreign affairs of Portugal and FRG, 05.12.1975.
59. PAAA, 110244, Memo of conversation between the Foreign minister and the secretary general of the PS, 19.12.1975. For the details of the talks between Soares and the SPD leader, Willy Brandt, see AdsD, WBA, A 11.4, 127, Report by Veronika Isenbergm, 17.12.1975.

Germans's main concerns was the situation of the economy. The Federal Republic had already given some financial aid (around 70 million *Deutsche Mark*), and the minister was able to announce in Lisbon the concession of the equivalent of 600 millions DM as a loan from the *Bundesbank* to the Bank of Portugal.[60]

The Federal Republic believed that the "economic stability" was the most important element for the consolidation of democracy in Portugal. That is why the economic issues occupied the major part of the conversations the minister held in Lisbon, not only with the government members, in particular with the Portuguese minister of Foreign affairs, Melo Antunes, but also with the party leaders. In general, the visit was a success, seen as "an indication of the West German conviction of the positive political development" of Portugal and recognized as such by those Portuguese whom the minister was talking to. They all showed appreciation for the German support to Portugal, not only on the "economic level, but also on the positive attitude the federal government had always taken in the European Community and in NATO".[61]

After the clarification of the political life in Portugal, which happened after the events of 25 November 1975, Portugal's main objective was to rehabilitate its economic and financial situation. With the escalation of inflation, the rising of unemployment and the returning of thousands of Portuguese citizens from the former colonies (mainly from Angola and Mozambique), who needed housing, work, clothes, etc., the situation in Portugal was very delicate. Lisbon's strategy was to come closer to the European Community, not only because of the economic support it could – and would – give, but especially because the EEC represented a new future for Portugal, after decolonization.

Since the first days after the coup of 25 April 1974 the Socialists, in particular their leader, Soares, had sought to obtain the support of the European countries. Using the network of the Socialist parties, mainly through the Socialist International, the PS was the Portuguese party that had best taken advantage of the international visibility it had gained. The climax of this international recognition was the meeting of the "Committee of Support and Solidarity with Democracy and Socialism in Portugal" of the SI in Porto on 14 March 1976. All the members of the Committee and some other important European leaders were present, making this an extraordinary occasion for the diffusion of a favorable image of Portugal and the PS, both internally and internationally.

Under the title "Europe with Us [the Portuguese Socialists]", this meeting focused mainly on economic issues and on the support to the PS. According to Soares, "several European leaders had asked" him to host a meeting of the SI in Portugal. But because of the political instability, only now could such a reunion take place. The "favorable evolution of the political situation" allowed this type of

60. PAAA, 110243, Preparatory documents for the visit of the Federal minister for Foreign affairs to Lisbon, 29.01.1976.
61. PAAA, 110243, Note on the visit to Lisbon of the Federal minister for Foreign affairs (04-05.02.1976), 18.02.1976.

events – in the same way it would allow a meeting of the European Union of Christian-democrats, or of the Liberal International, for example.[62] This was a clear answer to the criticism Soares was suffering from the other parties, either the CDS, the PPD or the PCP, which were accusing the PS of trying to obtain support for the electoral campaign (which would only begin in a couple of weeks) and the European leaders of interfering with the Portuguese internal affairs. Mario Soares defended himself by saying that this meeting was most of all important for the country. On his speech, Soares focused mostly on the future relations of Portugal with Europe. After promising that they were willing to help Portugal, it was now time for the "European friends" to carry out that promise and contribute for the consolidation of the Portuguese democracy.[63] The answer of the European leaders, on the words of Brandt, the president of the Committee, was very positive: "the Committee plans acts of solidarity in different levels of the European institutions (EEC, Council of Europe, and EFTA) and also bilaterally, from government to government, from party to party". The ending words of the final declaration of the meeting were clear: "Portugal belongs to Europe – Europe must recognize its responsibilities towards Portugal".[64]

And the Portuguese people showed they had chosen Europe as well. In the first free elections for the formation of a democratic parliament, in 25 April 1976, the PS was the choice of the Portuguese people to rule the country. Despite not having the majority of the deputies, Soares decided to form a government without coalitions. Two years after the coup of 25 April 1974, democracy had finally arrived in Portugal.

Conclusion

When Willy Brandt won the elections in December 1969, he began a new phase of West German foreign policy. *Ostpolitik*, allowed by the American-Soviet détente, was a new approach to the "German question". Brandt expected to overcome the division of Germany by the recognition of and normalization of the relations with the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union. Hoping that the economic penetration on the Socialist states would lead to the fall of those regimes, the Federal Republic tried simultaneously to strengthen the European Economic Community, not only through its enlargement to Great-Britain and Denmark but also by its political reinforcement, translated into the creation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC). One cannot separate *Ostpolitik* from this *Westpolitik*.

