

THE FUTURE WAS NOW

The military coup that overthrew the dictatorship in the early hours of the 25th of April of 1974 quickly transformed, due to popular support and impetus, into a revolution.

The huge crowds that filled the avenues and squares on 1 May were a demonstration of a deep collective desire for change. That May, workers enthusiastically took up old demands:

better wages, 13th month and a 40-hour working week.

To these demands added up the purges of the managers and servants of the bosses.

A powerful wave of spontaneous and surprisingly combative strikes arose, which were one of the most powerful pillars of the nascent democracy.

The future was now!

TECHNICAL FILE

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STRIKES AT THE DAWN OF THE DICTATORSHIP



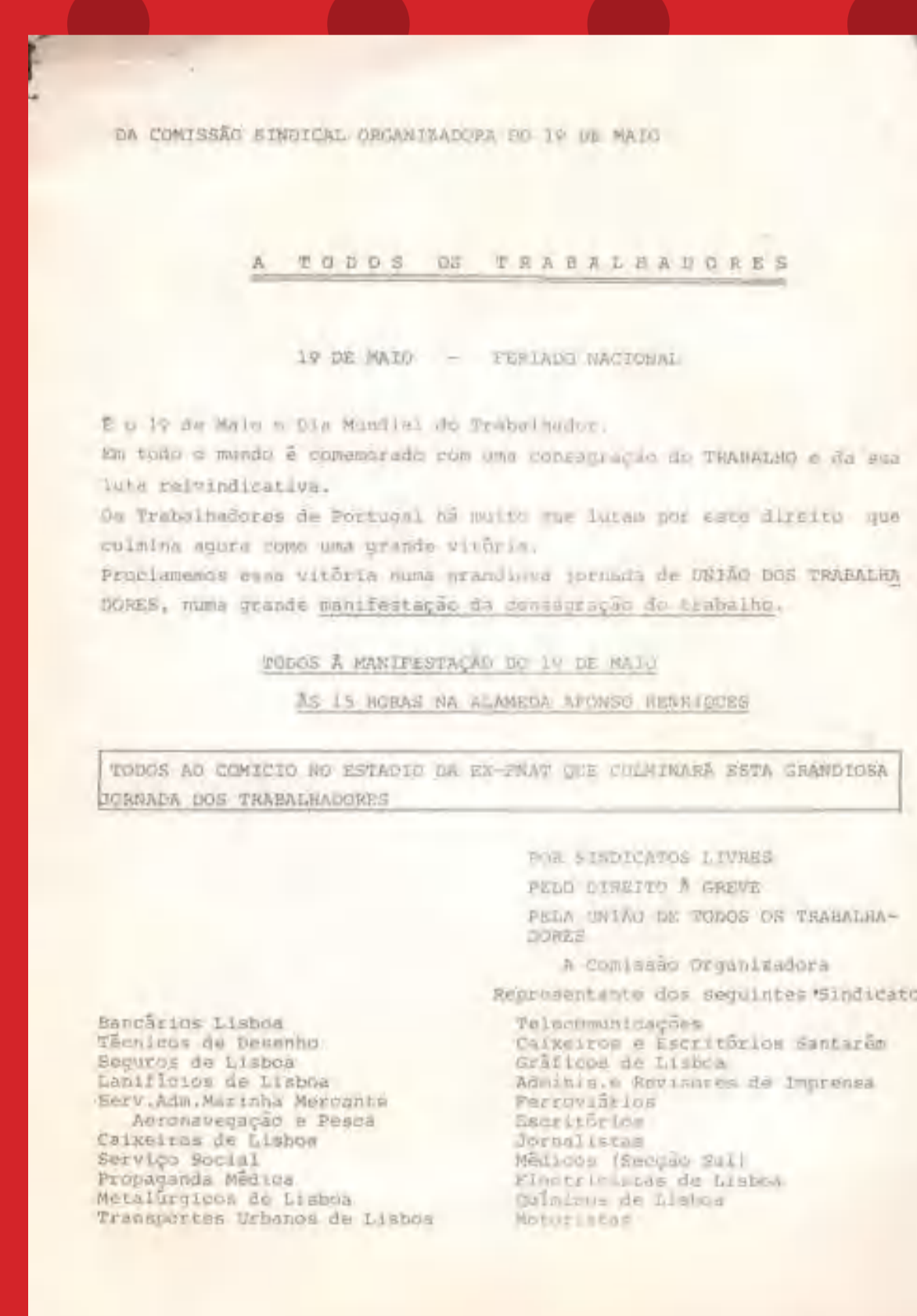
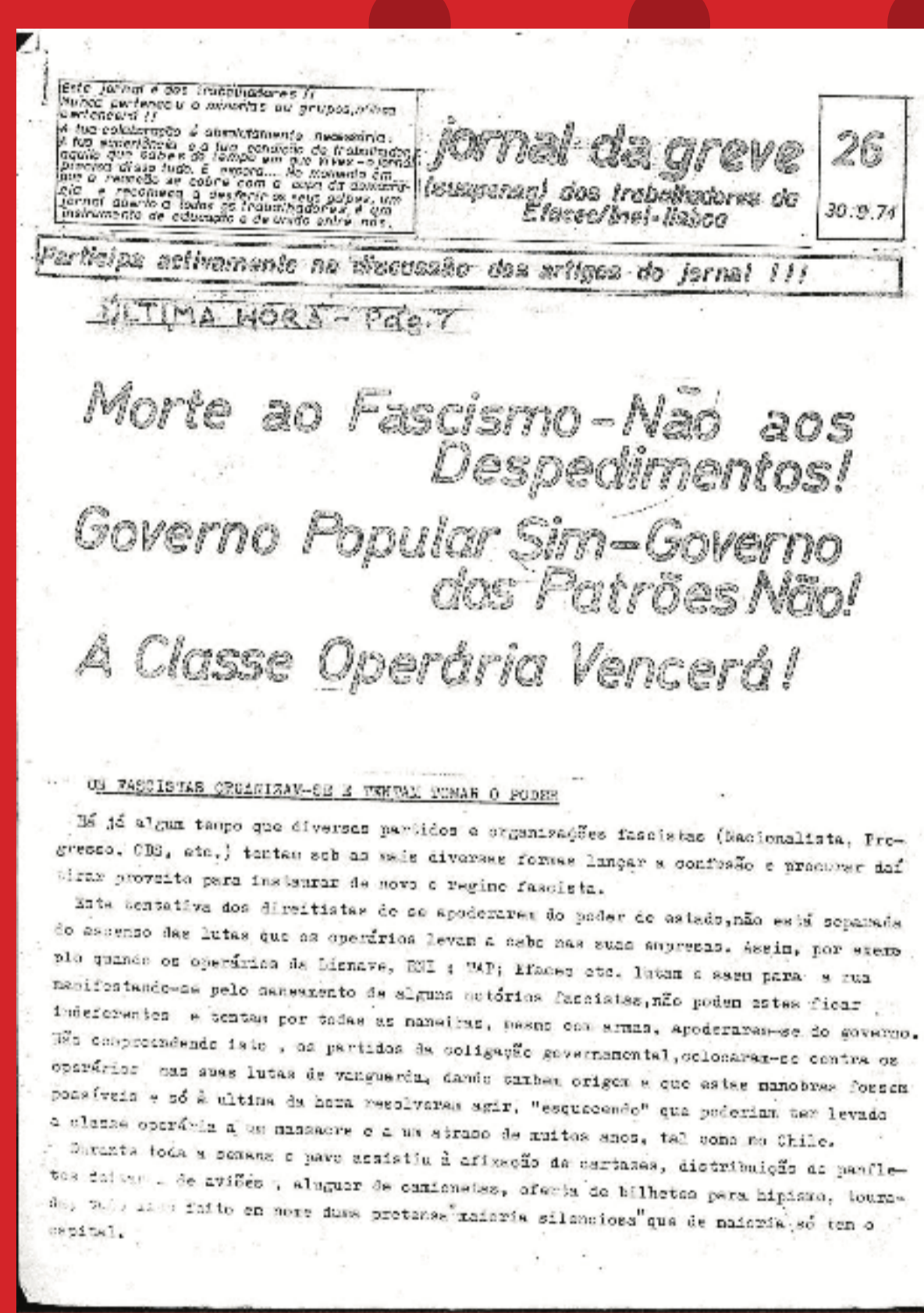
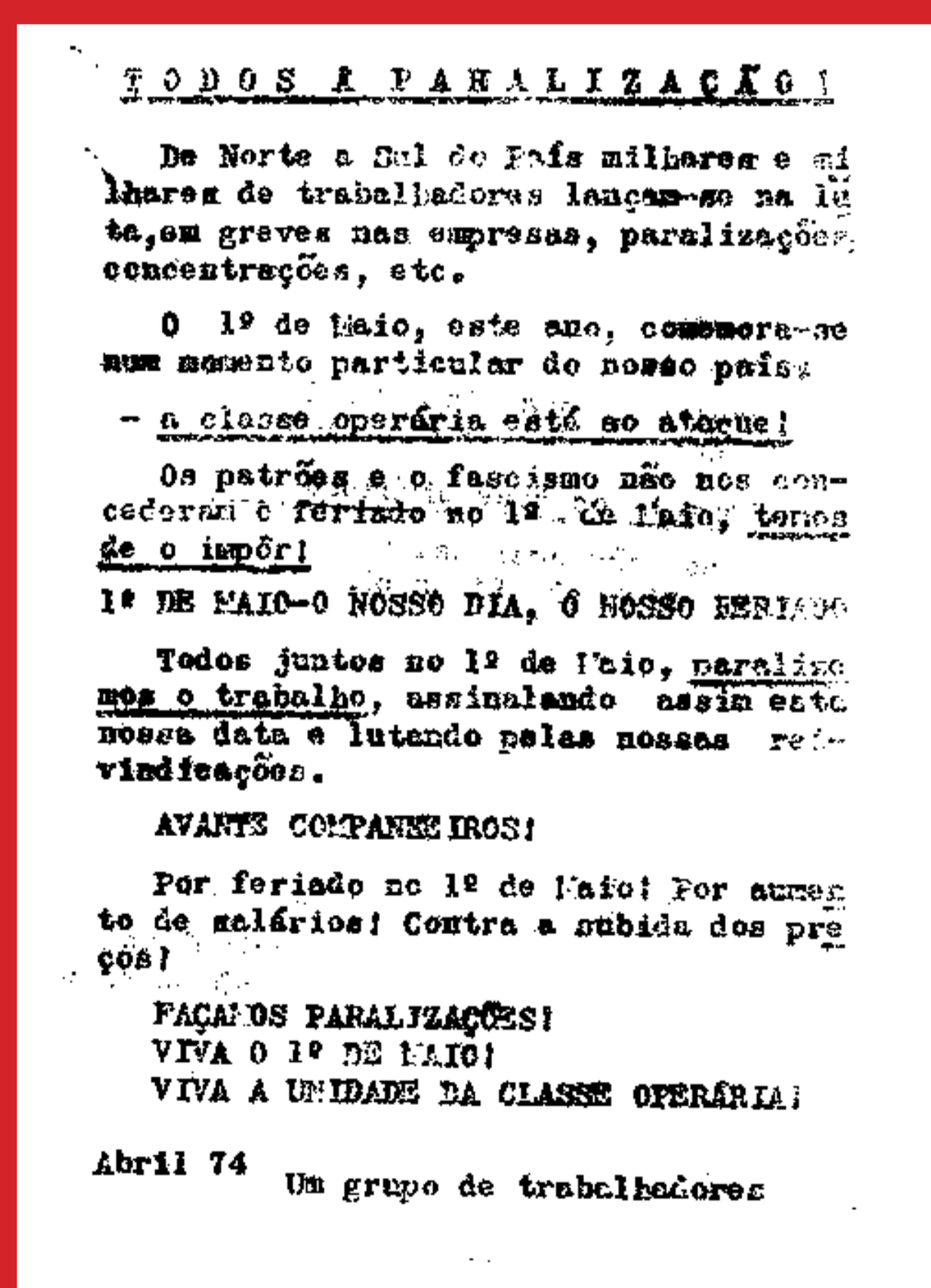
Police chasing TAP workers on strike, 1973.

