

The Portuguese Radical Left and Europe: The Case of the PCP

La izquierda radical portuguesa y Europa: el caso del PCP

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Recibido: 07/06/2021

Aceptado: 15/12/2021

Cómo citar este artículo: CUNHA, Carlos (2022). The Portuguese Radical Left and Europe: The Case of the PCP. *Pasado y Memoria. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, (24), pp. 66-90, <https://doi.org/1014198/PASADO2022.24.03>

Abstract

This paper takes a qualitative, rhetorical and historical approach with a view to analyzing the Portuguese Communist Party's (PCP) long-term, oppositional stance and tactics towards European integration (EI) by briefly covering early opposition, while focusing on 1990s onward stages. The economic crises (Euro Crisis 2008/2009 and Pandemic) Portugal faces, and the rigid, neo-liberal solutions imposed by the European Union, have led the PCP to feel its constant criticisms of increased federalism have been justified. At its XXI Congress in 2020, the PCP used the same rhetorical arguments as it had in the past, including that the only solution is to break with the right's pro-EU policies.

Keywords: Portuguese Communist Party; European Integration; Euroscepticism; Communism; Federalism; Political Parties.



Resumen

El presente trabajo adopta un enfoque cualitativo, retórico e histórico con el fin de analizar la postura y las tácticas de oposición, a largo plazo, del Partido Comunista Portugués (PCP) hacia la integración europea (UE), cubriendo brevemente la oposición temprana para centrarse a continuación en las etapas posteriores de la década de 1990. Las crisis económicas (Euro Crisis 2008-2009 y Pandemia) a las que se enfrenta Portugal, y las rígidas soluciones neoliberales impuestas por la Unión Europea, han llevado al PCP a sentir que sus constantes críticas al creciente federalismo están justificadas. En su XXI Congreso de 2020, el PCP utilizó los mismos argumentos retóricos que tenía en el pasado, manteniendo que la única solución es romper con las políticas pro-UE de la derecha.

Palabras clave: Partido Comunista Portugués; Integración europea; Euroescepticismo; Comunismo; Federalismo; Partidos políticos.

The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) celebrated its 100th anniversary on March 6, 2021 as one of the strongest communist parties in Western Europe and as the oldest Portuguese political party in continuous existence (Cunha, 1992).¹ The party's strength has declined since its parliamentary electoral apex in 1979 when its earlier coalition obtained 19 percent of the vote. Still, in the 2019 legislative election its Unitary Democratic Coalition (with the Greens Party-PEV) received a respectful 6.3 percent at the polls (10 seats for the PCP and 2 for PEV) (SGMAI, 2019 Outubro) and 6.9 percent at the European Parliamentary election (2 seats for PCP) (SGMAI, 2019 Maio). Given that the PCP continues rooted in an orthodox, Marxist-Leninist foundation when most other international communist parties have evolved with the fall of the Soviet Bloc, these results are quite good.

As a relatively small, electoral party, it is disproportionately active in the Portuguese and European Parliaments. In Portugal, for example, the PCP was the most productive party during the September 2017 to July 2018 legislative session (similar to previous years): Five Parliamentary Assessments, 83 law proposals, 149 draft resolutions, over 300 hearings and debates within and outside the assembly, and 850 questions and requirements posed to the government (www.pcp.pt/assembleia-da-republica/proyectos-de-lei). As can be imagined, the PCP's activities touched on almost every category of issues including European integration (EI), education, regionalism, employment,

1. For more detailed analyses on the PCP's history (including complete notation and bibliography) see Carlos A. CUNHA: *The Portuguese Communist Party's Strategy for Power, 1921-1986*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1992.

health, environment, budget, foreign and economic policy, agriculture, tourism, fisheries, culture, et cetera (www.pcp.pt/assembleia-da-republica).²

This paper takes a qualitative, rhetorical, historical approach focusing on one of the party's long-term, oppositional stances: European integration (EI). At a time when Euroscepticism and Brexit are vibrant in the news, we will examine the PCP's tactics in opposing EI including within two parliamentary forums, the Portuguese Assembly and the European Parliament. The content begins with a literature review for context. Next, the early stages of EI opposition are covered very briefly because analysis of those stages has been covered elsewhere. The later stages from the 1990s onward are the focus of this paper. The concluding remarks wrap up the analysis.

Literature Review

Much has been written on the PCP's history since 1921 from Carlos Cunha's analyses in varied writings³ to José Pacheco Pereira's many works (1999)⁴ and other scripts by scholars like João Madeira (2013). Given the emphasis here will be on the PCP's historical and current approach to EI, the literary focus will concentrate on this aspect. Nevertheless, a very brief historical overview is warranted.

The long history of continued clandestine struggle gave the party an aura of legitimacy and dedication to working class interests among many Portuguese. Government repression during the 48-year dictatorship meant that the truly committed (willing to suffer the negative consequences of membership) joined the party. Most of the post-1940's leaders, therefore, were Marxist-Leninists, which helps explain why the party continues its orthodoxy today. Its historical legacy positioned the PCP to return after the 1974 revolution as the strongest political party in the country at the time.

Although the PCP has often been involved in electoral politics since its emergence in 1921, one should not assume that the party is entrenched in pluralist democracy (which it still believes requires statist control). In the early years following the party's formation, a lively internal debate developed between anarcho-syndicalists, that wanted to prevent participation in bourgeois politics, and reformists, who increasingly leaned toward participating in elections. Both

2. Regular reading (or research) of Portuguese newspapers and consulting digital media, including party websites, offers an abundance of cases. See the issue links, for example, presented at <http://www.pcp.pt/assembleia-republica>.