62. Declarations of Mario Soares to the Portuguese newspaper *Expresso*, 13.03.1976, p.4.
63. Speech of the secretary general of the PS, Mario Soares, to the meeting of the «Committee of Support and Solidarity with Democracy and Socialism in Portugal» of the SI, 14.03.1976, in: M. SOARES, *Europa Connosco!*, Perspectivas e Realidades, Lisbon, 1976.
64. AdsD, HSA, 1/HSAA006219, Press Communiqué of the meeting of the «Committee of Support and Solidarity with Democracy and Socialism in Portugal» of the SI, 14.03.1976.

It is within the *Westpolitik* that we understand Brandt's policy towards Portugal. The major concern of Bonn regarding the right wing regimes in Europe was the political stability they assured, in particular when there wasn't any better alternative. The only organized opposition to Salazar (and after him, to Marcelo Caetano) was the Communist Party, and that, within the bipolar reality, was not as good as a stable, pro-Western, conservative and anti-communist right wing dictatorship.

However, at the beginning of the 1970s, the German Social-democrats began to establish some contacts with the Socialist opposition, whose leader was Mario Soares. Connected through the Socialist International to the Socialist and Social-democrat parties of Western Europe, Soares and his socialist fellows were able to call the attention of the SPD to the growing discontent in Portugal about the Estado Novo. By this time, the SPD had already understood that the political liberalization promised by Marcelo Caetano would never be consistent and that the regime would never reform from within. The contacts with the Socialist Party were becoming more intense when the coup of the 25 April 1974 happened.

The first reaction to the coup was of surprise, not only in Bonn but in all the capitals of the Western Alliance. But the declarations of the new leaders, mainly the respect for the international agreements (in particular those connected to the integration of Portugal in the Western block: NATO or the Azores agreement with the USA), the intention of calling free and universal elections and the beginning of decolonization reassured the German government. This confidence was reinforced by the appointment of Mario Soares to the Foreign ministry of the first provisional government, despite this government also having Communist ministers, including the leader of the PCP, Alvaro Cunhal. The presence of Communists in the provisional governments was never well accepted by any of the Western countries, and Bonn was no exception. But, because the SPD had a very close contact with the PS and Soares, the Federal Republic understood better the need to keep the Communist Party responsible for the government of the country, not giving it any excuses to move to the opposition.

The Federal Republic always reflected sympathy and enthusiasm towards the Portuguese revolution, even when it showed the first signs of radicalization. The German strategy was to keep Portugal "under control" through the establishment of constant contacts, both at government and party level. Indeed, the main innovation of the German policy towards Portugal was the use of a wide range of instruments to achieve the major purpose of its policy: the establishment of a pluralist, Western-like democracy in Portugal. These instruments were not only the traditional channels of foreign policy, like diplomacy, but also an informal network of contacts between the German parties and their associated foundations and the Portuguese political organizations. This was particularly visible in the case of the SPD, mostly because it was also the party in government and had one of the most charismatic Western German politicians, Willy Brandt, as its leader. Although not focused on in this article, the other German political parties – CDU and FDP –

were also active in Portugal, supporting mainly the CDS and the PPD. This was part of the broader strategy of the Federal Republic to create the conditions for the establishment of democracy in Portugal. Another dimension of this strategy was the recovery of the Portuguese economy. Besides the international economic crisis, Lisbon was facing huge economic problems resulting from the course of the revolution (social unrest, constant strikes, nationalization of the banks and insurance companies, etc.). The Federal Republic believed that economic stability and modernization were conditions *sine qua non* for democratization. It was the same principle that guided the economic approach to Eastern Europe. That was why the economic issues and the future of the Portuguese relations with the EEC were always an important part of the conversations between German and Portuguese representatives.

The last element of the FRG's strategy towards the Portuguese democratization was the pressure on the two superpowers so that they would help Portugal's stabilization. Both the German chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the leader of the SPD Brandt took advantage of their international visibility to defend the West German – and West European – position. In Washington, they insisted on the need to support the moderates, in particular Soares. Despite the initial intention of the secretary of State Henry Kissinger to isolate Portugal, including the possible expulsion from NATO, the Americans eventually understood that there was a possibility of democratization in Portugal. To the Soviet Union, the German leaders clearly played the "CSCE-card", assuring that a Soviet interference in Portugal would seriously endanger the realization of the Helsinki Summit.

The Portuguese elections to the first constitutional parliament, on 25 April 1976 acclaimed the Socialist Party and its leader, Soares. In a way, the socialist victory was also the recognition of the success of the Federal Republic's strategy. There is no doubt that the strength of the Socialists came mainly from the international support they received, which was not only financial but also organizational. And the leaders of that international wave of support to the PS were the West Germans, not only through the pressure that the government exerted (either on the US and USSR, or on the Portuguese authorities), but also through the action of the Social-democratic Party and its leader Brandt. In fact, it can be said that the major consequence of the West German position during the Portuguese transition to democracy was the consolidation of the Socialist Party as a party seen by the people as a stabilizing element of the political and economic situation. Nevertheless, the final result could have been very different if the Federal Republic of Germany hadn't had the strategy of engagement we have just described.