Between October 1973 and April 1974, a wave of strikes involved around 60,000 workers outside trade unions, even metal, wool, and electrical workers' unions, which had anti-corporate leaderships.

Strikes took place in fisheries, textiles, metalworking, electrical, chemical, cement and paper industries, and large companies like TAP (the national airlines). The new factor is the use of strikes by sectors of the middle classes, such as medical doctors, bank employees and insurance professionals, indicative of the social changes taking place in the country.

STRIKES AT THE DAWN OF THE DICTATORSHIP

RESPONSE TO THE RISING COST OF LIVING

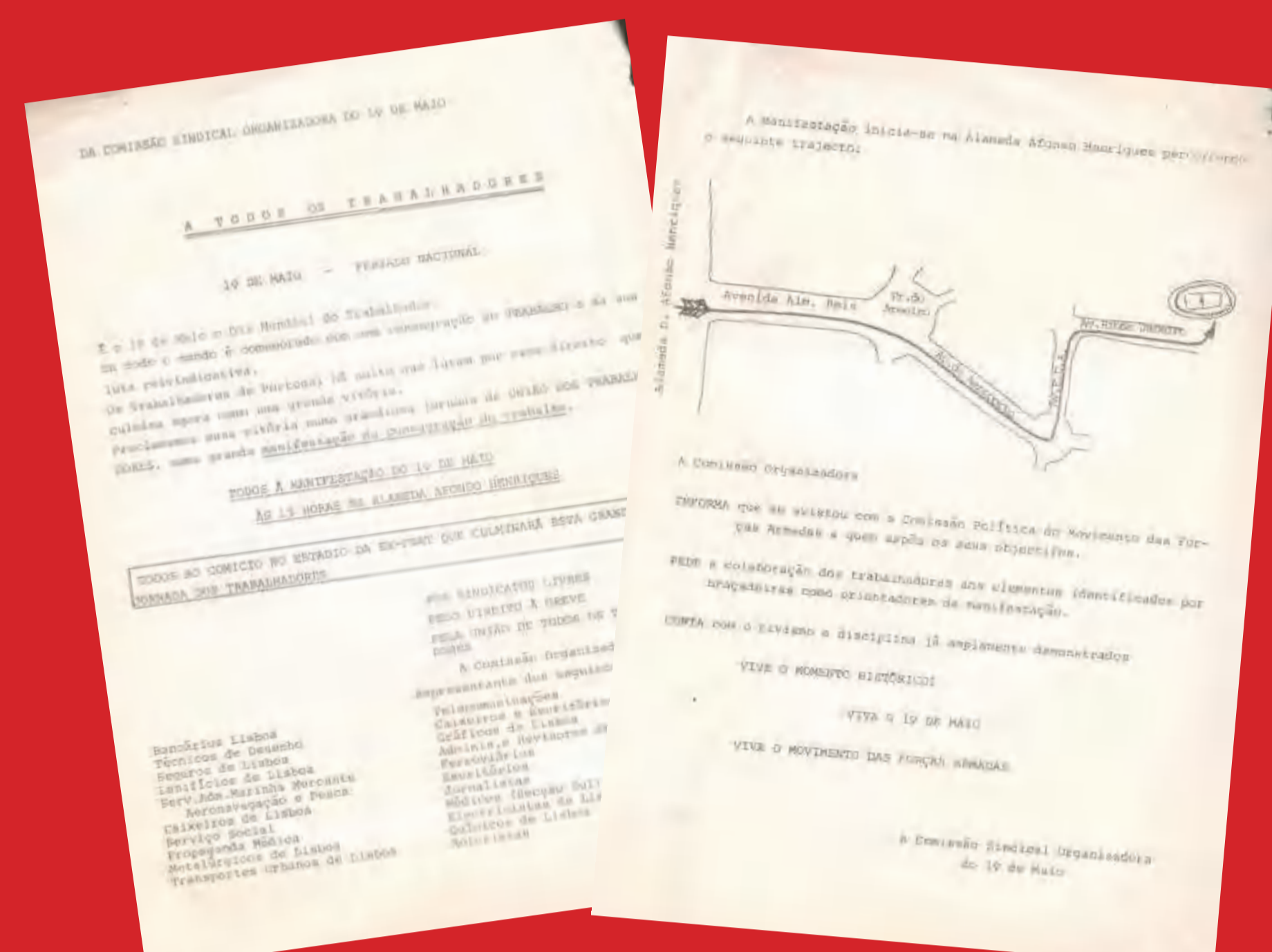


This is a spontaneous outbreak of strikes, predominantly economic in nature, whose mobilising factor is the rising cost of living and the need for better wages. This wave of strikes represents a response by large sections of the proletariat and the middle class against the worsening of their living conditions, which will continue after the April revolution.