3. Cunha, Op.Cit. and other sources that will be noted throughout.

4. For example, José Pacheco PEREIRA: *Alvaro Cunhal: Uma Biografia Política; «Daniel», O Jovem Revolucionário*. Vol. I, Lisboa, Temas & Debates, 1999.

the anarcho-syndicalist and reformist tendencies were eradicated during the bolshevization of the party in the thirties. Since then the party's participation in «bourgeois» politics was often a mere tactic in its dual strategy for power of revolution and evolution (with emphasis on revolution until the turn of this century). While in modern times revolution is not highlighted, neither is «bourgeois» politics. It continues the orthodox, democratic-centralist, vanguardist strategies. Great attention remains on non-parliamentarian tactics such as worker strikes and public demonstrations⁵. The party continues to look at its historical struggle and sees the economic crisis that began in 2008 as proving it is on the correct path.

Despite increased world globalization and interdependence, technological changes, and other trends, the PCP continues to favor analyses that are based on the conquests and correlation of forces of revolutionary Portugal. But the status quo has changed: «monopoly capital» and multinational corporations have absorbed much of the public, nationalized sector; the agrarian reform has largely been disbanded; and politically the nation is in the midst of the modernization transitions that led communists in other nations to reform. Yet at a 1998 PCP regional assembly, General-Secretary at the time, Carlos Carvalhas, still argued that as countries drew near the end of the century the world approached civilizational regression and continued to need revolutionary and progressive forces to protect workers' interests, development, progress, liberty, and the independence of people. The PCP, he insisted, had to double its efforts to ensure that these positions were maintained (*Diário de Notícias*, 1998)⁶.

While the PCP has been Eurosceptic long before the topic began to expand as a scholarly study in the late 1970s/early 1980s as EI continued to broaden, for context we mention some of the Eurosceptic literature. Luciana Castellina refers to the left mostly opposing European integration after World War II for three reasons hovering around United States (US) and capitalist control of Europe, which were also among the PCP criticisms at the time while clandestine and continue to this day. Castellina argues that: 1. Just as the US created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as part of the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union, the idea of a united Europe was to support the economic arm of that development in favor of capitalist systems. 2. European integration was intended to facilitate US control of Western Europe. 3. The rules were

5. Regular reading of the party press, its email lists, and consulting its website www.pcp.pt provide daily examples.

6. See coverage of the assembly held in Coimbra in «Carvalhas compara PS e PSD a Pedro e Paulo», *Diário de Notícias*, 19 de abril de 1998.

created by parties to the right of center in favor of free market perspectives (Castellina, 2018).

Richard Dunphy produces an excellent analysis in 1988 comparing and contrasting the varied stances toward EI by West European parties of the left (especially communist parties). He argues that by the mid-1980s there were four general leftist views on EI. First is the stance that most closely mirrors the PCP to this day (Central Committee, 2020)⁷. EI is a way for global capital to dominate Europe via US and German hegemony which becomes a threat to workers' rights as well as national welfare, democracy, and sovereignty. The result will be economic inequality and unsustainable development similar to the historical exploitation of the less developed world. The second position agrees with the above but does not see an alternative except to emphasize types of policies that are pro-labor, environmentalist, and that benefit the community at large. The emphasis should be on rejecting continued centralization of the European Union. Third is to use EI to push pro-Socialist measures and political change in that direction. And fourth, the state of the European Union is a «fait accompli» that must be accepted with an evolutionary push toward socialism (but not as strongly as in the third position) (Dunphy, 2004).

Other analyses that generally mirror PCP anti-integration stances overtime seeing the EU as imperialist, exploitative, and undemocratic are written in 2001 by Guglielmo Carchedi (2001) as well as Steven P. McGiffen (2001). One aspect of the PCP's approach to EI has been its constant emphasis on the independence of each country (and communist party) to accentuate nationalism, which weakens cooperation at the EU level and transnationalism (Central Committee, 2020, 17-20)⁸.

In 1970 Leon N. Lindberg and Stuart A. Scheingold (1970) propose that there was a public «permissive consensus» regarding EI. Ian Down and Carole J. Wilson (2008, 26-49) see overall support for EI in 2000s as lower than 1980s but differing little than 1970s as the «permissive consensus» gravitated to «constraining dissensus» that is a more pessimistic view than neo-functional view that EI would naturally continue moving forward. Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2006, 247-50; 2009, 1-23) present that «post-functionalist»

7. See proposals (theses) section on International Situation (Chapter 1: 1.1.2.6) for 2020 PCP XXI Congress approved by Central Committee in September 2020. «Teses – Projecto de Resolução Política», https://www.pcp.pt/sites/default/files/documentos/2020_xxi_congresso_teses_projecto_resolucao_politica.pdf, p. 6.

8. See proposals (theses) section on European Union (Chapter 2) for 2020 PCP XXI Congress approved by Central Committee in September 2020. «Teses – Projecto de Resolução Política», https://www.pcp.pt/sites/default/files/documentos/2020_xxi_congresso_teses_projecto_resolucao_politica.pdf, pp. 17-20.

theory emphasizes the role of interest groups as potential drivers of integration, while these two scholars see popular Euroscepticism as the focus. Elites that drove EI and ignored public opinion now face consequences of less room to manoeuvre as increased public opposition to EI emerges. Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (2008) edit a comprehensive, two-volume, comparative, and theoretical analysis. Paul Taggart (1998, 363-388) previously focused on theoretical aspects of Euroscepticism including a typology. Nathalie Brack (2013, 85-104) covers behavioral analysis of rightist Eurosceptic Members of European Parliament (MEPs) with her own typology.

