

San Francisco Chronicle

Moderate Leftist

A Woman at the Helm in Portugal

Lisbon, Portugal

Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo, 49, an engineer and diplomat, was named yesterday by President Antonio Ramalho Eanes to form a caretaker government that he hopes will preside over parliamentary elections in the fall.

Pintassilgo, who served as minister of social affairs in the leftist government of Prime Minister Vasco dos Santos Goncalves in 1975, will become the first woman prime minister in Portugal's history.

"Somebody had to take this job," said the stocky, black-haired

woman, who had been serving as Portugal's representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris. "If these words were not worn out, I would say that it is a service to be rendered to the country. I know there are few people who are willing to take this job."

With a reputation as a moderate leftist, Pintassilgo appeared likely to gain the support of the Communist Party and the acquiescence of Mario Soares' Socialists, who have been extremely critical of Eanes' announcement last week

that he intends to dissolve parliament and call fresh elections.

President Eanes has said, though, that he will dissolve parliament only after a new government is in place to replace the non-party administration of Prime Minister Carlos Mota Pinto, which resigned June 6 after its budget was picked apart by the Socialists and the Communists.

Like Britain's Margaret Thatcher, Pintassilgo is a chemical engineer by training. In 1971 and 1972, she was a member of Portugal's delegation to the United Nations.

New York Times



UPI Telephoto

MARIA PINTASSILGO
She'll form new government