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THE 25TH OF APRIL: A NEW POLITICAL FRAME

After the 25th of April, the National Salvation Junta, presided over by António de Spínola, has a conservative composition, while the First Provisional Government includes the PCP, MDP-CDE, PS and PPD. The members of the Junta appoint António de Spínola President of the Republic, who advocates for a controlled transition, without social revolution and with limited rights and freedoms.



1st of May 1974, Porto

A NEW POLITICAL FRAME

THE POPULAR AND WORKERS' DESIRES, ACTIONS AND DEMANDS EXPLODED IN DROVES



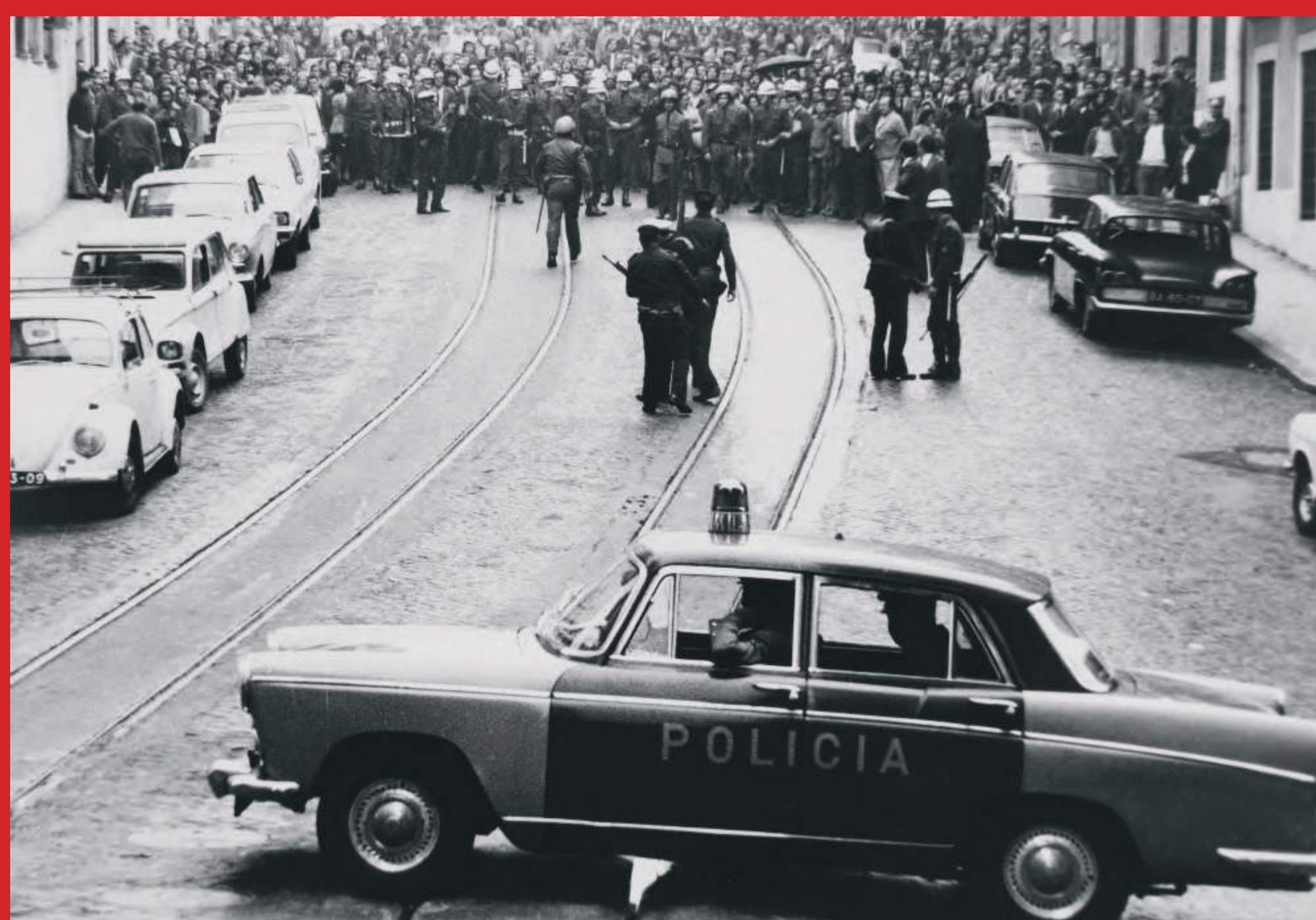
Demonstration of Renault workers



Diário de Notícias, 1972

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AGAINST FASCISM AND COLONIALISM, POPULAR INITIATIVE



Demonstrators gather outside the PIDE-DGS (political police) headquarters, controlled by the military who have occupied the premises.



Release of political prisoners from the Peniche fortress

After Marcelo Caetano surrenders to General Spínola, many demonstrators want to occupy the headquarters of the PIDE-DGS. The political police responded by shooting and killing four demonstrators, but the military prevented the demonstrators from storming inside the building. The dreaded political police that had arrested, tortured, and murdered the anti-fascist resisters' fell. The dictatorship's repressive apparatuses were taken over by the military and the people – the Censorship, Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth), Legião... On 27 April 1974, political prisoners were released from Caxias and Peniche prisons.