Regarding Eurosceptic studies on Portugal and Southern Europe as a region, varied analyses exist (especially since the Eurocrisis in 2008/2009 and Brexit 2016 events, with now the Pandemic 2020 being a new approach). Is regional Euroscepticism more policy or polity based? Some view Southern Europe as the most supportive of EI in the EU, but according to Susannah Verney, the crisis has led to increased scepticism as well as variation as Southern Europe has enlarged with the addition of Malta and Cyprus to the EU (2017). In Portugal the radical left parties are the most Euroseptic. Marco Lisi (2020) as well as Marina Costa Lobo and Pedro C. Magalhães (2011, 81-104) find the PCP is consistently hard Eurosceptic with the Left Bloc (BE) being more soft Eurosceptic given that a good percentage of the party supports EI but wants it to focus more on social integration and democratization of its central organizations.

The PCP and European Integration

One of the lengthiest, consistent, oppositional stances of the PCP has been against every stage of European integration since the 1950s (divided into approximately six distinct phases). We will focus especially on the final two phases over the last few decades in this analysis.

The PCP has generally adhered to what can be labeled a Third world/radical ideological argument concerning integration's side effects. For example, it has argued that membership has not resolved Portugal's economic problems (and will not) but only increased the nation's dependence on the outside world. Portugal has been integrated more deeply into «monopoly capital's international division of labor» resulting in a considerable loss of sovereignty. The party has also called frequently for the government to inform the public of the membership process and of its consequences, assuming that the Portuguese would turn against integration if they knew «all the facts» (although as mentioned below, based on the 2015 Greek referendum, the PCP is concerned that voters can be adversely influenced by «big capital» propaganda) («On the

Referendum in Greece», 2015). Over the years, the PCP has focused its analyses on Portugal's various economic sectors to show how European Economic Community (EEC)/European Union (EU) membership has had an overall negative impact.

Integration Embryonic Phase (1950s-1974)

The party already opposed integration in the 1950s, pushing instead for Portugal to develop closer economic ties with all global nations, and especially Soviet Bloc countries. At the time, João Madeira (2013, 253, 270) found the PCP argued, the national capitalist forces were also opposed to «liberal» integration given that they would lose the competitive edge of state-led protectionism. In the 1960s, a party study opposed membership in the European Economic Community (EEC), and in 1972 the communists criticized the European Free Trade Association's (EFTA) relations with the EEC (*Diário de Notícias*, 1997; *Avante!*, 1972)⁹. Given that the party was illegal and had a clandestine existence, its oppositional activities were non-parliamentarian during the dictatorship.

EEC Candidacy Phase (1974-1986)

The PCP continued opposition to Portugal's joining the EEC. It consistently focused on the negative aspects of EI such as its obstructing democratic politics (meaning «large capital's» manipulation of the process in its favor), attacking workers' conquests after the 1974 overthrow of the «fascist» regime, and integrating Portugal into a globalized system that minimized its national interests (*Programa do Partido*, XIX Congresso, 2012; *Programa do Partido*, XX Congresso, 2016, Central Committee, 2020; Cunha, 2000; Cunha, 1993; *O Militante*, 1986, junio; <http://www.pcp.pt/assembleia-republica/uni%C3%A3o-europeia>)¹⁰.

9. For reference to the PCP's position in the 1960s see Álvaro Cunhal's (PCP General-Secretary) opening statement in his debate «A União Europeia e a crise da independência, identidade nacional, soberania» with socialist leader Mário Soares as transcribed in «Contrariar as leis de outros...», *Diário de Notícias*, 7 de noviembre de 1997. Portugal was a member of EFTA prior to membership in the EEC. See party opposition to the EEC in *Avante!*, agosto 1972.

10. This EI analysis especially focuses on PCP positions since the 2010s such as the Party Program and Party Congress materials: *Programa do Partido*, XIX Congresso, 30 de noviembre-2 de diciembre de 2012, <http://www.pcp.pt/programa-do-pcp>; *Programa do Partido*, XX Congresso, 2 de diciembre de 2016, <http://www.pcp.pt/programa-do-pcp#uni-o-europeia-condicionalismos-e-limita-es-independ-ncia>; and proposals (theses) for 2020 PCP XXI Congress approved by Central Committee in September 2020, «Teses – Projecto de Resolução Política», <https://www.pcp.pt/sites/>

During this phase the party often used its parliamentary presence to push its positions (*O Militante*, 1979; «Resolution,» 1979; *Não ao Mercado Comum*, 1980; *O Militante*, 1980; *Avante!*, 1980; *Avante!*, 1981; *O Militante*, 1981).

EEC Membership Phase (1986-1987)

In 1986, Portugal officially entered the EEC. As a result, the PCP shifted its tactics, given that the nation was now a member, but emphasized that its opposition had been correct as the future would inevitably prove. The EEC, it argued, was not benefitting the nation economically as claimed by the Community's supporters, largely because the integration negotiations did not adequately protect Portugal from the negative aspects. Rather than modernize the nation's productive capacity, it was left vulnerable to the more competitive outside capitalist forces with which Portugal could not contend. Again, the party used its parliamentary presence and maneuvers to push its positions (*O Militante*, 1986; «Document of the Central Committee,» 1986; «Announcement of the Central Committee», 1987).