Anti-fascist demonstration in front of the penitentiary in Lisbon, 19th August 1974

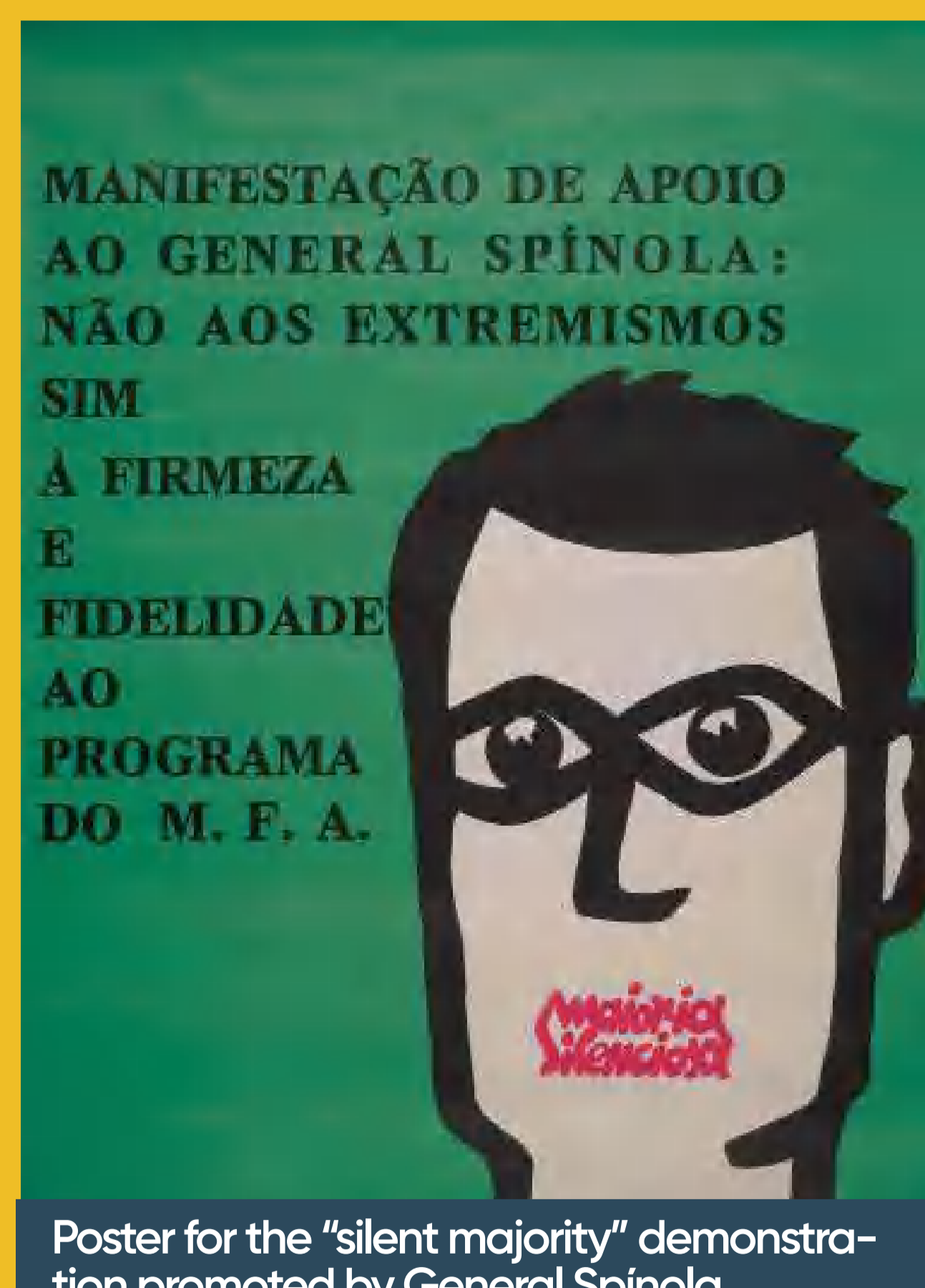


Demonstration for the independence of the colonies, Lisbon 10th September 1974

The takeover of the PIDE-DGS headquarters and the release of some prisoners went against General Spínola's initial wishes. The action of the people and the progressive military of the MFA was decisive in making this happen.

Tensions were evident between the MFA and the remnants of the old military apparatus. Spínola, now President of the Republic, sought to contain the popular impetus and subordinate the left-wing military. In alliance with most of the 1st Provisional Government (May-July 1974), they wanted to impose a disguised regime of continuity of Marcelism and a neo-colonialist solution. The spinolists wanted to prevent the national liberation movements, particularly the MPLA in Angola, from taking power.

POPULAR INITIATIVE



Poster for the "silent majority" demonstration promoted by General Spínola



Barricades at the entrance to Lisbon prevent reactionary intentions.

Failing to achieve its intentions, the government resigns. On the 28th of September 1974, Spínola, his military associates and small extreme-right parties attempted a reactionary political-military coup. They were appealing to, what they called, the "silent majority".

The left-wing forces mobilised. Barricades were organised at the entrance to Lisbon and other cities, and cars were searched to prevent the transport of weapons. The plot was defeated and Spínola resigned as President of the Republic. The popular initiative was decisive.

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THE SPREAD OF THE STRIKES MAY > JUNE 1974

May and June witnessed the peak of labour actions and conflicts. A revolutionary popular movement emerges which, through the struggle, imposes concessions and conquests on the political-military power bloc, prior to any legislative consecration.