Unitary Act Phase (1987-1990)

As subsequent developments occurred within the EEC, the PCP opposed those changes as well. After the signing of the Unitary Act in 1987, the party attacked the qualitative change, arguing the act would allow a majority of nations to impose their will on the minority. In the future, Portugal might not have veto power over decisions taken at its expense. The act was also criticized for taking additional evolutionary steps toward a common foreign policy that would further weaken national independence. Perhaps in attempting to change the image the PCP had developed over time concerning its opposition to the EEC, the party emphasized that it was not against membership but against any agreement that decreased Portuguese independence (Cunhal, 1987; *CDU*

default/files/documentos/2020_xxi_congresso_teses_projecto_resolucao_politica.pdf. The PCP website provides 37 pages of links focusing on its EU legislative actions dating back to 1997 at <http://www.pcp.pt/assembleia-republica/uni%C3%A3o-europeia>. While the PCP continues to follow the same argument lines over the last several decades, those interested in past sources might want to check the following: Carlos CUNHA, «Nos deram a chouriça para levar o porco! The Portuguese Communist Party and the European Union», *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring-Summer 2000, pp. 96-109; Carlos CUNHA, «L'opposition du parti communiste portugais à l'adhésion à la CEE» en Pascal DELWIT and Jean-Michel DE WAELE (eds), *La Gauche Face aux Mutations en Europe*, Bruxelles, Université de Bruxelles Presse, 1993, pp. 119-132; and *O Militante*, junio 1986, No. 135.

Election News, 1987). The party continually used its parliamentary presence and maneuvers to push its positions (*O Militante*, 1987; *O Militante*, 1988, febrero; *O Militante*, 1988, julio).

Maastricht Treaty and European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) Phase (1990-2008)

With Portugal's membership in the first tier of the EMU in 1990, the PCP became increasingly critical of the Portuguese Social Democratic Party's (PSD) government plans. The communists argued firms from the European community penetrated the Portuguese market at the expense of domestic enterprises. Since membership, the terms of trade between Portugal and most other nations had worsened. The country was falling into an international and regional division of labor that decreased its self-sufficiency as a result of foreign imports that limited production to forestry and other sectors which interested EU markets. EU firms placed Portuguese enterprises, which were generally smaller, at a competitive disadvantage. Portugal remained peripheral to the rest of Europe, providing cheaper labor to foreign monopolies. The party continued to use the argument that larger nations within the Union had greater power over the smaller to force them to accept certain positions.

It also argued that joining the EMU imperiled the nation, and that greater indebtedness would increasingly subordinate national interests to foreigners and their decisions. Through the EMU, the international capitalist division of labor would return the nation to the dependent economic conditions which existed prior to, and immediately after, the April 25, 1974 revolution. Joining would lead to growth only in those areas that interested the multinational corporations. The PCP also felt that Portugal's agricultural independence would be threatened by EU and US imports (*Avante!*, 1991). Overall, the party argued that maneuvers for Portugal to join the EU were designed by the same monopoly capital interests that were overthrown during the revolution. Those groups wanted to again impose their capitalist recuperation policies on the nation. Instead, the PCP proposed that Portugal pursue a development strategy designed for the nation's needs that would draw on international cooperation with all nations (*Avante!*, 1992, diciembre).

Another major argument was that the nation's technological and structural underdevelopment would lead to the failure or consolidation of many businesses and would accelerate the ruin of small and medium-sized enterprises. It would also lead to the under-utilization of excess capacity in industries like shipbuilding. Furthermore, the nation would lose much of its sovereignty

over fishing rights, suffer because of its older, less competitive fleet, and lead to increased dependence on foreign decision-making. In addition, Portuguese interests would be subordinated to foreign commerce, and large supermarkets would bankrupt many smaller retailers. Judicial and legislative sovereignty would also decline because Portugal would become subject to EU rules and regulations (*Avante!*, 1992, julio).

As always, the PCP resorted to its argument that the party was opposed to membership, but given that the nation had entered the EU, the PCP had to actively minimize damages to the nation, workers, small and medium farming enterprises, merchants, industrialists, and other sectors that would be adversely affected. The nation, it argued, would increasingly find that important decisions were being made by distant bureaucrats rather than its own leaders, and by the European Parliament that would not defend Portuguese needs vis-à-vis those of other EU members. The party was adamant in Portugal's imperative to maintain local (national) power over centralized, Eurocrat decision-making. It argued that because the party always stood against the Community, only the communists could truly be trusted to defend national interests. While the government was subordinating those requirements to the EU's, the PCP argued it preserved them through its representatives in the European Parliament¹¹; as Portuguese integration deepened, they expected the situation to only worsen. The party continued to insist that it was uniquely qualified to defend Portugal because it argued most vehemently against membership before it happened.

The PCP is proud of its consistent opposition to European federalism. As a result, it has taken various measures within the parliamentary framework to open debate on the direction of European union, especially with Maastricht and EMU. The communists criticize the government of surrounding the accords in secrecy to minimize debate by taking control of the agreement and diminishing the parliamentary watchdog procedures. The party remains very critical of the speed and secrecy that shroud progress toward federalism and obscure public knowledge of the true nature of integration ahead. For example, the PCP frequently argues that the strongest nations are bullying the smallest in the community to approve conditions that run against their interests (Viegas, 2015). According to the PCP, in 1992 Maastricht further deepened European

11. This argument continues and can be verified by the many actions posted on the PCP website by one of its European Parliament representatives, João FERREIRA, on 7 de diciembre de 2018. For example, «Sobre as disposições relativas à hora de Verão e à hora legal», <http://www.pcp.pt/sobre-disposicoes-relativas-hora-de-verao-hora-legal>.

integration without giving adequate attention to the social dimension as it pursued neo-liberal measures. Even though final decisions on a common foreign policy were not resolved, considerable additional steps toward integration were taken. The decisions taken at Maastricht risked widening what the party labels the «democratic deficit» by minimizing with what parliaments in the member nations deal, the true representatives of the people. The really important decisions are often made by the governments behind closed doors. Ample debate on the impact these measures would have on Portugal was necessary and should precede the decisions taken in Parliament. In Portugal, the Maastricht treaty was voted on by Parliament rather than a popular referendum that the party felt should have occurred.