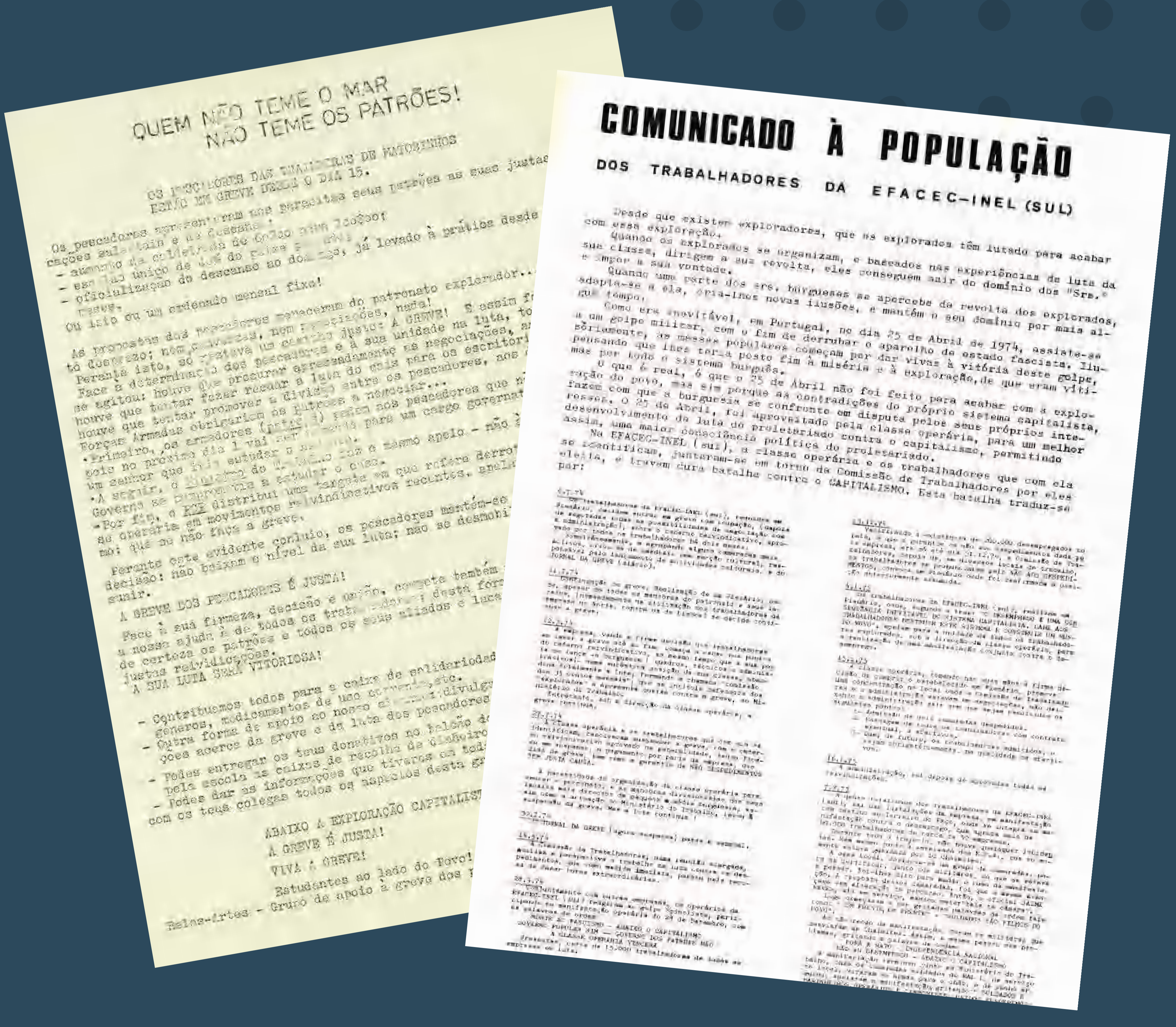


Demonstration by MESSA workers.



Carris workers strike.

It's a nationwide, intersectoral movement of claims. Centred on the world of workers and industry, it quickly spread to services, transports, the rural areas, and fishing centres, in short, to the whole of society. The main conflicts of this period were at the National Steelworks, Lisnave, Metro, Carris, Sogantal, TIMEX and MESSA. In many cases, the employers accept the demands without resorting to strike action, but radical strikes, with occupation or expulsion of managers and staff, are frequent.



On the 27th of May, a minimum wage of 3.300 escudos was set. In its innovative dynamic, the mass movement creates new forms of expression and organisation of the popular will in enterprises: democratically elected workers' committees that can be revoked at any time.