The PCP's strategy at the European parliamentary level is to present an image of intervention on behalf of the working class on a broad array of issues such as child labor, syndical concerns, migrant workers, emigration questions, et cetera. The party also deals with Portuguese local matters or international relations issues of national interest (like impacts on the Organization of Portuguese Speaking Nations). The communists reject the continued evolution of the EU toward federalism that threatens to transform Portugal into a sub-alternate and peripheral nation¹².

The PCP argues that the economic situation is sufficiently preoccupying and grave to not allow «sophisms and diversionary maneuvers» to divert attention. Policies regarding the single currency (Euro) must be radically different to guarantee the viability of Portuguese agriculture, fisheries, and other sectors like tourism, media and telecommunications, domestic commerce, and the financial sector¹³. To do this the party feels the government must break with the monetarist orientations of the EU and the criteria of nominal convergence. It must give priority to development, which means that the nation should withdraw from the EMU that hinders it. The government must substitute for the nominal convergence objective the real convergence objective with the adoption of differentiated norms that can translate into the positive evolution of social and economic models, rather than according to the strongest economies. It is fundamental to create policies that see employment

12. For analysis of the PCP's positions regarding the European Parliament see the party press. Additional information is listed on the party's web site (www.pcp.pt) under the section «Parlamento Europeu».

13. Reiterated at PCP roundtable on EU such as by João FERREIRA, «A defesa da soberania nacional é indissociável do avanço no caminho da emancipação social dos trabalhadores e dos povos», 18 de diciembre de 2018, <http://www.pcp.pt/defesa-da-soberania-nacional-indissociavel-do-avanco-no-caminho-da-emancipacao-social-dos>.

and social progress as the major objectives and create conditions for development (Ferreira, 2018, 18 diciembre; Ribeiro, 1996, maio). For example, the PCP is critical of discussions of the EU budget that focus on the EMU at the expense of social harmony (Ribeiro, 1996, junio). Unemployment and social degradation have to be taken into consideration. There is too much inflexibility in arbitrary deadlines as well as too much emphasis on investment and speculation.

One of the foci of communist alternative policies is to end the neoliberal view that is currently dominant: that the rich must be richer so that the poor can be less poor. A different European path is required, claims the PCP. The EMU divides the union among rich and poor nations, and within nations. These policies are opposed to workers' rights, weaken their salaries, and threaten their Social Security benefits. The union is increasingly distant from the public. The Portuguese economy was not ready to join the EMU, a club for the rich with membership charges that the economic crisis has shown the nation is not able to pay. Some argue that the difficulties are merely transitional, and the long-term benefits will outweigh the costs. The party believes the problems will, in fact, be exacerbated because in the future the nation will have to pay penalties should the economy move beyond the acceptable range of fluctuation. While it is true that Portugal gained a lot from the structural funds it received, one also has to look at the costs that Portugal has had to pay (Fernandes; Barbosa, 1996).

After 1992, the party claimed the grand illusion that the EU was good for Portugal slowly gave way to reality, as many of the agricultural and industrial protections disappeared and the nation faced the consequences. What could Portugal expect after it received less funds, more imports, and had less exports? The PCP argued that the increasing deficit with the EU was an indication of future problems. The liberalization of capital transfers and foreign investment led to greater dependence on the outside and left the nation with less control of its resources. Despite all the funds showered on Portugal, it should have received even more money to smooth the transition. The nation needed to renegotiate membership for terms that were more favorable. By this stage the PCP had gone all out in its campaign against the treaty by distributing pamphlets, holding enlightenment sessions and a four-day conference in June, and even by organizing demonstrations (*Avante!*, 1992, julio).

Carlos Carvalhas, the Secretary-General at the time, declared at a joint meeting of PCP national and European parliamentary deputies that a party analysis following the Florence Summit and the 1996 Intergovernmental Summit (CIG) led to five conclusions. The party considered:

1. it unacceptable that the central question of the Maastricht Treaty, the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), continues to remain outside of the revisionary process¹⁴. The EMU adheres to neoliberal and monetarist policies that run counter to principles of 'economic and social cohesion,' the real convergence of economies, and the promotion of employment.
2. that it is a mystification that the Commission, Council, and Portuguese Prime Minister continue to show preoccupation with unemployment and include the issue in summit meeting agendas, like in Florence, discussing new programs to combat it when it is known that Maastricht policies, to which all claim to be attached, are leading to the concentration of wealth, a widening of the development gap, and to the liquidation of productive machinery of the weakest economy of EU which will lead to greater unemployment. Emphasizing development over the social dimension will lead to tens of thousands of unemployed, increase the number of workers without rights, lead to attacks versus social security, and create 50 million European poor. This scenario is a consequence of the policies of deregulation, of the forced march toward a single currency, of neoliberal policies, and of the submission of national policy to the interests of large finance capital.
3. that it must strongly reject the transfer of more power and essential policies to the European Community. This is especially true for policies connected to the core state sovereignty issues like foreign policy, defense, justice, and domestic matters. The passage from the principle of cooperation to the principle of community control signifies its domination by opaque supranational bureaucracies with special negative impact on mid-sized nations and those whose economies are less developed, such as Portugal. The broadening of issues decided by majority (Foreign Policy and Common Security – PESC) and the proposals to increasingly communitize policies are real threats to the sovereignty and independence of the states, and further contribute to the creation of a hierarchy of states leading to a 'Directory of large powers'.
4. that it is increasingly necessary to have the Portuguese public vote via referendum on Maastricht Treaty after revision. What is at stake will have a profound impact on daily life, the future of the Portuguese, and the nation. It will not be the reinforcement of closer cooperation between Portugal and the EU but the drastic reduction of Portuguese sovereignty. The entire treaty should be up for referendum and not partial aspects.
5. that the revision process cannot continue to be closed in the files and cocoons of Eurekaucrats and special parliamentary commissions, but requires ample debate and lots of information. The Portuguese public should know what is at stake and the compromises that the government has made. In the face of the global offensive against the sovereignty of the states, and against salaries, rights and social security, the PCP considers it increasingly necessary to have mass struggle and institutional intervention in a coordinated and convergent way at the national and EU levels by the forces of the left. Given