THE SPREAD OF STRIKES

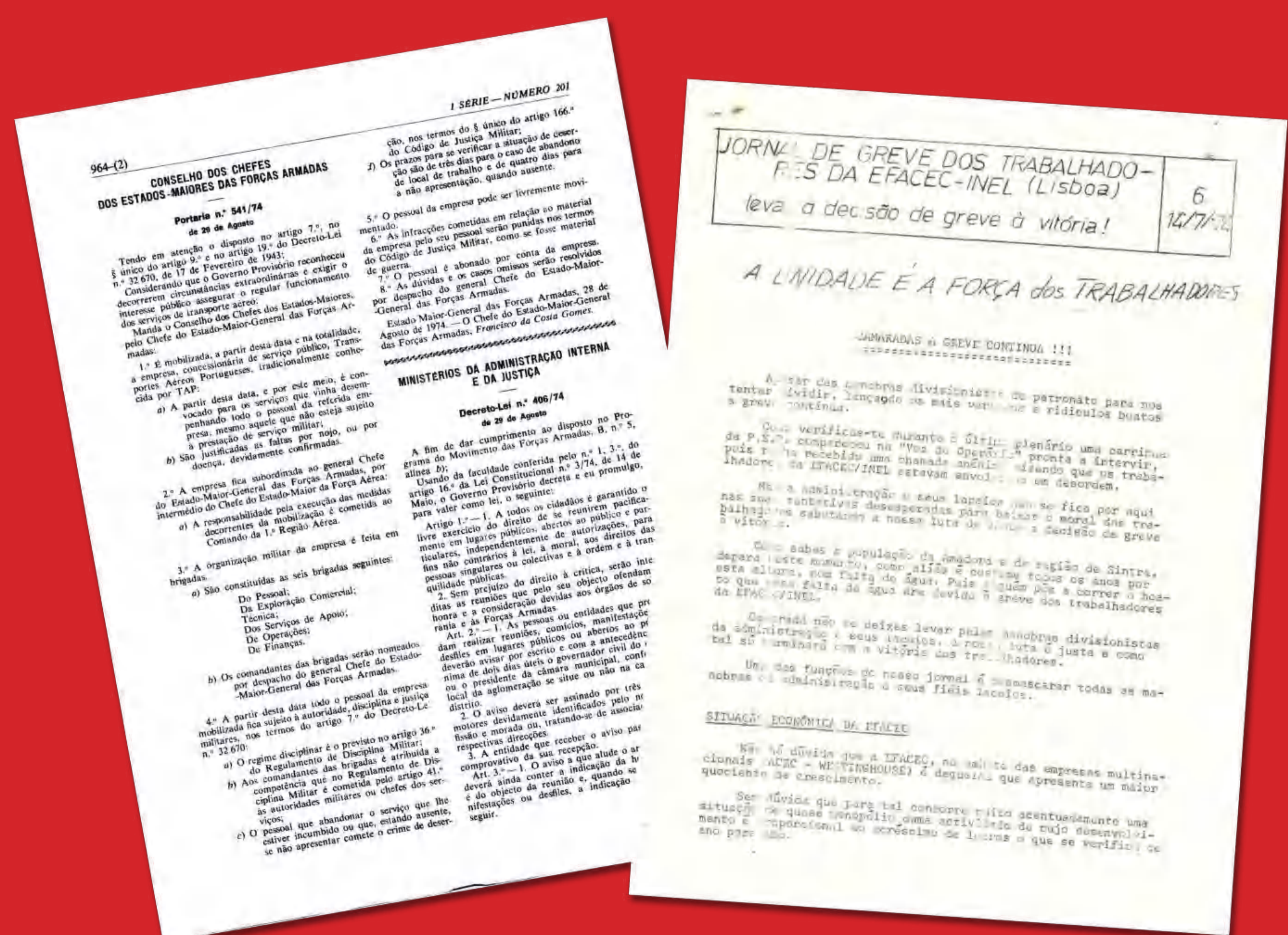
JULY > SEPTEMBER 1974

At the end of June and into July a decrease in the number of conflicts took place. The threat of companies shutting down and unemployment begins to loom.

The summer struggles were met with attempts at repression. At CTT (the National Post), political pressure led to the suspension of the strike; at Jornal do Comércio and TAP, the Provisional Government and the Armed Forces intervened against the strikers. At Jornal do Comércio, workers use the machinery to print a strike newspaper and are expelled from the company by the military forces. At TAP, hundreds of workers are fired, and the service is militarised. August and September, marked by the attempt to reorganise the right-wing parties, brought an increase in conflicts.



Bidonville in Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris



Decree mobilising the TAP military to deal with the TAP workers' strike.

EFACEC workers' strike newspaper



Bidonville in Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris

LOCATION OF ENTERPRISES IN THE METROPOLITAN LISBON AREA



1. Siderurgia Nacional (SEIXAL)
2. Lisnave (ALMADA)
3. Lisnave (LISBOA)
4. Setenave (SETÚBAL)
5. Mague (ALVERCA)
6. MEG (ALVERCA)
7. Cometna (AMADORA)
8. Serefame (AMADORA)
9. Companhia União Fabril (BARRERO)
10. Messa (SINTRA)
11. Timex (ALMADA)
12. ITT e Standard Elétrica (CASCAIS)
13. Applied Magnetics (SACAVÉM)
14. DSEP (SACAVÉM)
15. Camburnac (CACÉM)
16. Cergal (BELAS)
17. Socel (SETÚBAL)
18. Charminha (ODIVELAS)
19. Sogantal (MONTIJO)
20. TAP (LISBOA)

THE DEMANDS



Sogantal - Sale of production to pay wages.

Economic issues, a 40-hour working week, working conditions and sanitation are the main concerns on the list of demands. Wage demands tend to be egalitarian: an end to wage discrimination against

women, equal pay rises for all. Sanitation raises the question of power and nature of society and employers' power. It was a matter of destroying the representation of the old order in the world of labour.

Control of redundancies, trade union freedoms, organisation in the workplace, the minimum wage and the foundations of a welfare state completed the list of demands.

CONTENT OF CLAIMS IN 158 COMPANIES

Wage increases	66
Minimum wage	72
Minimum wage (women)	9
Minimum wage (minors)	9
Equal work, equal pay	13
Shift allowance	9
Food allowance (cafeteria)	27
Transport allowance	6
Profit sharing	25
13th and 14th month	41
Indexation	5
Seniority pay	6
Sick leave and medical and social services	22
Retirement	20
Weekly maximum	49
Abolition of overtime	7
Special overtime pay	7
Duration	56
Allowances	54
Safety and hygiene at work	16
Rhythms and standards	12
Abolition of bonuses	10
Reduction in salary range	20
Revision of professional categories	16
Participation in management	37
Activity survey	13
Publicising salaries ¹¹	11

LISNAVE: THE 12TH OF SEPTEMBER 1974

On 12 September 1974, queues of Lisnave workers in work suits and hardhats arrived in Lisbon. Despite being banned by the government and the MFA, the demonstration took place, breaking through the repressive military apparatus.