14. The EMU remained outside of the revisionary process because all nations agreed to leave it untouched.

this orientation the party was present at the Paris Rally and Madrid Encounter upon invitation by the United Left. The PCP is firmly opposed to the nation's surreptitious transformation into a province without spirit of an EU commanded by the interests of the great powers and finance capital. The PCP will continue to struggle within institutions and outside them for a European community that emphasizes economic and social cohesion, the developmental convergence of the various nations, the combat against unemployment, the intervention of the public in the decision-making process... a Europe of cooperation, solidarity, peace and economic and social progress (Carvalho, 1996).

These five points made up the tactical foundation of the party's anti-community stance in the mid to late 1990s. The party's tactics, as mentioned in point five, increasingly included a coordinated onslaught against pro-community evolution. The party is a founding member of the Confederal Group of the United European Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) of the European Parliament. It is active in the group's meetings and activities (e.g., Rome Meeting June 11-13, 1996)¹⁵. The party also sponsored a meeting of the group at a Lisbon international rally where the main slogans were «Employment with rights» and «the Europe of social progress, peace, and cooperation». By this point, the party had focused its anti-European rhetoric on the euro, an opportune moment for the rally since revisions to the Maastricht treaty had been scheduled for early June 1997 (Barbosa, 1997, maio).

The party's main goal is to act politically within the community's organs to pursue a different path for EI. The communists opine that Portugal should be one of the sovereign European nations cooperating among themselves for employment and the well-being of the public and of mutual development. That is the European community that the PCP envisions. The party insists on blocking the plan of multinational capital domination and the instruments it uses, like the EMU, liberalization, and the total privatization of economies. The party has not supported a Europe with a common currency as an instrument for the cooperation of EU nations if it would be the only legal tender. The escudo and other national currencies, from its perspective, should have remained (Dias, 1997).

On the 20th anniversary of Portugal's joining the EEC the PCP held a one-day national conference in Moita on December 16, 2006 to deal with the results of the nation's membership. It again covered many of the arguments presented previously (and since) by presenting data to support its opinions across the board and for varied economic sectors. It also provided what was considered

15. For example, see the press release «Eurodeputados da Esquerda Europeia debatem rumos da UE», Brussels, 14 de junio de 1996, <http://www.pcp.pt/pe/activ/t06-05.html>.

proof of the damage Portugal encountered after entry. Among the previous 15 member EU nations (leaving out the 10 new members that joined in 2014), Portuguese purchasing power had actually declined. While it was only at 59.4% in 1986 and increased to 73.2% in 2000, by 2005 it had again deteriorated to 65.8% (similar to the 1989 average) because of implementing the euro currency at a high rate of exchange making the nation less competitive. Gross Domestic Product was also close to 0% from 2000 to 2006¹⁶. In addition, Portugal had one of the most unequal income distributions within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), holding a Gini Coefficient of 35.5% compared to the OECD 30.7% average (only surpassed by USA, Poland, Turkey, and Mexico). Portugal also had the lowest minimum wage and social support spending per capita in purchasing power average as well as one of the highest poverty rates (21%) within the EU¹⁷.

In the end the PCP emphasized its usual arguments opposed to EU federalism and favored national sovereignty. What was needed was a true convergence of the national economy with the rest of more developed Europe emphasizing living conditions and meaningful work rather than neo-liberal policies that would continue to direct Portugal to specialize in cheap, unskilled labor in the tertiary sector (such as tourism). It favored supporting small and medium scale economic sectors of family farms and fisheries, rather than the large capital-intensive approach of mega, mechanized farming or fishing, for example¹⁸.

When considering national and global transformations, one could argue that change is in order. However, the party's stance regarding the EMU is not unwarranted. Many intelligent, well-informed individuals from varied backgrounds also agreed that Portugal's entry into the third phase of the EMU could be dangerous and a mistake, as demonstrated by the economic crisis it faced eventually with troika (European Commission, European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) foreign impositions during the economic crisis that began in 2008/2009. Arguments and counter arguments were supported by individuals from the entire political spectrum¹⁹. And similar type debates

16. See section 1.1.2 of the report «Encontro Nacional sobre os 20 anos de adesão de Portugal à CEE/UE», 16 de diciembre de 2006, <http://www.pcp.pt/encontro-nacional-sobre-20-anos-de-adesao-de-portugal-ceeue>.

17. Section 1.1.6-1.1.7, Op. Cit.

18. Section 4, Op. Cit.

19. For analyses of the pros and cons when the EMU was being considered, check press coverage in *Diário de Notícias*, *Público*, *Avante!* and other sources over those years. For example, Marina Pinto BARBOSA, «Renascimento ou morte da UE por Louçã e Constâncio», *Diário de Notícias*, 7 de noviembre de 1997 and Pedro CORREIA, «Monumental Trapalhada», *Diário de Notícias*, 9 de noviembre de 1997.

and struggles were, and are, being held throughout Europe by Eurosceptics²⁰. The side effects of entering a theoretical framework that is being matched with realistic implementation policies inevitably leads to unforeseen circumstances. The PCP was poised to take advantage of governmental mistakes in handling that economic crisis as well as forthcoming crises. Given the party's lack of change in its «revolutionary» rhetoric, joining the Euro provided the PCP with political benefits. The party's earlier electoral losses were halted (for a time) by citizen frustration with Euro side-effects and the economic crisis. As the only party to oppose the EMU, the PCP stood to benefit depending on the political inclination of the voters. Joining the Euro did lead to further neo-liberal capitalist integration and increased unemployment.

Euro Crisis Phase (2008-2018)

The emergence of the Euro Crisis and the EU's attempts to remedy it exacerbated the PCP's severe criticism of the increased foreign influence on Portugal. The 2012 European Stability Mechanism and Fiscal Stability Treaty, the increased power of the European Central Bank, and even the increased strength of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) after the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, came under aggressive attack by the party (with the former labeled the «Aggression Pact» in the communist's 2014 European Parliament Electoral Program). The PCP was extremely critical of the worsening economic situation created by the austerity measures. The party informed that the only manner to turn away from these disastrous policies was to vote for its candidates to change the right-wing policies of the EU and the Portuguese conservative government. The electoral program detailed all the problems with the EU policies²¹.

The party's 2015 Electoral Program for the October legislative elections called for a well-organized exit from the Eurozone. Membership in the Euro led to the destruction of national production, strategic firms (such as iron works and shipbuilding), fisheries, and the merchant marine (Lopes, 2015, 19 julio). Using Greece as its example of the Euro's disastrous impact on national rights, the General-Secretary Jerónimo de Sousa called for a renegotiation of

20. See press coverage in varied nations. For example, Josef JOFFE, «Europe's Colossal Coin Toss», *New York Times*, 1 de maio de 1998, p. A27; Alan COWELL, «4 Quixotes Tilt at German Adoption of the Euro», *New York Times*, 13 de enero de 1998, p. A3; Marlise SIMONS, «No Olive Branch in the Embattled Olive Grove», *New York Times*, 12 de enero de 1998, p. A4. Similar types of arguments continue to the present day.

21. «Declaração Programática do PCP para as Eleições para o Parlamento Europeu», 10 de marzo de 2014, http://www.pcp.pt/declaracao-programatica-do-pcp-para-eleicoes-para-parlamento-europeu#1_1.

Portuguese debt with the troika that imposed the harsh austerity measures. Its lesson of the Greek leftist government's problems withdrawing from the Eurozone led the PCP to conclude that a cautious, well-planned exit was essential and needed to be set forth in the new legislative session, because Portuguese integration was already too strong to move toward a quick exit (Lopes, 2015, 8 julio). According to de Sousa, the nation needed to return to its own budgetary, exchange, and currency sovereignty away from the European Central Bank and Eurogroup. After 800 years of independence the integration process had diminished Portuguese sovereignty (Lusa, 2015).

The PCP was convinced that to move towards a solution, a renegotiation of the debt was required. De Sousa called for a debtors' (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Spain-PIIGS) intergovernmental meeting. Merely withdrawing from the Euro would not resolve the problems. Without re-establishing Portuguese growth, which would not occur unless different measures were pursued rather than the austerity imposed by the troika, the nation could not resolve the crisis because it would increasingly be more indebted rather than less so. The restructured debt should include a 50% cut, longer payback period, 75% interest rate reduction, and payment limited to 25% of the annual resource availability so the remainder could be reinvested in the economy to stimulate growth. New policies should also include the nationalization of banks and sectors recently privatized²².

The PCP sees six interconnected directions as necessary to deal with the EU:

1. Continuing to protect national interests (especially via EU institutions).
2. Concretely minimizing the negative consequences and conditions of membership.
3. Battling the supranational impositions and democratic limitations to the public will.
4. Pursuing all measures to reclaim national progress and insure the well-being of all Portuguese.
5. Joining the people and workers of other nations in the struggle against European capitalist integration and replacing it with a peaceful Europe of equal, free, sovereign nations.

22. Maria LOPES, Interview with Jerónimo de Sousa, *Público*, 19 de julio de 2015, p. 12-14. These types of arguments against austerity measures still expected by the EU continue, such as PCP MP argument in Portuguese parliament by Paula SANTOS, «Soberania e Desenvolvimento – Desvincular Portugal do Tratado Orçamental,» 13 de marzo de 2019, <http://www.pcp.pt/desvincular-portugal-do-tratado-orcamental/>.

6. Fighting through evolving tactics to defend sovereign development according to the national interests of the public and workers²³.

PCP Anti-Integration Stance since 2018

At this time the PCP continues to feel vindicated of all its warnings and struggles against EU integration since the Coal and Steel Community. It also criticizes NATO, and especially the EU's increased reliance on what the party considers a belligerent organization for its security. The PCP prefers an emphasis on peace rather than military buildup²⁴.

The party's overall analysis of the EP election results is that for the first time the European Social Democrats (S&D) and traditional right (PPE) lost seats, so together they now hold less than 50%. The GUE/NGL, to which the party belongs, also lost seats because the PCP claims it became more heterogeneous. Nevertheless, the French and Germans will still dominate the EU top posts. The continued imposition of neoliberal policies (especially connected to EMU) and loss of additional sovereignty by member nations is expected (Ferreira, 2019).

The PCP praises the British people's decision to leave the EU despite the pressures and influences the dominant international capitalist system used to affect the voting, even though the EU is still battling the UK public's desire to leave the community. The party believes that as a result, a potentially new phase has been launched that will lead all nations to reconsider their relationship to the EU, and especially tackle the increased control of large capital over the convoluted and contradictory policies of the federal system (Ferreira, 2016). In fact, the party believes it is capitalist integration that has led to the contradictions, tensions, and rivalry which has affected public disillusionment with the EU from Brexit to other lack of popular support. Each EU crisis is seen as allowing additional steps in capitalist integration with neo-liberalism, militarism, and federalism by increasingly shifting power away from nations to EU institutions dominated by large powers such as Germany (within the EU) and the USA. This EU capitalist concentration is blocked from public view via the union's propaganda with social cosmetics and claiming it is protecting against

23. «União Europeia – condicionalismos e limitações à independência,» *Programa do Partido*, op.cit.