They have come to present the public powers with their demands, which have been discussed at length in assemblies. They were demanding a purge of the “lackeys of the bosses and fascism” and challenging the new strike and lock-out laws.



Lisnave workers



Lisnave workers' demonstration



Lisnave workers' demonstration

The working class, independently and in a powerful demonstration, took the initiative, stormed the shipyard gates, and invaded the city, becoming the living symbol of a new political subject in the democratic revolution: **the proletariat.**



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CRONOLOGY OF THE MAIN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS APRIL > SEPTEMBER 1974.

APRIL.

- 25 and 26 - **MAGUE** strike
- From the 28th - Occupation of the SN, replacement of the leadership and structural changes
- 30/4 - Occupation of the **Ministry of Corporations**

MAY.

- 1/5 - **Demonstrations throughout the country.** Creation of new unions in previously forbidden sectors: **Public Services and Teachers**
- 3/5 - Plenary meeting of **National Steelworks** workers approves demands.
- 4/5 - Demonstration in Lisbon of **salesclerks**
- 5/5 - Plenary of workers - **TLP** surrounds and dismisses management; resignation of directors of various newspapers; creation of agricultural unions; fishermen's strike and transformation of the former Fishermen's Houses into unions; Plenary of **CTT** workers
- 6/5 - Plenary of **TAP** workers
- 9/5 - JSN condemns and threatens strikes and purges; **Lisnave workers'** plenary; **Lisbon dockers'** plenary; **TIMEX** occupations; construction strike in Troia
- 10/5 - JSN delegation at the Ministry of Labour begins to homologate pending CCTs. Inter-union warns against "upstarts and opportunists" who use the opportunists" who use the strike opportunistically and appeals to concentration on the InterUnion.
- 12/5 - Lisbon metalworkers' plenary session approves list of demands; wool strike in **Covilhã**
- 13/5 - **Lisbon drivers'** plenary session; **Panasqueira miners'** strike
- 14/5 - **Borralha miners'** strike
- 15/5 - **Spínola takes office as President of the Republic; Avelino Gonçalves (PCP) is the Minister of Labour; Lisnave** strike begins with occupation, on the side lines of the unions
- 16/5 - **First Provisional Government takes office;** National wool strike; Lisbon textiles strike; strike with occupation of Messa; pharmaceutical laboratories worker's' strike

Reactions: PCP and COE position themselves against "economic chaos" and "inopportune" strikes, recalling the example of Chile. On the 22nd of May, the Inter-Union states against "unrealistic" demands and the actions of "demagogues and provocateurs" who play into the hands of the bosses.

- 19 to 22/5 - Strikes and struggles by construction workers, **Gulbenkian** Foundation workers, agricultural workers, and domestic workers.
- 23/5 - Lisbon **Metro** strike (management dismissed on 30/5 and concessions are withdrawn)
- 26/5 - **National decree sets a 3,300\$00 minimum wage.** Trade unions put the brakes on strikes, but some continue:
- Last days of May - "savage strikes" at **Carris** (Lisbon), the bakery industry, the **CIT postmen**, the **toll workers** on the Tagus bridge.
- Occupation processes or struggles on the side lines of the unions that continue: Messa, TIMEX, CTT, Lisnave, TAP
- 27/5 - Metalworkers' Union demobilises strike and **accepts minimum wage of 4,500\$00**
- 28/5 - PCP Command denounces **Carris** and bakers' strikes as "counter-revolutionary manoeuvres" by "groups of adventurers"; Spínola in Porto against "anarchism" and "social chaos"; anti-strike round table on RTP with PS, PCP, PPD and MDP.

JUNE.

- 1/6 - InterUnion demonstration in Lisbon against strikes ("repudiation of the provocative manoeuvres of the enemies of the working class"); Ministry of Labour appoints commission to prepare legislation on the right to strike.

Effect of the national minimum wage: wave of redundancies and closures of metal, footwear, textile, clothing, clerks, office workers, taxi drivers, etc. Workers from closed or abandoned companies occupy them in self-management: Sogantal, Naturana, Charminha.

- 17/6 - National CIT strike (until 20/6) supported by the MES and MRPP. Speech by Álvaro Cunhal in Porto against the strike (on the 23rd of June).
- 19/6 - Rural strike in the district of Beja, spreading to the whole of the Alentejo. Most agrarians don't accept it, don't comply, sack people, and abandon the land.

AUGUST.

- 19/8 Demonstration of TAP workers in support of the new charter
- 26/8 TAP strike begins. Attacked by the PCP/ InterUnion
- 27/8 Decree on the right to strike
- 28/8 Military occupation of TAP and forced mobilisation of workers

SEPTEMBER.

- 12/9 - **LISNAVE** workers march on Lisbon. Condemned by the PCP and declared illegal by the Ministry of the interior. Troops surround the shipyard. allow the demonstration to pass.
- 17/9 - **TAP** plenary calls a new strike for 27/9. PCP and 10 unions denounce the strike as "playing into the hands of fascism".
- 25/9 - 200 **TAP** workers sacked
- 27/9 - Demonstration of workers from TAP and other companies