24. Comité Central, «Sobre a reunião do Comité Central do PCP de 26 de Junho de 2016,» 26 de junho de 2016, <http://www.pcp.pt/sobre-reuniao-do-comite-central-do-pcp-de-26-de-junho-de-2016> and «Comunicado do Comité Central do PCP de 29 e 30 de Junho de 2018,» *Newsletter*, 28, 2 de julho de 2018, <http://www.pcp.pt/comunicado-do-comite-central-do-pcp-de-29-30-de-junho-de-2018>.

the extreme right and by emphasizing «European citizenship» or «European values»²⁵.

The PCP even blames the handling of the COVID-19 crisis as the EUs continued attempts to reduce national sovereignty and align the solutions with large monetary capital interests; given the high costs of the pandemic, at least it is temporarily allowing nations to use their national budgets more flexibly²⁶.

Portugal will preside over the Council of the EU during the first semester presidency of 2021. For the PCP this is an opportune moment for Portugal to confront the EU and move to correct its decades long neoliberal path which has resulted for many nations (including Portugal) in social regression, wealth concentration, public disinvestment, fragile and privatized public services, weakened productive networks, increased dependence and debt, impoverished democracy, and disrespected sovereignty. Unfortunately, the party sees that instead the government will continue to intensify the neoliberal path (Pereira, 2021).

From a Leninist perspective, the PCP sees the EU as an attempt to resolve the contradictory capitalist forces with «one revolving along the inevitable alliance of all imperialists; and another that places all imperialists in opposition amongst themselves» (Lenin, 1987). Facing the competitive, international, capitalist world ideas of unifying Europe began around the WWI period. The theory is that European nations could use integration to give Europe a competitive edge in the global marketplace. Rather than European capitalists competitively weakening each other, the party argues they could work as a block to compete with the United States and other capitalist forces (Knijajinski, 1987). But the consistent forward steps in integration have not eradicated the competing capitalist trends in the European sphere. Brexit, for example, demonstrates this continuing contradiction. While the PCP thinks Portuguese capitalists may favor the trend, given Portugal's competitive weakness, the imperialist struggle underlies the nation's economic woes (and losses) in the battle (especially since 2008). Portugal is a peripheral nation in the struggle, favored for its cheap labor and primary goods. Its dependent relationship with big capital powerhouses like Germany is catastrophic regarding the economic

25. See proposals (theses) section «A União Europeia» (Chapter 2: 2.2) for 2020 PCP XXI Congress, Op. Cit..

26. «Sobre as conclusões da reunião do Eurogrupo», 10 de abril de 2020, <http://www.pcp.pt/sobre-conclusoes-da-reuniao-do-eurogrupo> and «Defender firmemente os interesses do povo e do País – Rejeitar as imposições e condicionalismos da União Europeia», 21 de marzo de 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/OrganizacaoRegionaldeEvoradoPCP/photos/a.1567830310101051/2460959707454769/?type=3&eid=ARDMLD4DOlibjFzAUYLGPtUcFlsnyoc2FyU678LE2QGK2c9OBBte2AqtnRnDi3uEyHOkAoB1scG9Uagu>.

future. The result, the party argues, has been economic crisis, social regression, weakened democracy, and militarism; all inevitable results of the imperialist struggle.

CONCLUSION

The economic crisis the PIIGS faced, and the rigid, neo-liberal solutions imposed by the European Union, have led the PCP to feel its constant criticisms of the increased federalism have been justified in the European and Portuguese Parliaments, as well as in its non-parliamentary actions. At its 2016 Twentieth (XX) and 2020 (XXI) congresses, the party emphasized its continued fight against European union into the future.

Similar to its disproportionate activity given its size in the National Assembly, the same is true at the European Parliament (EP). The balance of the 2009-2014 parliament found the two PCP representatives (the party's CDU alliance received 10.64% of the vote in 2009, which it increased to 12.7% and three representatives in 2014 elections, but again declined to two representatives with 2019 electoral results of 7.4%) very active both inside and outside of the country. In Brussels and Strasbourg they posed 1100 questions, 585 plenary interventions, and 3000 vote declarations²⁷. The representatives in the 2014-2019 parliament posed 1262 questions, 576 plenary interventions, and 4039 vote declarations, rapporteurs for 15 reports and 9 opinions, as well as shadow-rapporteurs for 86 reports and 104 opinions²⁸.

I do not foresee any short or medium-term developments that will alter the PCP's activity and negative attitude toward EI. In its campaign and program for the 2019 EP and October national legislative elections as well as its XXI Congress in 2020, the PCP used the same rhetorical arguments as it had in the past, including that the only solution is to break with the right's (it includes the Socialist Party as rightist) pro-EU policies²⁹.

27. <http://www.cdu.pt/parlamentoeuropeu2014/interven-ac-luta>.

28. <https://www.cdu.pt/parlamentoeuropeu2019/intervencao-confiante-e-determinada-em-defesa-dos-direitos-e-interesses-dos-trabalhadores-e-do-pais>.

29. «PCP, 98 anos. Um é «baixinho», outro é «altinho», mas Rangel e Marques são iguais», *Expresso*, 17 de marzo de 2019; <https://www.cdu.pt/parlamentoeuropeu2019/sabia-que>; «Declaração Programática do PCP», <https://www.cdu.pt/parlamentoeuropeu2019/declaracao-programatica-do-pcp>; and proposals (theses) section on International Situation (Chapter 1: 1.1.2.6) for 2020 PCP XXI Congress, Op. Cit..

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